UNHCR ACNUR
La Agencia de la ONU para los Refugiados

FACT SHEET

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

El Salvador

August 2023

UNHCR is committed with the protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), through **awareness raising**, **complaint mechanisms**, **investigations**, **disciplinary measures** and the **protection of survivors and complainants.**

In 2022, UNHCR in El Salvador **assessed the capacities** in PSEA of 13 partner organizations, through the verification of their internal policies and the development of **strengthening plans.**

To ensure broader **prevention efforts,** in 2023, UNHCR has conducted a series of **Training of Trainers** (ToT) workshops in PSEA for both UNHCR staff and partner organizations.

Sexual abuse refers to any physical threat or intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or coercion. Sexual exploitation refers to sexual abuse or the threat of sexual abuse with the purpose of taking advantage of a person in a vulnerable situation or in a relationship of unequal power. Humanitarian workers are STRICTLY PROHIBITED from:

- Offering money, employment, goods, or services in exchange for sexual relations.
- Offering humanitarian assistance (e.g., food, clothing, or shelter) in exchange for sexual favours.
- Engaging in any form of sexual activity with individuals under the age of 18, regardless of consent.
- Any sexual activity maintained through force, intimidation, or even with consent if it is obtained by taking advantage of the person's vulnerable condition.
- Any sexual activity with individuals receiving humanitarian assistance.
- Any act or insinuation of a sexual nature requested by the humanitarian worker in exchange for assistance, service provision, or inclusion in support programmes.

OBJECTIVES OF UNHCR'S STRATEGY ON PSEA

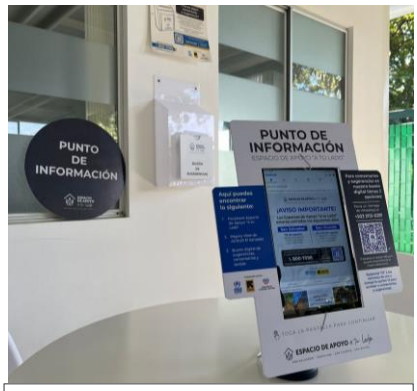
Follow a **victim-centred approach** in all our practices and procedures concerning sexual misconduct.

Equip and empower UNHCR and partner personnel to **prevent, identify and respond** to sexual misconduct.

Uphold **organizational accountability** in tackling sexual misconduct.

Maintain UNHCR's active role in inter-agency efforts. Contribute to eradicate sexual exploitation and abuse in the humanitarian and development sectors through close and active engagement with partner organizations and institutions, ensuring that on-the-ground perspectives and realities are adequately represented in inter-agency forums.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND REPORTING MECHANISMS



Information point in the Support Space in Santa Ana.
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UNHCR strengthened, updated, and diversified reporting and feedback mechanisms to receive complaints, including those related to sexual exploitation and abuse, from both staff and communities. Complaints and suggestions boxes were installed in key service locations.

Additionally, UNHCR set up digital Information Points with tablets to ensure access to secure channels for feedback on services, located in community centres, Support Spaces, and shelters. Anonymous reporting forms and email options are available through UNHCR's Help webpage and chatbot.

UNHCR has a **WhatsApp number available 24/7** for receiving quick information. The **chatbot - A Tu Lado en Línea** : +503 2113-0281, option 13, directs you to UNHCR's mailbox for complaints or suggestions. Additionally, reports can be **made in person at UNHCR's office, community centres, or Support Spaces**, as well as through the helpline **800-7096**. Incidents or suspicions of incidents can also be reported directly to the **Office of the Inspector General** at inspector@unhcr.org

TRAINING IN PSEA

29 introductory PSEA workshops.

409 members of UNHCR staff, partner organizations, service providers, and outreach volunteers sensitized.

3 Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions.

37 individuals trained to conduct PSEA trainings

UNHCR staff and NGO personnel participate in the Training of Trainers in PSEA. © UNHCR/Alejandra Romo

STRENGTHENING OF PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Between November 2022 and January 2023, UNHCR El Salvador assessed the PSEA capacities of its 13 partner organizations. These organizations were categorized based on their capacity levels, which included low, medium, and full. The assessment involved reviewing eight core standards related to the risk mitigation and prevention process, as well as incident response. For those organizations identified with low or medium capacity, UNHCR designed joint capacity strengthening plans with monthly and quarterly reviews, respectively.

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