



PSEA Policy

Organization of literacy support for independent Afghanistan

2025

OLSIA PSEA POLICY

Board Approval

The board of director of OLSIA, by resolution duly adopted by unanimous vote at a meeting duly called and held and not subsequently rescinded or modified in any way, has duly determined that this policy is workable and fair to and in the best interests of OLSIA, the board, approve this policy, recommended for use and directed that the amendment be submitted for consideration by OLSIA board members and ED at the OLSIA board meeting.

Each member of the board agrees to perform such further acts and execute such further documents as are necessary to effectuate the purposes hereof. This policy manual shall be understood and enforce in accordance with and governed by the laws of the government of Afghanistan.

The OLSIA Board Approval constitutes approval of this policy manual undersigned.

Abdul Qaum Almas

Signature

Fazal Rabani

Signature

Abdul Jabar Ameri

Signature

Farhad Naderi

Signature

Haroon Ahmadi

Signature



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Policy Update

In order to provide flexibility and operate within this policy, the PSEA policies and procedures in this manual are subject to review and updates on regular basis. This policy was created in March 2024 and reviewed in May 2024.

The changes in size and complexity and implementation of new systems are subject to changes in regulations and PSEA standards, and the existed processes or policies of OLSIA will need to be modified accordingly. Added this, it's important that any best practices or 'lessons learned' are regularly incorporated into the policies and procedures for continual process improvements.

Any changes and updates will be incorporated in this manual on annual basis and will be effective for implementation after the approval of the OLSIA board. The next review of the policy will be performed in May 2027.

Policy Implementation

The Executive Director, supported by the Program and administrative departments, is responsible for developing, reviewing and implementing PSEA policies and procedures, as well as monitoring existing PSEA policies.

OLSIA believes that all relevant staff receive access and regular training on PSEA policies and procedures of the organization, so the benefits of the structure that the document creates can be realized. Also, a regular and consistent enforcement of the policies across all levels of the organization is in place to minimize and mitigate the risks falling out of compliance with the policies.

In due course, the OLSIA board has a fiduciary duty to the organization to ensure that PSEA policies are used appropriately. This includes making sure that there are good documented policies and procedures to protect the rights of human resources and management of OLSIA is responsible for ensuring these policies and procedures are communicated, followed, monitored, and corrected as needed.

Policy Orientation

The purpose of this policy is to ensure efficient and effective implementation of PSEA policies and procedures, and the alignment of PSEA steps with the overall mission of the organization. This manual includes policies and rules that ensures the organization a safer place for all the staff and PSEA procedures and standards that align with the overall goals of the organization that are written with enough clarity to be understood by individuals within the organization.

It is important that all relevant staff understand the policies and procedures adopted in this manual. To effectuate, OLSIA is responsible to conduct an orientation about the policy and all the updates and changes incorporated in this manual. For new staff, PSEA policies and procedures should be explained in detail and productive training ought to be provided as/when needed.

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OLSIA Background

The Organization of Literacy Support for Independent Afghanistan (OLSIA) was founded in 2023 with the conviction that education is the cornerstone of lasting peace, economic stability, and social inclusion in Afghanistan. Grounded in the belief that every person—regardless of age, gender or circumstance—deserves the opportunity to learn and grow, OLSIA is committed to building a brighter future for Afghan communities.

From its inception, OLSIA has positioned education as “first and for all,” directing its efforts toward increasing access to literacy, computer skills, vocational training and the English language. By mobilizing educated Afghan youth and partnering with local communities, OLSIA strives to overcome barriers that have long limited opportunities, especially among women and underserved populations.

Operating across multiple provinces, OLSIA implements projects that combine classroom learning with practical skill-building: establishing computer learning centers, delivering soft-skills training, and facilitating vocational pathways. These initiatives are designed not only to educate but to empower learners to participate meaningfully in the economy and society.

OLSIA’s vision is of a united and prosperous Afghanistan where development opportunities are accessible to all, thereby fostering social inclusion and stability. Its mission centers on building a collective movement of educated Afghan youth who champion education for all ages and all genders—with no discrimination. The ultimate goal is to enhance livelihoods, create economic opportunities, and contribute to the country’s long-term development.

Through transparent governance, community-centered design and partnerships that link education with employment, OLSIA seeks to ensure that every Afghan has a chance to unlock their potential. We believe that when people lead their own learning and development, the benefits ripple outward—strengthening families, communities and the nation.

Our Vision:

A united and prosperous Afghanistan where education and development opportunities are accessible to all, fostering social inclusion and stability.

Our Mission:

We aim to build a collective movement of educated Afghan youths to support education above all, education for all ages and all genders without any discrimination of any kind.

Goal

To improve access to education, vocational skills, and economic opportunities, enhancing the livelihoods of Afghan communities and contributing to the country’s long-term development.

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Humanitarian Principles:

OLSIA is committed to the principles that are central to establishing and maintaining the provision of humanitarian response to the affected people in natural disasters and complex emergency situations and/or implementation of human development interventions.

The main humanitarian principles defined by UN have been adopted by OLSIA.

The four core principles are:

- Humanity
- Neutrality 2 OLSIA Policy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)
- Impartiality and,
- Independence

Background to this policy

Reference framework

This policy follows the importance of and requirements for the good conduct of staff and establishes a systematic obligation to report any behavior that break it. Any form of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of our beneficiaries and the communities in which we work is a profound betrayal of OLSIA fundamental values, as well as of our mandate to protect vulnerable populations.

All our employees, including volunteers, consultants and partners, are therefore required, without exception, to take all the necessary measures and undertake high levels of due diligence to prevent and manage any suspected or proven case of SEA.

Obligations with respect to Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) derive from international human rights law, in particular the provisions on combating trafficking in human beings. This policy applies wholly to the protection and management of cases against beneficiaries and members of communities including children.

Policy Objectives

With this policy OLSIA has set up the SEA risk prevention and management strategy and specified its commitments to a zero-tolerance approach. This policy governs and sets out SEA's risk management policy and is based on the following areas:

1. Community Engagement
2. Prevention
3. Response
4. Management and coordination.

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The policy aims at:

- setting out measures for the prevention of SEA;
- setting out procedures for managing SEA cases;
- informing and educating staff and partners about the risks associated with PSEA and their obligation to act;
- Recognizing the importance and role of each of OLSIA's players and specify their level of responsibility in preventing and managing SEA cases.

This policy is supplemented by procedures, guidelines and tools to ensure it is implemented.

Scope

The policy applies to all staff from main office and in the field regardless of their contractual arrangement. Humanitarian aid workers are expected to uphold the highest standards of personal and professional conduct at all times to protect beneficiaries of assistance.

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by humanitarian aid workers directly contradicts the principles upon which humanitarian action is based and represents a protection failure on the part of the aid community. SEA impose harm on those whom the humanitarian community is obligated to protect, as well as jeopardizes the credibility of all assistance agencies.

All OLSIA employees and related personnel are required to behave perfectly with the project beneficiaries or members of the community, using particular care with the most vulnerable classes: minors, women, the elderly and social outcasts. OLSIA commits to create a zero-tolerance organizational culture against contentment and impunity. OLSIA Management, among the others, is expected to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse.

OLSIA management staff must be familiar with and enforce this policy, being proactive in overseeing their team. Through the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy, OLSIA clearly expresses its determination to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries and members of the community by OLSIA employee and all related personnel. The policy covers all employees including vendors and contractors, and suppliers in relation to OLSIA activities. The following miss behavior is covered by the policy:

Sexual abuse. Any form of sexual abuse as defined in point 1.4 is completely prohibited, regardless of its form or the circumstances in which the abuse occurs.

Sexual exploitation. Any form of sexual exploitation as defined in point 1.4 is completely prohibited, regardless of its form or the circumstances.

Consensual sexual relations with beneficiaries or members of the community where OLSIA is present who are over 18 years of age. Such relations, whether occasional or regular, are based on an essentially unequal power dynamic and undermine OLSIA's credibility.

and integrity; they are therefore strongly discouraged. Every employee has an obligation to inform his or her superior as soon as possible if such a situation occurs.

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Abuse of power. Any direct or indirect abuse of power over a beneficiary or a member of the community will be reported to the capable authorities. The appropriate disciplinary measures will be ordered according to the staff regulations.

Sexual activities with a child (under 18). See **Child Safeguarding Policy**. According to the rules set out in the latter, any sexual activity with a child is prohibited.

Definitions

OLSIA uses the following definitions in this policy:

- **Sexual abuse:** Actual or threatened physical abuse of a sexual nature, which may take place by force, coercion, violence or in situations of inequality. This term includes, but is not limited to, acts of rape, harassment, child pornography, non-consensual sexual acts or any other sexual offence.

This means that physical force is not necessary for sexual abuse to be considered. Such an act may also occur in situations where apparent consent has not been given, in situations of inequality, psychological pressure. Consent to drink alcohol or use drugs must not under any circumstances be considered consent to sexual activity and in no way reduces the performer responsibility.

- **Sexual exploitation:** Any actual or attempted sexual abuse of a person in a position of vulnerability, trust or where there is a power differential including, but not limited to, profiting financially, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Prostitution, even when legal, is a form of sexual exploitation. This means that exploitation can also occur when an individual is an intermediary for the abuse.

- **Victim or survivor:** A person who is, or has been, sexually exploited or abused. For the purposes of this policy, this is a person who has been sexually abused or exploited by a person bound by a contract with OLSIA.

- **Zero tolerance:** approach consisting in severely punishing any person under contract with OLSIA who has committed a sexual offence against beneficiaries or members of the communities in view of the unacceptable nature of such an act, whether this occurred as part of their OLSIA activities or in a private context.

OLSIA as a committed organization is accountable to all internal and external stakeholders for complying with the internationally developed self-regulatory documents for the purpose of preventing sexual exploitation and abuse at the project site and at offices including Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

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Core Principles, the six Core Principles are from the UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13). They have been modified based on OLSIA structure and activities.

1. Sexual exploitation and abuse by OLSIA employee and related personnel constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for disciplinary actions and/or termination of employment contract within the applicable and current regulations;
2. 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 regarding the age of a child is not a defense and in no way shall ignorance of the age of the person be accepted as a justification. A specific Children Safeguarding Policy further sets the principles and the operationalizing procedures and guidelines for guaranteeing children safeguarding in all domains of OLSIA action.
3. Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries;
4. Sexual relationships between OLSIA staff and beneficiaries and members of the community are strongly discouraged since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of the Humanitarian aid work;
5. Where OLSIA employee and related personnel develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or by a fellow worker, whether the individual works for OLSIA or for other organization, partners, suppliers or other related stakeholders, he or she must report such concerns through the means and tools available within the Organization. The Supervisory Body must be informed about all the concerns and suspicions, including rumors in good faith arisen about sexual exploitation and abuse.
6. All OLSIA staff members, whatever their levels are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of the Code of conduct and Ethical Code.

Areas

To prevent and manage possible cases of SEA, and ensure the reporting process is effective, OLSIA bases its approach to protection on the following:

Community Engagement

The mainstay of the work that needs to be carried out to ensure effective protection from sexual exploitation and abuse by our staff is at field level as we often work in situations where people may find themselves in highly vulnerable situations. To implement this policy, OLSIA makes it a point of honor actively to engage the local communities and people and tries to encourage setting up a partnership to improve our understanding of the various issues and dynamics. This requires support in several areas:

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Mapping local stakeholders and organizations

To improve our understanding of the challenges and specificities of the local contexts in which the teams operate and to develop the appropriate tools and means of communication, it is important that each delegation is able to identify the key stakeholders and entities that could play a role at community level in preventing, reporting and managing SEA incidents.

Awareness-raising

Local communities are made aware of their right to unconditional humanitarian aid, of the importance of disapproving any request for sexual favors, any abuse or pressure towards them, of the strict ban on staff engaging in such behavior and of the mechanisms in force to report any behavior that break the OLSIA General Code of Conduct. Emphasis must be placed on how best to communicate with beneficiaries and communities by using visual tools in a language and form that is adapted to the local and cultural context, as well as on providing appropriate training for the various stakeholders. The orientations and trainings are conducted as per the approved plan also the awareness to communities specially to affected population is provided as part of the project over all implementation plan. The training and awareness may include the followings:

- Reporting and Reporting obligation for all staff
- Investigation
- Assistance for survivors
- SEA definition and examples
- Why preventing sexual exploitation and abuses
- Roles and responsibilities of personnel in preventing and responding to SEA
- 6 guiding principles

External Partners All external future agreements will have a clause obligating the partners to comply with the provisions of OLSIA PSEA policy, unless the partners have its own PSEA policy.

Reporting

OLSIA all staff clients (beneficiaries) and visitors are required to report suspicions or allegations of SEA, or things against this policy, within the first 24 hours by informing the OLSIA PSEA focal point. By submitting a report through email, phone number or in person to the OLSIA staff, clients (beneficiaries) and visitors must report historically SEA allegations.

Adapting reporting tools and the mechanism to local realities

To improve the level of reporting of SEA cases by the local people, we must also improve the understanding of the issues that are specific to each community and adapt the reporting mechanisms to the realities on the ground.

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A sensitive approach to the dynamics of gender, diversity and social inclusion

The tools and mechanisms to be put in place must be designed so as best to reflect everyone's challenges and specificities and ensure they remain fully accessible to all. It is therefore crucial, when they are developed and implemented, to combine and consider the various points of view and priorities of the different groups and to ensure each actively participates and is complied with during the process.

The tools and mechanisms must also benefit all the different groups in a community or who benefit from OLSIA's assistance, regardless of their race, ethnicity, color, caste, religion or belief, status, origin, nationality, politics, gender, sexual orientation, disability or age.

Prevention

SEA cases are a serious violation of the trust placed in us by our beneficiaries, the members of the communities in which we work, the donors and the public and it is OLSIA's duty to create and maintain an environment that ensures these risks are prevented.

Given that the relationship between the stakeholders collaborating with OLSIA, the beneficiaries and the members of the communities where we are operating is by its nature unequal in terms of power relations, OLSIA must remain vigilant and avoid any action that would suggest or imply that a sexual act could be required as a condition for providing aid.

Preventing and explanatory risks are a priority for OLSIA, which is particularly focused on improving the understanding of the causes and mechanisms in a society that could enable such abuse. This effort is supplemented by systematically incorporating the EAS risk management cycle in all of OLSIA's actions.

OLSIA preventive approach is based on the following:

Promoting an institutional culture of transparency consisting of:

- Promoting and ensuring a strong commitment by the leadership and management teams to the fight against SEA cases.
- Communicating OLSIA's zero-tolerance approach clearly to all levels in the organization and to all stakeholders and the consequences of a failure to adhere to this approach.
- Helping to fight at every level against the culture of silence, taboo and the abuse of power.
- Establishing a culture of transparency, respect for the self and boundaries.

Establishing a SEA risk management cycle

- Consider the notion of SEA at all levels and from the early project concept stage.
- Identify and analyze SEA risks based on the economic, sociological and cultural context of each program, project communities, beneficiaries and employees.
- Prevent risks from occurring and put forward measures to reduce these through close collaboration between main office and the field.
- Manage incidents.
- Monitor, evaluate and consider lessons learned through the implementation of SMART indicators.

A focus on the project's beneficiaries and communities consisting of:

- Systematically consider principles of accountability, transparency and quality throughout the project's life cycle.
- Put in place safeguards and ensure that the rights of individuals are met.
- Communicate clearly about behaviors that will not be tolerated by OLSIA, clarify the legal procedures, explain the consequences for those who violate the rules and the protection guarantees for victims/survivors and witnesses.
- Ensure that clear and frequent training sessions are regularly conducted and adapted to the context.
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Recruitment:

OLSIA ensure robust recruitment screening, vetting and referencing process for all personnel, particularly for persons who will have any direct or indirect contact with children by emphasizing clauses on PSEA throughout the employment cycle including job advertisements, job descriptions, performance contracts, written and verbal interview questions, and by carrying out thorough employer and professional references, background, and police checks.

Ensure all new and existing employees sign OLSIA's Declaration Statement which is part of OLSIA's PSEA Policy. The acceptance of the PSEA Policy by signature of this declaration form is a condition for undertaking any relation with OLSIA.

OLSIA provides training sessions on SEA and PSEA in the workplace for new staff and refresher trainings for existing staff which recognizes and responds to risks and concerns at regularly scheduled intervals.

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Response

Procedure for reporting cases

OLSIA has set up an internal reporting procedure based on the CoC, which is used to report allegations of violations of the code, including cases of sexual abuse or exploitation. This procedure is regularly updated by the Risk Management sector to reflect best practice in the international community.

The internal reporting procedure must be adapted to the different areas and communities in which OLSIA operates. While inter-agency complaint mechanisms have been formalized in some contexts, this needs to be communicated clearly to staff, community members and partners.

Protective measures for the victim/survivor and/or witness(es)

The following emergency measures will be taken to protect and safeguard the victim/survivor and/or witness(es):

Availability of the Abuse/PSEA Focal Point. The coordinator is empowered to receive and manage complaints of sexual abuse or exploitation, to listen to the survivor and provide them with sympathetic and confidential advice and assistance.

Emergency medical assistance or evacuation and psycho-social support. If someone makes an urgent complaint to our teams about a case of sexual abuse or exploitation, they must be able to receive prompt and appropriate care in line with their wishes.

Each delegation must have an emergency procedure in place. Protection measures and logistical assistance. If events should arise that could risk the safety of one of the parties, OLSIA must be able to intervene and take extraordinary measures to deal with them as quickly as possible.

In the longer term, following the emergency period, the following measures may be taken to protect and safeguard the parties' best interests:

- Legal and administrative assistance.
- Medical and psycho-social follow-up.
- Medium-term protective measures and logistical support.
- The victim/survivor's consent. The victim/survivor's consent will be sought before each step in the process that involves them making a choice.
- Decisions will be taken to respect their rights and dignity where possible according to legal obligations.
- Confidentiality. Confidentiality rules apply at every stage in the case management.
- Help with case management. A specific procedure sets out the terms for case management.

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Legal follow-up of a case

- A protection risk assessment should be conducted systematically before determining what action to take on a case. The decision will be weighted according to the parties' safety, the wishes of the victim/survivor and the legal framework.
- OLSIA will, accordingly, and subject to duly documented exceptional circumstances,¹ report the case to the competent authorities and/or impose appropriate disciplinary sanctions, according to the staff rules in force in the project country or at headquarters.
- If the offence is only prosecuted following a complaint, OLSIA will issue recommendations to the victim/survivor, advise them and support them during legal proceedings.
- OLSIA reserves the right to seek damages against the perpetrator of the offences in question or to pursue any other legal remedy.
- Support for Survivor
- Support will be offered to survivors, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out. Support can include specialist psycho-social counselling, access to OLSIA PSEA or Gender focal point and/or access to other specialist and appropriate support as needed. Survivors and victims can choose if and when they would like to take up the support options available to them.

Disciplinary sanctions

If the alleged facts are so serious that, according to the rules of good faith, they do not allow OLSIA to demand that a working relationship continue, OLSIA will proceed with immediate dismissal for valid reasons. If the facts do not constitute justified grounds for dismissal and the applicable labor law so permits, disciplinary sanctions may be applied.

The sanctions that may be imposed against the employee are comprehensively set out in the Staff Regulations in force in the program country. In the absence of such regulations, the Staff Regulations at headquarters will prevail.

Management and coordination

Setting up an PSEA Focal Point

A Prevention Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Focal Point will be appointed to play an active role in all the areas described in this policy. See "Roles and Responsibilities of the PSEA Focal Point", which should be adapted to each local context.

Participation in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on SEA and other platforms

OLSIA is a member of the global Task Force and ensures the best practice developed in this framework is applied when creating the tools and mechanisms to protect against SEA. At field level, many countries have their own network of inter-agency PSEA coordinators responsible for implementing an action plan nationally. Where possible, OLSIA must ensure that it is part of this and guarantee smooth communication between the field and headquarters. OLSIA takes part in other platforms that coordinate on PSEA, where appropriate.

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Setting up regional Working Groups of coordinators

Working Groups are set up in each region, in line with linguistic and cultural specificities, to develop a network of regional coordinators that are trained, active and autonomous.

Implementing an annual action plan by delegation

The annual action plan includes all the “Abuse” elements in Risk Management. Its main goal is to improve each delegation’s practices and achieve a minimum standard within OLSIA. The plan provides an overview of where the delegation stands and what it needs to do to improve its situation.

Roles and responsibilities

Individual Responsibilities

Individual responsibility is a cornerstone in the fight against exploitation and abuse and everyone has an active role to play in ending any behavior that might not be consistent with OLSIA's honor and value system and that undermines the integrity of our beneficiaries and the communities in which we operate.

The staff must abide strictly by the Global Code of Conduct, this policy, and the guidelines and procedures put in place by OLSIA on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

Everyone is expected to comply with the obligations set out in this policy in particular the obligation to report suspicions and allegations to OLSIA, to respect the confidentiality of the parties, not to act in bad faith and not, under any circumstances, to engage in any form of retaliation.

Management

Managers are expected to set an example by behaving impeccably and that they meet their obligations towards the staff with respect to prevention, training and monitoring in the most appropriate way possible according to the specific circumstances in which the teams work. They must also ensure that staff are aware of the whistleblowing and case management procedures for SEA and that the requirements for this policy are met.

Operations

Operations bear ultimate responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this policy by the field teams, as well as the resulting guidelines, procedures, tools and mechanisms.

Risk Management Sector

The Risk Management Sector is responsible for reviewing, disseminating and communicating this policy. It ensures that the tools and mechanisms that comply with best practice are developed and disseminated and supports teams in adapting them for the field. It also assists operations in setting up and monitoring national action plans and supports coordinators in implementing the tools, mechanisms and policy. The Risk Management Sector plays a key role in preventing SEA cases at headquarters and in the field.

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The Human Resources Department

The Human Resources Department promotes best practice and procedures for safe recruitment and training staff on SEA issues. The Human Resources Department drafts specifications for managers, including an obligation to prevent, investigate and supervise SEA-related risks at headquarters and in the field and takes the Focal Point's role into account in job descriptions.

The Director of OLSIA

The Director of OLSIA is responsible for ensuring that policies and procedures are put in place and that they contain a clear outline of responsibilities. The Director and SMT will actively and publicly promote this policy and the resulting best practice and procedures.