humedica Policy on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

Our Code of Conduct

humedica places human dignity at the centre of its relief and development work. humedica takes seriously all concerns about sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment[1] and complaints about them brought to our attention. humedica initiates rigorous investigation of complaints that indicate a possible violation of this Policy on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment ("PSEAH Policy" or "Policy") and takes appropriate disciplinary action, as warranted. This policy applies to complaints of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment involving humedica employees and related personnel[2].

Background

We affirm the determination of humedica and all its country offices and sister organisations collectively referred as humedica to prevent acts of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment by humedica employees and related personnel. We acknowledge the need that all humanitarian aid organisations take responsibility and need to collectively work on the elimination of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment by humanitarian aid workers.

Core principles

The core principles provide that:

- Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment by humanitarian workers are acts of serious misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
- Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the local age of consent, i.e. the local or national laws of the country you are working in. Ignorance or mistaken belief in the age of the child is not a defence.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour by humedica Employees and Related Personnel is prohibited. This includes the exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance.
- Sexual relationships between humedica employees and beneficiaries of humedica s programs are strongly discouraged since they are based on

[1] As per the UN Secretary General's bulletin (ST/SGB/2003/13), Sexual Exploitation is defined as the abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Sexual abuse is defined as the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

[2] We define "humedica Employees and Related Personnel" broadly to include all employees of humedica, humedica country offices and sister organisations, and board members, volunteers, interns, international and local consultants as well as individual and corporate contractors of these entities and related personnel, such as non- humedica entities, and their employees, and individuals who have entered into partnership, subgrant or subrecipient agreements with humedica.

inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humedica's relief and development work.

- When a humedica employee has concerns or suspicions regarding sexual exploitation or abuse or harassment by a humedica Employee or related personnel he or she must report such concerns via the established reporting procedures of the appropriate humedica entity. The same obligation applies when such concerns develop towards a humanitarian aid worker from another aid agency.
- humedica employees are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and promotes the implementation of this Policy. humedica Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems that maintain this environment.

Commitments

Managers and supervisors must ensure that all humedica Employees and Related-Personnel understand and comply with this Policy and its Core Principles. To aid in implementing this Policy and in educating humedica employees and related personnel, humedica and its managers and supervisors commit to:

1. Develop organization-specific strategies to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.
2. Incorporate our standards on sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in induction materials and training courses for our employees and in other relevant organizational codes of conduct.
3. Incorporate appropriate job responsibilities (such as staff training, complaints and response mechanisms, coordinating high-level oversight and progress reports) in specific staff positions to support and ensure effective implementation of organizational strategies to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.
4. In compliance with applicable laws and to the best of our abilities, prevent perpetrators of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from being rehired or redeployed by humedica. This could include use of background and criminal reference checks.
5. Establish and ensure that complaint mechanisms for reporting sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment are accessible, particularly to beneficiaries of humedica programs, and that humedica focal points for receiving complaints understand how to discharge their duties.
6. Take appropriate action to the best of our abilities to protect persons from retaliation when allegations of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment are made in good faith and establish procedures which encourages persons to report on concerns in good faith without fear of reprisals
7. Investigate allegations of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment involving humedica Employees in a timely and professional manner, and to the best of our ability encourage related personnel to do the same. This includes the use of appropriate interviewing practices with complainants and witnesses, particularly with children. Engage professional investigators or secure investigative expertise as appropriate.

8. Take swift and appropriate action, including legal action when required, against humedica employees and related personnel who commit sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. This may include administrative or disciplinary action, and/or referral to the relevant authorities for appropriate action, including criminal prosecution, in the abuser's country of origin as well as the host country.
9. Provide basic emergency assistance (medical, legal) and basic psychosocial support as appropriate and feasible to complainants of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.
10. Create and maintain mechanisms to systematically educate humedica employees and related personnel and the communities we serve on measures taken to prevent, mitigate risks and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.
11. Ensure that when engaging in partnership arrangements, subgrant or subrecipient agreements, these agreements
    a. incorporate this Policy as an attachment or include clauses on the protection of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment; and
    b. expressly state that the failure of those entities or individuals, as appropriate, to take preventive measures against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, to investigate allegations thereof, or to take corrective actions when sexual exploitation or abuse or harassment has occurred, shall constitute grounds for humedica to terminate such agreements.
12. Ensure high level oversight and information systems on SEAH reports received and actions taken in order to monitor effectiveness, report progress and improve efforts to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.
13. Engage the support of communities and governments to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.
14. Undertake a regular review of humedica´s policy to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

Employee Standards

humedica's capacity to achieve its vision and mission depends upon each and every one of us in the humedica family, individually and collectively. To this end, all employees of humedica must uphold and promote the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct and abide by humedica's policies. This PSEAH Policy sets the minimum standards to be followed by all humedica employees. Each humedica member or affiliate is encouraged to strive for more effective standards and define their own strategies and procedures to uphold this PSEAH Policy and the Core Principles on which it is based.

The need for this Policy flows from a recognition that our work often puts humedica employees in positions of power in relation to the communities we work with, especially vulnerable women and children. We have an obligation to use our power respectfully and must not abuse the power and influence we have over the lives and well-being of the participants of our programs and others in the communities where humedica works.

These Standards apply to all humedica Employees and are intended to provide an illustrative guide for employees to make ethical decisions in their professional and personal lives in addition to the ICRC Code of Conduct and the humedica Code of Conduct for members of the humedica task force team. Any violation of these Standards is serious a concern and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, in accordance with disciplinary procedures of each humedica member or affiliate and applicable laws.

1. Employees will not request any service or sexual favour from participants of humedica programs, children or others in the communities in which humedica works in return for protection or assistance, and will not engage in sexually exploitative relationships.
2. Employees will not exchange money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour. This prohibition against exchange of money for sex means humedica employees may not engage the services of sex workers while on humedica business, including on humedica premises or accommodation, or while travelling to/from or attending workshops, meetings and trainings, regardless of the local or national law concerning sex work or prostitution in the country.
3. Employees are strongly discouraged from having sex or engaging in sexual activities with beneficiaries because there is an inherent conflict of interest and potential for abuse of power in such a relationship. If an employee engages in sex or sexual activities with a beneficiary of assistance, the employee must disclose this conduct to his/her supervisor for appropriate guidance. Failure to report such conduct may lead to disciplinary action pursuant to humedica's policies and procedures.
4. Employees must refrain from sexual activity with any person under the age of 18, regardless of the local age of consent, i.e. the local or national laws of the country in which the employee works. Ignorance or mistaken belief of the child's age is not a defense. Failure to report such a relationship may lead to disciplinary action pursuant to humedica's policies and procedures.
5. Employees will not support or take part in any form of sexual exploitative or abusive activities, including, for example, child pornography or trafficking of human beings.
6. Employees must report any concerns or suspicions they have regarding possible violations of this PSEAH Policy via humedica's reporting mechanism[3]. Employees must report any such concerns via humedica established reporting procedures even when the person who may be in violation of this Policy is related personnel, as previously defined, and not a humedica employee or a humanitarian aid worker from another organisation.
7. Sensitive information related to incidents of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment whether involving colleagues, beneficiaries of assistance or others in the communities in which humedica works shall be shared only with enforcement authorities and humedica agents and employees of the appropriate seniority or function who have a need to know such information.

[3] Every office of humedica is required to establish appropriate reporting mechanisms and disseminate the same to its entire staff.

8. Employees must undertake to create and maintain an environment that promotes implementation of this Policy.
9. Managers and supervisors at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems that maintain an environment that facilitates implementation of this Policy and which is free of exploitation, abuse and harassment.