



POLICY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT FINAL REPORT September 2006-June 2007

In view of reinforcing the policy to prevent harassment and exploitation implemented since 2004, CARE Madagascar submitted a proposal on sexual harassment with an extension to selected program beneficiaries as a pilot in response to the opportunity offered by HQ.

1. Overview

The policy on sexual harassment has been developed and validated after review and feedback from staff representatives. The proposal included the extension of the policy to pilot program beneficiaries split up into 3 regions along with staff awareness.

The policy has been disseminated and orientations followed by training were mainly given to the staff. The planned activities were not fully fulfilled due to some incidents which have prevented us to undertake them.

First, as reported we recorded a delay in starting the activities comparatively to the planning. Then, Madagascar has been implementing Emergency Programs due to cyclones that hit the country at the beginning of the year. The emergency activities took up much of the HR staff and the involved persons time within the central and sub-offices. Thus, the extension of the policy to the program beneficiaries could not be achieved as planned.

On the other hand, CARE Madagascar has experienced recently a real case of sexual harassment which has caused some perturbations among the staff of the region where it happened. This issue made us deciding to further reinforce the orientation and training activities. For CARE Madagascar, code of conduct and sexual harassment policy are included in the induction program.

Due to these facts, the extension of the policy towards the program beneficiaries could not be started during the period. Thus the budget was no spent as planned.

Dealing with sexual harassment is delicate and embarrassing even shameful to some extent as regards of human dignity and our core values. However, the implementation of this policy on prevention of sexual harassment is valuable and very welcomed to promote healthy work environment in order to fulfill CARE's mission and vision.

CARE Madagascar is willing to pursue all efforts related to sexual harassment and welcome any assistance and financial support to fulfill the remaining activities.

2. Sexual harassment policy

The sexual harassment policy is to some extent the operational implementation of the Code of Conduct. It covers the following points:

- Definition of sexual harassment
- Key points to be focused in terms of sexual harassment (power/authority abuse, scope, impact of sexual harassment if not being addressed, confidentiality)
- What resort if you are victim of sexual harassment?
- Basic principles to be considered in addressing sexual harassment
- Reporting and complaint mechanisms
- Investigation mechanism
- Monitoring and evaluation

3. Implementation of the activities

Staff awareness and competency building – the policy has been translated into local language to facilitate the staff comprehension and integration. The training was conducted in a participative way and the staff were invited to give examples of conducts, actions, gestures, situations etc.. described and qualified as sexual harassment. Questions and debates on the policy and related issues were held after the training which largely helped to clarify ambiguous points.

Senior staff accountability building – special trainings were given to supervisors with a purpose of preventing and respond to allegations.



Training session for supervisors in the sub-office of Mahanoro

Key points addressed through the training:

- Actions towards oneself – supervisors should be a model, act and behave with a responsible conduct in compliance with the organizational ethic and values - respect of equity - being proactive and sensitive to the other's needs - being updated with the means to prevent harassment.
- Actions towards the others – discussion of the policy with supervisees with a focus that harassment undermines seriously the organization core values – offer guidance and piece of advice individually or in group if needed.
- Preventions - monitoring atmosphere and unhealthy climates (tips are given to them) – promote open communication with respect – when and how to advise the responsible persons.

The training sessions were very appreciated by supervisors. Much time has been spent discussing with related issues and current related cases which were useful to clarify the right/expected behaviors and actions to take.

The orientation and training given to the staff have really helped them to understand CARE expectations in preventing harassment and especially sexual harassment.

4. Challenges

Within CARE staff – competency, confidence and accountability building are continuing actions and imply all staff - despite the efforts accomplished on sexual harassment since the development and implementation of the policy and the fact that policy addresses almost all aspects of the staff's concerns, there are still some doubt within some employees especially those in the area where the sexual harassment case happened.

Training session of Supervisors in the sub-office of Vatomantry



Moreover, supervisor's competency building on the prevention of sexual harassment (proper behaviors, detection of symptoms, facts or situations might conduct to sexual harassment...) is still a challenge.

Within the selected communities – the extension of the policy to the communities are the next activities to undertake simultaneously with the actions towards CARE staff.

5. Lessons learned

- Supervisor's involvement is very important in the process. The training and orientation given to them have actually built awareness and commitment to that particular issue.
- Accountability and confidence building imply and involve all staff; each of us has a role to play towards the implementation of the policy.
- Open communications should be encouraged, promoted and maintained in day-to-day activities and especially all along the process in view of the delicacy and uncomfortable aspect of sexual harassment.

- The inclusion of the policy along with the code of conduct in the staff orientation program is valuable as they generate and teach positive attitudes to the new staff.
- The policy has been tested during the staff training and orientation throughout the staff's questions and doubts raised in the debates. The monitoring and evaluation aspect should be conducted to improve the policy in view of its extension within the communities.
- All these facts are to be considered when implementing the policy within the communities.

Conclusion

Sexual harassment is a delicate and sensible issue and we have to admit that sexual harassment policy is not alike of either administrative or financial policy. It touches human sensibility, dignity and respect which make it difficult to handle and to deal with and all the involved persons have to face up to these aspects.

Globally and as mentioned above, CARE Madagascar policy on sexual harassment is clear and has addressed almost all unclear points raised by the staff. Throughout the orientation and training sessions, the policy is clear to the staff. They know and understand how to prevent sexual harassment, what are the expected behaviors towards it, what to do in case of sexual harassment. In addition, supervisors were taught to sensitize their staff on the policy, to detect the symptoms of harassment and sexual harassment and to promote open communication.

Despite all the achieved activities, this is a continuing action and the extension of the policy towards the communities remains a challenge.