

PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE POLICY



WOPEN

Shaping Practices Influencing
Policies Impacting Lives

WOPEN 2023

www.wopen.org



Women Peace Builders Network (WOPEN)

Motto: *“Love, Tolerance, Peace and Security”.*

Email: Wopen25@gmail.com Website: www.wopen.org Tel : (+237) 699912544

Definition

WOPEN defines the term sexual exploitation as any actual or attempted abuse of a person in a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the exploitation of someone else. The term sexual abuse means actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force, coercion or under unequal conditions.

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WOPEN opposes all forms of sexual violence and any abuse of power regardless of age, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, disability, religion or ethnic origin. We recognize that there are unequal power dynamics across WOPEN, our partners and institutions with whom we work and in relation to those, we serve. There is a risk that those in a position of power will exploit their position of power for personal gain.

WOPEN does not tolerate its employees, volunteers, consultants, partners or any other representative associated with the delivery of our programs carrying out any form of sexual harassment, sexual exploitation or sexual abuse. It is crucial that we all understand the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse and our own role and responsibility in preventing it.

WOPEN recognizes our fundamental duty is to operate in a manner consistent with the fundamental principles of human rights, we are committed, and we acknowledge our responsibilities to keep children, youth and adults safe while engaged in our programs and activities. To that end, WOPEN has developed this Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy.



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Purpose

This policy sets out WOPEN’s approach to preventing and addressing sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse. This includes our commitment to prevention and to ensure effective action is taken when problems occur.

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Scope

This policy applies globally to all WOPEN members, employees, volunteers, consultants, partners or any other representative associated with the delivery of our programs during and outside normal working hours. This policy applies in all locations except in countries where the following policy contravenes local legislation, in such a case, local legislation must be followed.

Policy

WOPEN has a zero-tolerance stand on exploitative and abusive relationships. We will also not tolerate behaviour that endangers the security of employees or the Network or brings either into disrepute. It follows, therefore, that employees, volunteers, consultants, partners or anyone representing WOPEN should have:

- No sexual contact with children under the age of 18 (mistaken belief of age being no defense)
- No transactional sexual contact with WOPEN beneficiaries, clients or staff of WOPEN partners.
- Employees are bound to uphold this policy and to report people or incidents that they believe contravene it.
- Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
- 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 defense.
- Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.

Location: Commercial Avenue, Mezam Division.
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- Sexual relationships between humanitarian workers and beneficiaries are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.

WOPEN affirms the four Core Principles adopted by the United Nation’ s Inter- Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Prevention and Response to Sexual exploitation and Abuse. Page | 3

1) Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of our management, employees and anyone who works with WOPEN to report incidences of sexual exploitation and abuse being perpetrated by anyone within WOPEN. The leadership of WOPEN is responsible for creating and maintaining an environment in which employees, volunteers and consultants know what WOPEN expects from them and feel able to report any suspicious or inappropriate behaviour.

2) Partners

WOPEN is clear that any partnerships we have with others is based on mutual respect for values and beliefs. When WOPEN employees assess partner capacity to carry out projects this should include an assessment of the partner’s capacity to meet our requirements in upholding this policy and the WOPEN code of Conduct.

3) Reporting

Anyone has the right to make a complaint about the behaviour of those associated with WOPEN and its programmes including any inappropriate behaviour of other employees or volunteers. Any suspected behavior should be reported immediately.

4) Investigations

WOPEN will investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving WOPEN members, staff, volunteers, consultants and partners in a timely and professional manner and will engage professional investigators or secure investigative expertise as appropriate if needed.

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Investigations are an internal administrative process which may or may not involve the police or judiciary.

WOPEN reserves the right to act or not to act on any information provided. The organization is not required to disclose its response or the actions resulting from any information that may be provided or reported. Safety of participants and colleagues will prevail. The intentional misreporting of information is subject to disciplinary action.

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Training and Learning

WOPEN will ensure awareness of our policy and our WOPEN of Conduct during orientation for all new and existing members and staff. Additional training will be implemented as appropriate or as policies are updated.

Consequences

Members and employees who contravene WOPEN’s clearly stated expectations of their sexual conduct will be subject to disciplinary action that may result in dismissal. Volunteers will have their relationship terminated . Consultants who contravene our expectations will have their contract ended .