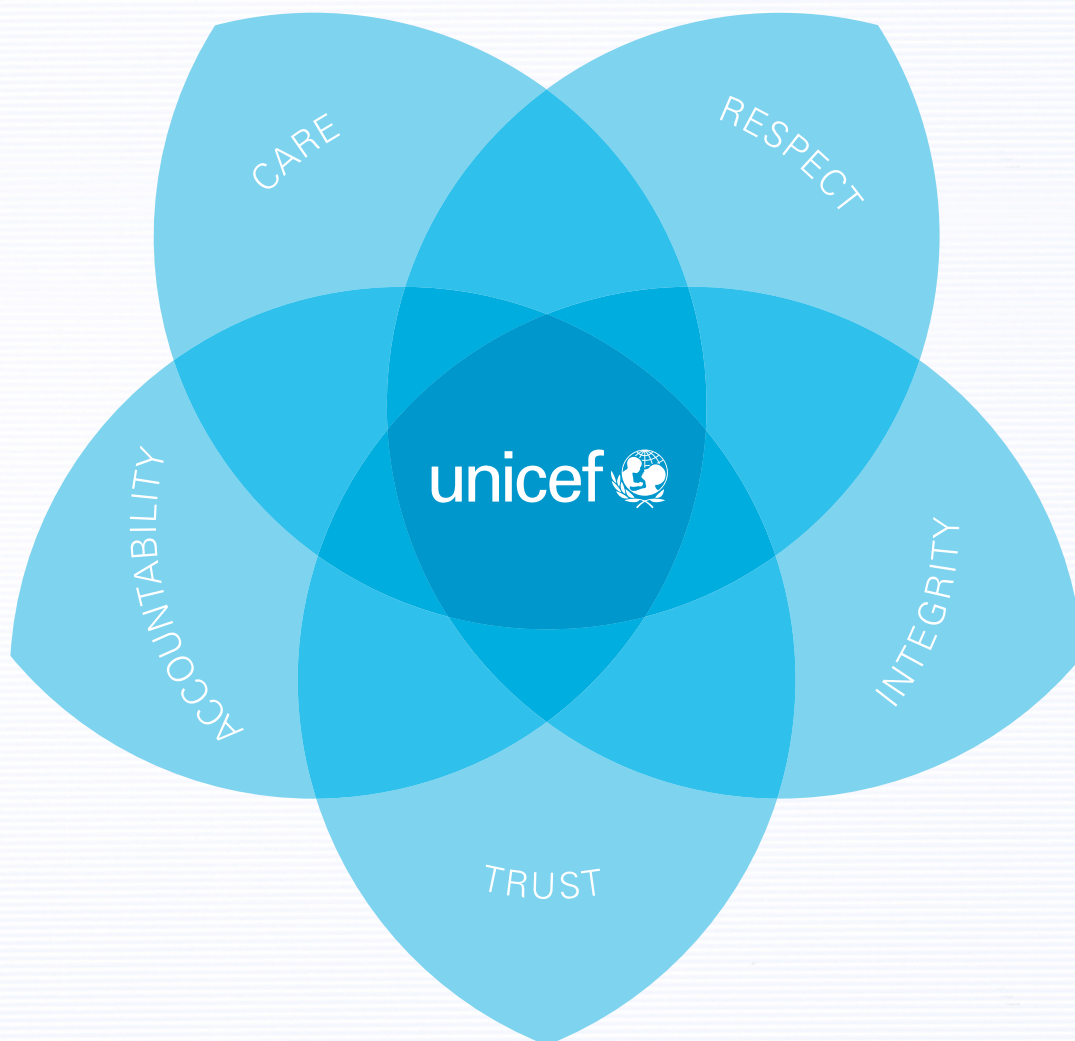


# UNICEF'S STRATEGY ON PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT



# A Culture of Zero Tolerance

## Overview

**UNICEF's strategy on sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH)** sets out the vision, goals and values we are promoting – and the concrete actions we are taking – to prevent and respond to SEA and SH, together with our partners and all UNICEF personnel.

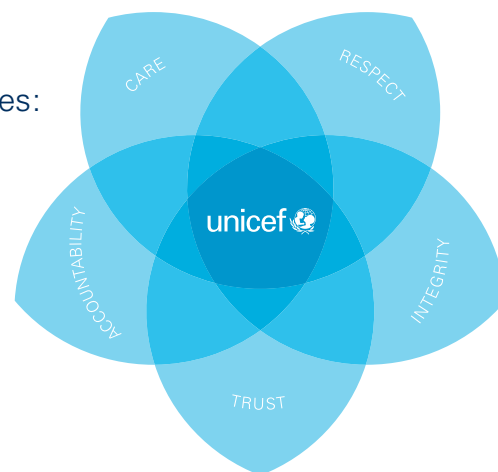
SEA in the communities we serve is unconscionable and often criminal. Equally intolerable is the sexual harassment of our colleagues and fellow aid workers. SEA and SH are both unacceptable breaches of fundamental human rights and a deep betrayal of UNICEF's core values: Care, respect, integrity, trust and accountability.

Informed by our core values, UNICEF's strategy envisions a culture of zero tolerance for all forms of sexual misconduct – a culture of prevention, deterrence, gender equality and accountability at every level of the organization.

To operationalize the strategy, we will engage our partners in the fight on SEA and SH. We will improve reporting, strengthen support for survivors, swiftly investigate alleged abuses and ensure accountability for perpetrators.

[See UNICEF's full SEA and SH strategy on www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

UNICEF's  
5 core values:



## Vision

UNICEF's vision of zero tolerance is framed by the rights of the people we serve, the rights of all UNICEF personnel and the rights of all victims of SEA and SH. This vision is based on the following principles:

### **In every community where UNICEF works**

people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect, and to receive protection and assistance without fear of SEA – and UNICEF has a responsibility to prevent such violations.

### **In every UNICEF workplace**

all staff, consultants, interns and volunteers have the right to an empowering, respectful environment free of SH – and UNICEF has a responsibility to create and maintain such an environment.

### **In every case of SEA and SH**

victims have the right to timely, confidential, safe and effective investigations and assistance – and UNICEF has a responsibility to provide such support.

### **In every context**

UNICEF personnel are expected to act with tolerance, sensitivity and respect for diversity. Under the rules and standards of the United Nations system, they must not engage in, condone or tolerate behaviour that would constitute SEA or SH, and must accept responsibility for their conduct

# Priorities

UNICEF is working to prevent and respond to SEA and SH through concrete measures that focus on five priorities:

**1. An organizational culture of zero tolerance.**

In this culture, grounded in prevention, accountability and gender equality, we will create an environment in which all personnel exemplify UNICEF's core values and no one tolerates any form of SEA or SH.

**2. Safe, trusted reporting mechanisms.**

Such mechanisms empower individuals, communities, UNICEF personnel and partners to report violations with confidence that all reports will be handled with respect for rights and due process. Senior management will support the right of all personnel to speak up and speak out – thereby shifting attitudes and power dynamics that can drive underreporting. UNICEF's policies and procedures on reporting SEA and SH will be aligned with those of the United Nations system.

**3. Survivor-centred responses.** Survivors of SEA and SH will receive support that is targeted to their needs, timely, predictable, sustainable and adequately resourced. In partnership with the United Nations system and Member States, UNICEF will work to prevent violations, assist victims and ensure accountability for perpetrators.

**4. Swift, credible investigations and sanctions.** UNICEF will conduct impartial, timely and confidential investigations. To deter misconduct, we will raise awareness among personnel and partners about the sanctions that apply to substantiated cases of SEA and SH.

**5. Engaging partners in the fight.** UNICEF will work with individuals, communities and all partners to prevent and respond to SEA and SH. In collaboration with other United Nations agencies, we will also continue to help governments strengthen their national capacities and systems for prevention and response.

## A zero-tolerance organization

### Accountability

Individuals, leaders and UNICEF as a whole will have clear accountabilities to prevent and respond to SEA and SH, and to maintain an organizational culture of zero tolerance. Our accountability framework will require that:

- **As individuals,** UNICEF personnel – like all United Nations system personnel – will be accountable to the standards set for international civil servants, including accountability for actions in their private lives.
- **As leaders,** UNICEF's management will be accountable to set the tone and guide the organization in addressing SEA and SH.
- **As an organization,** UNICEF will be accountable to act on alleged violations and support survivors, including working with national authorities and implementing partners to address misconduct.

### Prevention and deterrence

To prevent and deter SEA in the communities we serve, UNICEF will continue to raise awareness, set up community-based complaint mechanisms and train partners. UNICEF is embedding SEA in its risk management systems in all its programmes at all levels. Within the organization, we will actively promote prevention through an open, 'speak up and speak out' culture and by practicing our core values – starting with our leadership.

### Gender equality

SEA and SH are embedded in unequal power relations, which are often gendered. Thus, a core component of UNICEF's strategy is to continue our investment in creating an organizational culture of gender equality and combatting barriers to equality. This effort will build on UNICEF's Gender Action Plan 2018–2021 and our obligation to maintain EDGE certification – the leading global business standard for gender equality.

# Operationalization of the strategy

## A 'whole organization' commitment

To carry forward the commitments in UNICEF's strategy, we are engaging the whole organization – as well as our implementing partners – in addressing SEA and SH.

As UNICEF works to ensure a culture of zero tolerance for SEA and SH, we are concurrently developing a strategy to improve our workplace culture generally, and to prevent and respond to all forms of workplace abuse.

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

### For more information please contact:

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### Leadership and management

UNICEF's leadership will champion workplace practices that reinforce individual and organizational accountability, build trust and emphasize prevention of SEA and SH. Leadership and management practices will be grounded in our Code of Conduct.



### Coordination and collaboration

Across UNICEF globally and in tandem with other United Nations agencies and all partners in the field, we will build strong coordination and cooperation to implement the strategy on SEA and SH. A 'whole organization' approach, led by the office of the Executive Director, will help ensure a coherent approach across UNICEF offices and with external partners.



### Communication

Clear, timely and open communication with all partners will assist UNICEF in addressing SEA and SH. A dedicated, well-tailored strategy for both internal and external communications will facilitate our efforts to prevent and respond to violations.



### Policies, tools and resources

UNICEF is committed to establishing clear policies and procedures to prevent and respond to SEA and SH. We will also establish:

- An accountability framework to set out roles and responsibilities at all levels.
- A monitoring and evaluation framework to measure progress against targets.
- Resourcing, capacity-building and training initiatives for personnel employed by UNICEF and our partners.