

# **DAHW Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid**

## **1. Introduction**

DAHW has the vision of creating a world in which no one suffers from leprosy, tuberculosis or other neglected diseases associated with poverty that can lead to disabilities and exclusion. We put people at the heart of our work. We are committed to helping people in need to lead a healthy and dignified life. This also includes DAHW's work with children and adults.

DAHW operates a zero-tolerance policy with regard to sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and child abuse. This document supplements our "Guidelines for Protecting Children Against Abuse and Exploitation" and outlines our commitment to preventing all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse in our work.

## **2. Scope of the guidelines**

These guidelines apply to all employees for the duration of their work, regardless of where they are deployed. This includes DAHW employees worldwide, supervisory bodies, project partners, consultants for short and long-term tasks, service providers, interns, volunteers and anyone who travels to project countries on behalf of DAHW.

DAHW will not tolerate any behaviour or actions that violate these Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. All employees and partners of DAHW are therefore obliged to sign and observe these guidelines. Anyone who violates these guidelines shall face disciplinary action and may be immediately dismissed from DAHW; they may also be liable for damages. In such cases, DAHW also reserves the right to terminate its on-going support for the project and reclaim any payments that have already been made.

## **3. Terminology used in these guidelines**

Sexual violence and exploitation can be expressed in many different ways. These issues first emerge when someone's personal boundaries are crossed or when entrenched forms of behaviour cross someone's personal boundaries. This includes unwanted comments or suggestive remarks about physical characteristics and appearances. It also includes sexual harassment, which may come in the form of unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favours. Sexual violence can be defined as any verbal or physical act of a sexual or sexualised nature that can be rightfully understood or seen as offensive or humiliating to the survivor.

**Sexual exploitation**

Sexual exploitation is any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, an inequality of power or a position of trust for sexual purposes. This includes, but is not limited to, the sexual exploitation of another person for financial, social or political gain.

**Sexual abuse**

This can be defined as the actual violation of someone's physical integrity or the threat of bodily harm of a sexual nature that leads to sexual intercourse through violence, coercion, a breach of trust or the exploitation of a state of dependence or power relations. This term includes, but is not limited to, any acts that constitute rape, harassment, coercion, child pornography or non-consensual sex and any other non-consensual acts of an intimate nature or any other violations of a person's sexual integrity. This means that sexual abuse does not necessarily involve the use of physical strength; it can also be facilitated by psychological pressure, coercion, states of dependence or unequal power relations. Sexual abuse also occurs when the person concerned is unable to express their refusal or even desirability due to mental or physical impairments, but it can be assumed that they can fully assess the situation.

**Victim or survivor**

This is a person who has been or is exploited or sexually abused. The term "survivor" shall be used consistently below.

**4. DAHW's declaration of commitment**

- 1) We are committed to preventing sexual exploitation and abuse – and protecting people against such acts – in line with our zero-tolerance policy.
- 2) Within our sphere of activity, we create a safe environment in which the rights of all people are safeguarded.
- 3) We make our employees, partners and collaborators aware of how to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse.
- 4) We develop, implement and use suitable measures<sup>1</sup> with clearly defined obligations and procedures in the areas of prevention, crisis management and control.
- 5) We raise awareness of sexual exploitation and abuse among relevant interest groups and within our networks.

**5. The actors named in the "scope of the guidelines" above undertake:**

- 1) To prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse.
- 2) To observe the DAHW Code of Conduct.
- 3) To follow the guidelines and avoid any form of intimate relationship between DAHW officers and the organisation's beneficiaries – even if such relationships are mutual – to safeguard DAHW's beneficiaries, reputation and capacity to act.
- 4) To take appropriate measures to prevent any form of sexual exploitation or abuse during the implementation of programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> DAHW Code of Conduct, DAHW Guidelines for Protecting Children Against Abuse and Exploitation in Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, etc.

- 5) Managers and superiors at all levels have a special responsibility when it comes to promoting and developing systems designed to foster an environment that facilitates the implementation of these guidelines – free from sexual exploitation and abuse – and investigating any suspected violations.
- 6) To report any concerns about sexual exploitation and abuse with regard to local laws and these guidelines.
- 7) To respond to sexual exploitation and abuse in accordance with the applicable local laws and procedures. If our guidelines are more stringent than the local legislation, our guidelines shall prevail.
- 8) To ensure full and confidential cooperation when investigating concerns or allegations of sexual exploitation or abuse both within the organisation and with local and national authorities.
- 9) To show respect for the rights, integrity and dignity of those affected, to consider their interests and to avoid exposing them to any risks or dangers.
- 10) To protect the identity of those accused until proven guilty.

## 6. Implementation

- 1) A copy of all DAHW guidelines, including these Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, is provided to all DAHW employees and the members of its supervisory bodies. All guidelines are also posted on our website.
- 2) All DAHW guidelines, including these Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, are attached to all employment and service contracts as well as agreements with project partners and organisations. Our partners are obliged to develop or observe their own appropriate policies.
- 3) All DAHW guidelines, including these Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, are explained to all employees, who are obliged to sign a declaration confirming their willingness to comply with the guidelines. This also applies to trips undertaken by volunteers and other persons from outside the organisation who travel on behalf of DAHW (e.g. photographers, accountants).
- 4) DAHW's regional representatives, programme directors and managers in each country / region must present clear guidelines and demonstrate how all areas of the organisation ensure that children and adults are protected against sexual exploitation and abuse when participating in local projects and programmes.
- 5) It is the responsibility of the respective regional representative (or the regional team in Würzburg if there is no regional representative) to initiate capacity building within regional / programme structures and to send out regular updates and information materials on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. All measures should be documented in the annual progress reports.

## 7. Reporting

Our employees are obliged to report any situation in which they are unsure whether these Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse have been violated.

Our regional representatives work with programme directors to ensure that culturally appropriate, community-based grievance mechanisms are developed and implemented, and that they are monitored and reviewed to ensure their effectiveness. This includes making project partners, beneficiaries and DAHW employees aware of how to use such grievance mechanisms and how to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse.

Such awareness-raising campaigns should take place in the regional language in an easily understandable manner. All information materials should be readily available, inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities, so that they also have access to the information and the grievance mechanism.

In addition, our regional representatives work with our programme directors to ensure appropriate disciplinary action for employees and procedures for handling and investigating grievances. They are supported by a network of doctors, psychologists, lawyers and self-organisations for the protection of survivors.

Any allegations, complaints or suspicions of sexual exploitation or abuse involving DAHW employees or any of the other persons specified in Section 2 ("Scope of the guidelines") must be immediately reported to the relevant DAHW regional representative and/or programme director. They shall then immediately inform the DAHW office in Würzburg. Reports can also be sent directly to the ombudsman ([ombudsman@dahw.de](mailto:ombudsman@dahw.de)) or anonymously using the online complaint form: <https://www.dahw.de/organisation/transparenz-kontrolle/richtlinien.html>.

The procedure for reporting an alleged or actual violation of the guidelines by DAHW employees or external persons involved in DAHW programmes is described in the internal complaint management information: <https://www.dahw.de/organisation/transparenz-kontrolle/richtlinien.html>.

When processing each case, we ensure that any person / institution who reports their concerns or suspicions receives appropriate care, support and protection. Our investigation team ensures that reports are thoroughly investigated, monitored and adequately documented. If necessary, special consultants are called in from outside of our organisation.

Throughout the process, the team ensures that the necessary steps are taken to protect the survivor. If necessary, experts are contacted (e.g. specialist lawyers, psychologists, self-help groups for survivors). However, DAHW does not always automatically initiate criminal proceedings if it has doubts as to whether justice will be served.

The team is obliged to keep all reports strictly confidential and to protect the identity of the victim / survivor, the informant and the accused. If a member of the team has a personal relationship with a person suspected of sexual exploitation or abuse, another person will be appointed to avoid conflicts of interest. The investigation team is obliged to document every suspected case in writing until it has been concluded and to report regularly to the executive board and supervisory board of DAHW.

## 8. Additions and amendments

These guidelines supplement DAHW's catalogue of behavioural principles. The managing director shall arrange a periodic review of these Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (every 3 years or earlier if necessary). Any amendments to these guidelines must be approved by the DAHW managing director and the supervisory bodies.

<b>Functional area:</b>	Human Resources and Organisational
<b>Owner:</b>	DAHW management
<b>Approved by:</b>	Managing director / executive board /
<b>Next review:</b>	Three years from date of approval (or earlier if
<b>Languag</b>	English, German, Spanish, French and Portuguese
<b>Applicable to:</b>	All employees (in Germany and abroad), members of the executive board and supervisory board, project partners, consultants, service providers, interns and volunteers
<b>Relevant guidelines:</b>	DAHW Code of Child Protection Internal Complaint Management at DAHW; Guidelines for Combating and Preventing Corruption, Conflicts of Interest and Fraud in DAHW Work; Guide to Cooperation in Companies; Digital Media Guide; DAHW Project Management Handbook
<b>Contact:</b>	DAHW management