

## PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

RECIPROCITAS is a Canadian non-profit organization that promotes the creation of local Mutual Aid groups in developing countries. We aim to enhance the skills of Mutual Aid Group members and encourage civic engagement, solidarity, and reciprocity among citizens experiencing poverty and social exclusion.

We firmly oppose all forms of sexual violence and the abuse of power, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, sexual orientation, disability, religion, or ethnic origin. We do not tolerate sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, or sexual abuse from our directors, employees, volunteers, consultants, partners, Mutual Aid Group members, facilitators, or any other representatives associated with our programs.

We are dedicated to responding to and preventing incidents of sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse. We prioritize ensuring effective action is taken when such incidents occur. Additionally, we are committed to supporting survivors and enhancing our protection measures and reporting processes.

RECIPROCITAS adopts and follows the U.N. definitions as follows.

- Sexual exploitation involves the actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, power, or trust for sexual purposes. This includes but is not limited to, gaining monetary, social, or political benefits from exploiting another person's sexuality.
- Sexual abuse refers to any actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether it is carried out through force or under unequal or coercive conditions.
- Engaging in sexual activity with children (individuals under the age of 18) is strictly prohibited, regardless of local laws regarding the age of majority or consent. Having misconceptions about a child's age or claiming ignorance is not a valid defence.

RECIPROCITAS aligns its code of conduct with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's six core principles regarding sexual exploitation and abuse, along with the accompanying eight minimum operating standards.

1. Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers are considered acts of gross misconduct and may result in termination of employment.
2. Engaging in sexual activity with children (defined as individuals under 18) is strictly prohibited, regardless of the local age of majority or consent. A mistaken belief about a child's age is not a valid defence.
3. It is prohibited to exchange money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behaviour. This includes the exchange of assistance meant for beneficiaries.

4. Any sexual relationship between humanitarian workers and individuals receiving humanitarian aid or protection that involves the improper use of rank or position is forbidden. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian work.

5. Humanitarian workers who have concerns or suspicions about sexual abuse or exploitation by a colleague, whether within the same agency or not, must report these issues through established agency reporting mechanisms.

6. Humanitarian workers are required to foster and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse while promoting adherence to the code of conduct. Managers at all levels are responsible for supporting and developing systems that uphold this environment.