



Canadian Bureau for  
International Education

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## Code of Conduct to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

*December 2020*



## Leadership message

The Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) is a global leader in international education, dedicated to equity, equality, inclusiveness and partnership. We are committed to being a national voice for advancing Canadian international education by creating and mobilizing expertise, knowledge, opportunity and leadership.

CBIE is committed to promoting a safe and respectful work environment, free of harassment, exploitation or abuse of any kind.

Given the evidence of widespread sexual violence within our sector, it is our Duty of Care to ensure that everything is being done to mitigate risks of sexual violence and do no harm in the communities we serve. In recent literature covering sexual violence prevention, organizational culture has been defined both as a key factor of the problem and as part of the solution. To create cultural change in our sector, it is essential that everyone actively address issues contributing to sexual violence.

To this end, CBIE aligns with the Government of Canada commitments on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the International Development Sector and with the Canadian Council of International Cooperation (CCIC) Leaders' Pledge.

This Code of Conduct articulates our shared commitment to preventing sexual violence in our organization and programs by defining a framework for the way we conduct our work and setting expectations. We recognize that to operationalize this the Code of Conduct, we must bring it to life in our day-to-day interactions, identifying gaps between policies and practices and working to close them through meaningful action.

It is on all of us to change the culture around sexual violence.



## Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to clearly articulate to internal and external stakeholders our commitments, expectations, standards and processes for preventing and responding to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse within our organization and as it applies to our programs.

## Definition

CBIE adopts the U.N. Secretary-General's definition on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse as follows:

- **Sexual Exploitation:** *Any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability, differential power or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.*
- **Sexual Abuse:** *Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.*
- **Sexual Harassment:** *Any unwanted sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.*

Note: Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Not knowing or mistaking the age of a child is not a defence.

## Commitments

In line with the CCIC Pledge, CBIE commits to:

- improving our collective ability to recognize and tackle power imbalances and gender inequalities that can enable sexual violence, including intersecting forms of discrimination;
- establishing a culture of zero tolerance to all forms of sexual violence in all the work that we do;
- creating a work environment free from sexual violence for staff, volunteers, partners and local populations within our organizations and the countries in which we operate;
- protecting people involved in our programs and the communities we serve from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, especially children; and
- building knowledge and capacity around survivor/victim-centred approaches.



## Core principles

CBIE abides by six core principles on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, adopted by the United Nations' Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Force on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse:

1. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by CBIE and its representatives constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for disciplinary actions and/or termination of an 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.
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 for assistance that is due to community members.
4. Sexual relationships between CBIE staff and members of the community are strongly prohibited since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of our work.
5. When CBIE and its representatives develop concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse by an individual, whether the individual works for CBIE or other organizations, partners, suppliers or other related stakeholders, **they are mandated by a legal and moral duty** of care. They must report such concerns through the means and tools available within the agency's reporting mechanisms. The management must be informed about all the concerns and suspicions, including rumours, in good faith, regarding SEA.
6. All CBIE and its representatives are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents SEA and promotes the implementation of the Code of Conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems that maintain this environment.



## References

CBIE's Code of Conduct was adapted from the AQOCI Code of Conduct Template (listed below) and also informed by the PSEA policies and Codes of Conduct of the following organizations:

- [ADRA: Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse policy statement.](#)
- [AQOCI: Code of Conduct: A Template for addressing sexual violence in small and medium ICOs.](#)
- [CODE: Policy prevention of Sexual exploitation and abuse.](#)
- [Emmanuel International Canada Code of Conduct Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy.](#)
- [PWRDF - PSEA procedures and guidelines.](#)
- [PSEA Implementation Quick Reference Handbook By CHS Alliance.](#)  
[CCIC Leader's Pledge](#)