

Policy On Prevention Of Sexual Exploitation And Abuse (Psea)



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I. Introduction

- Children of Earth Association (YEÇED) has a zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse. YEÇED will not tolerate its staff, associates, partners, volunteers or any other representatives associated with its work to engage in any form of sexual exploitation or abuse. YEÇED is committed to protecting all communities that the organisation works with from sexual exploitation and abuse at all times.
- Sexual exploitation and abuse become possible when there are imbalances of power and opportunities for exploiting such imbalances, and that there is a rooted imbalance of power based on gender in the context of our efforts.
- Human rights, interests and needs of all survivors shall always be at the center of our efforts, and a survivor-centered approach guides the SEA prevention and response whereby the survivor is informed and participates in the decision-making process.
- A cohesive response to SEA requires strong coordination between all humanitarian organizations in Türkiye, including through engagement with the PSEA Network of Türkiye as well as the AAP Task Force.
- The principles of do no harm, confidentiality, safety, non-discrimination, timely access and response for the survivors are the guiding principles when responding to allegations of SEA.
- The purpose of the PSEA policy is to establish an outline of the importance of the framework and clear procedures. The PSEA Framework also affirms YEÇED's commitment to the United Nations Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse ([ST/SGB/2003/13](#)).

II. Definition

- In accordance with the United Nations General Secretary Bulletin on Special measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13).

Sexual Exploitation	Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
Sexual abuse	The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.
Survivor	A person who is, or has been, sexually exploited or abused. For the purposes of this policy, a survivor is a person who is, or has been, sexually exploited or abused by humanitarian organizations and their affiliated personnel in Türkiye, including employees or related personnel of an implementing partner's subcontractor(s).

III. Policy Approach

Zero Tolerance Policy

- Our organization adopts a zero-tolerance approach to any form of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Any act of sexual exploitation or abuse is considered a serious violation and will not be tolerated under any circumstances.
- All personnel are required to report any suspicions or incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse immediately, and no later than 24 hours after becoming aware of the incident, through designated reporting channels.
- Failure to report a known or suspected case of SEA may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or partnership with Yeçed.

- Each allegation will be promptly and thoroughly investigated by a trained, independent team to ensure impartiality and justice.
- If an individual is found responsible for violating this policy, strict disciplinary actions will be enforced, which may include termination of employment or contractual relationship, and, if applicable, referral to law enforcement.
- Continuous efforts will be made to prevent such incidents through training, education, and the promotion of ethical behavior across all levels of the organization.

Confidentiality

- Respect for the privacy of survivors and those who report incidents (whistleblowers) is fundamental to our commitment to safeguarding.
- Only those who need to know (such as investigators or relevant senior staff) will have access to information regarding an incident. This ensures that the privacy and dignity of all parties involved are maintained.
- Any records related to allegations, investigations, and outcomes are securely stored and access is strictly limited.
- Reporting channels will include options for anonymous reporting, allowing individuals to come forward without fear of exposure.
- Survivors will have access to confidential support services, including counseling, legal advice, and medical assistance as needed, with their information kept private at all times.

Consent and Power Imbalances

- Our organization recognizes that beneficiaries and staff may experience a power imbalance, which can create vulnerabilities.
- Any interaction or support provided to beneficiaries must involve fully informed consent, with an understanding of rights, options, and potential consequences.
- Staff members are strictly prohibited from engaging in any romantic or sexual relationship with beneficiaries due to the inherent power imbalance and risk of exploitation.
- Staff members undergo regular training to understand the dynamics of power imbalance and how it can lead to exploitation. They learn techniques to maintain professional boundaries and provide respectful, equitable support.

- Special attention is given to protecting individuals who may be particularly vulnerable (e.g., minors, persons with disabilities, displaced individuals) by fostering an environment of trust, respect, and safety in all interactions.

IV. Prohibition of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

- Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse constitute acts of serious misconduct and are therefore grounds for disciplinary measures, including summary dismissal.
- Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior, is prohibited. This particularly includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance.
- Sexual relationships between the members of humanitarian organizations and beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics, undermine the credibility and integrity of the work of organizations and are strongly discouraged.
- The standards set out above are not intended to be an exhaustive list. Other types of sexually exploitative or sexually abusive behavior may be grounds for administrative action or disciplinary measures, including summary dismissal, pursuant to internal or additional regulations and rules to which personnel of humanitarian organizations adhere.

V. Prevention and Deterrence

- Yeçed is committed to fostering an environment that proactively prevents sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by promoting clear policies, open communication, and ongoing education.
- Encouraging transparency, fostering open dialogue, and sustaining a zero-tolerance stance are fundamental to creating a protective environment. Yeçed will actively work to understand cultural and power dynamics that may contribute to under-reporting of SEA cases.
- Leadership within Yeçed is responsible for upholding high ethical standards and serving as role models. Managers at all levels shall support systems that

enable safe reporting and response mechanisms, thus maintaining a protective environment.

- Raising community awareness on SEA risks is a priority. SEA risk assessments and preventive measures will be integral to all new programs and strategies. Yeçed commits to equipping individuals, communities, and partners to act as informed allies in SEA prevention and response.

VI. Complaint and Investigation

1. Complaint Mechanisms

At Yeryüzü Çocukları Derneği (Yeçed), all complaint mechanisms shall be designed to be safe, gender-sensitive, and appropriate to the context in which we operate.

This includes ensuring that:

- Complaint mechanisms are accessible and confidential for all individuals, including children, and particularly for vulnerable groups, such as women, refugees, or individuals with disabilities.
- Complaints can be made through multiple channels, including in-person, online, and through phone or text, and via email at complaint@yeçed.org, ensuring accessibility for all community members.
- Reports can be made by calling the Yeçed complaint hotline at 0212 909 20 45. The line is available [09.00-17.00].
- Community feedback and complaints will be collected and acted upon with respect to the cultural context and sensitivity to the needs of those who are most vulnerable.

2. Investigation of Allegations

Any established complaint mechanism will ensure timely, impartial, independent, and fair investigations into any allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). These mechanisms will be:

- Developed in consultation with the affected communities, ensuring the participation of vulnerable groups in the process.

- Linked to survivor services, such as psychological support, medical care, and legal assistance, to ensure that survivors are supported throughout the process.
- Managed in a manner that respects the rights of the survivor and prevents further harm.

3. Accountability for Perpetrators

Perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse will be held accountable for their actions. Yeçed has a **zero tolerance policy** towards SEA, and impunity for any form of SEA will not be tolerated.

- Sanctions will be systematically applied, and no deadlines will be imposed on investigations to ensure a thorough and fair process.
- Appropriate disciplinary measures will be applied to all staff members, volunteers, and partners found guilty of SEA.

4. Confidentiality and Survivor Protection

- Confidentiality interests and the best interests of the survivor will be prioritized throughout all stages of the complaint process.
- Measures will be in place to protect survivors from retaliation, discrimination, or further harm as a result of making a complaint.
- Survivors will be regularly updated on the progress of their case and will be informed of the available support services throughout the investigation and beyond.

5. Vigilance and Reporting

- All Yeçed staff and partners must be particularly vigilant to any signs or evidence of SEA in the communities where we work. This includes being proactive in identifying, reporting, and addressing any allegations, even when the institutional affiliation of the perpetrator is unknown.
- Reports may be made anonymously. Third parties, including community members, partner organizations, and service providers, are also encouraged to report any suspicions or incidents of SEA.
- All cases, including rumors or suspicions of SEA, will be immediately reported to the designated PSEA Focal Point within Yeçed, to ensure that each case is investigated appropriately.

- In cases of complaints or suspicions related to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), a Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Complaint Reporting and Referral Form must be completed.

6. Protection from Retaliation

- Yeçed has a zero-tolerance policy for retaliation. Individuals making a report in good faith will be protected from any form of retaliation, including harassment or discrimination. If you feel you are being retaliated against, please report it immediately.

7. Investigation Process

- Upon receipt of a report, the PSEA Focal Point will ensure that the incident is reviewed promptly and will facilitate the appropriate investigative process.
- Investigations will be conducted in an impartial, timely, and fair manner, with respect for the survivor's rights and confidentiality.
- The survivor will be kept informed of the progress of the investigation and any actions taken.

8. Follow-up and Support

- Yeçed will provide survivors with appropriate support throughout the investigation process, including access to medical, psychosocial, and legal services.
- Survivors will be informed of their rights and the available support services and will be updated on the outcome of the investigation.

9. Special Considerations for Children

- In cases involving children, all decisions made regarding the prevention and response to SEA will be guided by the best interests of the child, ensuring their right to participate and be heard throughout the process.
- Yeçed will ensure that children's voices are considered and that their views are taken into account in the handling of SEA cases.

10. Reporting to National Authorities

- In cases where there is sufficient evidence to support allegations of sexual exploitation or abuse, Yeşed will refer the case to national authorities for criminal prosecution as required by law.

VII. Disciplinary Measures

Personnel or representatives of Yeryüzü Çocukları Derneği (Yeşed) found to have engaged in sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) will face disciplinary actions, which may include:

- **Termination of Employment or Contract**
Immediate termination of employment, volunteer role, or contract with Yeşed for those found to be in violation of SEA policies.
- **Referral to Legal Authorities**
In cases involving criminal activity, Yeşed will refer the matter to the relevant legal authorities, cooperating fully with law enforcement in accordance with local laws.
- **Notification to Regulatory or Certification Bodies**
If applicable, Yeşed will notify any relevant regulatory or professional certification bodies about the SEA violation, ensuring that disciplinary actions extend beyond the organization if necessary.
- **Barring from Future Involvement**
Individuals found guilty of SEA will be permanently barred from any future involvement with Yeşed, including employment, volunteer work, and partnerships.
- **Documentation and Confidentiality**
All disciplinary actions will be documented in alignment with Yeşed's confidentiality and data protection policies, ensuring privacy for all parties involved.

VIII. Responsibility and Accountability

All personnel, volunteers, and partners associated with **Yeryüzü Çocukları Derneği (Yeşed)** are responsible for fully understanding and strictly adhering to this PSEA

policy, ensuring that their actions uphold the dignity, rights, and safety of all affected individuals.

Managers, supervisors, and designated **PSEA focal points** hold direct accountability for:

- Ensuring the effective implementation of this policy;
- Actively promoting a safe, respectful, and SEA-free environment;
- Responding promptly, fairly, and transparently to any reports or concerns of SEA;
- Engaging affected populations in the prevention and response process in line with CHS and IASC AAP commitments.

Yeçed's leadership will:

- Regularly review compliance with the PSEA policy;
- Ensure that **feedback and complaint mechanisms** are safe, accessible, and culturally appropriate for all community members;
- Guarantee that affected populations are informed of their rights, available reporting channels, and the outcomes of reported cases where appropriate;
- Support continuous learning and improvement in SEA prevention and response at all levels of the organization.

In line with CHS and IASC AAP principles, affected populations will be consulted during policy implementation and review. Their feedback will directly inform improvements, ensuring that safeguarding measures are relevant, effective, and trusted.

IX. Conclusion

- This policy will be reviewed and amended regularly to address new challenges, legal requirements, and standards in the field of protection against SEA.

Children of Earth Association

Karagumruk. Viran Odaları St. Nu: 15 Fatih/İstanbul, 0(212) 909 20 45

yecedorg@gmail.com - www.yeced.org/en