



WOMEN'S NGO
SECRETARIAT OF
LIBERIA

[WONGOSOL]

Prevention of Sexual Harassment & Assault Policy (PSHA)

Catalog

I.0 Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Assault (PSHA) Polic1	1
Level2	2
Level2	3
Level1	4
Level2	5
Level2	6

1.0 Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Assault (PSHA) Policy

Women NGOs Secretariat of Liberia (WONGOSOL)

1.1 Policy Statement

WONGOSOL is dedicated to fostering a safe and inclusive environment for all employees, free from discrimination and harassment, including sexual harassment. We uphold a zero-tolerance policy for any form of sexual harassment within our workplace. All allegations will be treated seriously, promptly investigated, and addressed with appropriate disciplinary action, which may include dismissal for confirmed offenders. WONGOSOL guarantees confidentiality and protection against retaliation for individuals who report incidents of sexual harassment.

1.2 Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that offends, humiliates, or intimidates another person. This includes, but is not limited to, situations where employment conditions are contingent upon sexual favors, as well as creating a hostile or intimidating environment.

Sexual harassment can involve one or more incidents and actions constituting harassment may be physical, verbal and non-verbal.¹ Sexual harassment can manifest through various forms of conduct, including:

Physical Conduct

- Unwelcome physical contact (e.g., patting, pinching, inappropriate touching, kissing hugging).
- Physical violence, including sexual assault.
- Use of job-related threats or rewards to solicit sexual favors.

Verbal Conduct

- Comments on a person's appearance, age, or private life.
- Sexual jokes, stories, and advances.
- Repeated, unwanted social invitations on dates or physical intimacy.
- Insults based on the sex of the worker
- Condescending or paternalistic remarks
- Sending sexually explicit messages (by phone or by email)

Non-Verbal Conduct

- Display of sexually explicit material.

¹ https://www.ilo.org/.../policy/wcms_407364.pdf

- Sexually suggestive gestures or behaviors.

Note: The above-mentioned examples are not exhaustive and that sexual harassment can include any conduct of a sexual nature which is unwanted and unwelcome by the recipient

1.3 Scope

Sexual harassment can occur regardless of the gender of the victim or the harasser, and may involve individuals of the same sex. WONGOSOL acknowledges that harassment often arises in contexts of power imbalance, such as between supervisors and subordinates. Harassment is prohibited both within WONGOSOL premises and during work-related events outside the workplace.

1.4 Complaints Procedures

Individuals who experience sexual harassment are encouraged to address the issue directly with the alleged harasser if safe to do so. If direct communication is not feasible, victims may report the incident to a designated staff member responsible for receiving such complaints who will be the head of the Board Committee on Safeguarding and Complaints, or designated staff member at libngowomen@yahoo.com at the 14th Street Sinkor Office. Reports may be made anonymously. WONGOSOL senior management will respect the confidentiality of anonymous reports to the extent possible. For urgent concerns, individuals may contact the complaint manager or board committee.

2.0 Core Principles:

1. **Zero Tolerance:** The organization maintains a strict zero-tolerance policy for sexual harassment and abuse. All incidents will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.
2. **Respect and Dignity:** Every employee is entitled to a work environment that respects their dignity. All individuals should be treated with courtesy and respect, free from harassment or intimidation.
3. **Confidentiality:** Reports of sexual harassment or abuse will be handled with utmost confidentiality to protect the privacy of all parties involved. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
4. **Reporting Mechanisms:** Clear and accessible reporting mechanisms are established to encourage individuals to report incidents without fear of retaliation. Employees should feel safe and supported when coming forward.
5. **Education and Training:** Regular training and awareness programs will be conducted to inform employees about what constitutes sexual harassment and abuse, as well as the processes for reporting incidents.
6. **Support Systems:** Employees will have access to support services, including counseling and legal assistance, to help them navigate the aftermath of harassment or abuse.
7. **Accountability:** The organization is committed to holding individuals accountable for their actions. Disciplinary measures will be enforced consistently against those who engage in harassment or abuse.

8. Culture of Inclusion: A workplace culture that promotes inclusion and respect is vital. All employees should feel empowered to speak up and contribute to a safe environment.
9. Leadership Commitment: Leaders at all levels must actively promote and model appropriate behavior, demonstrating a commitment to preventing sexual harassment and abuse.
10. Continuous Improvement: The organization will regularly review and update its policies and practices related to PSHA to ensure effectiveness and adapt to evolving needs.

2.1 Steps for Reporting

1. Initial Reporting: The designated staff member will document the complaint, including dates, times, and facts.
2. Understanding Victim's Needs: Discuss potential outcomes with the victim and explain the procedures.
3. Confidentiality: Maintain confidentiality throughout the process.
4. Informal Resolution: If preferred, attempt to resolve the matter informally through facilitated discussion.
5. Formal Investigation: If informal resolution fails or is not appropriate, initiate a formal investigation.

2.2 Investigation Procedures

1. Referral for Investigation: The initial staff member will refer the complaint to a senior HR manager or designated investigator.
2. Gathering Information: The investigator will interview the victim, the alleged harasser, and any relevant witnesses.
3. Assessment and Reporting: A report will be generated detailing the findings and recommendations for disciplinary actions or remediation.
4. Implementation of Recommendations: Follow up to ensure that recommended actions are implemented.

2.3 Disciplinary Actions

Any individual found to have engaged in sexual harassment will face disciplinary action based on the severity of the misconduct, which may include:

- Verbal or written warnings.
- Performance evaluations.
- Reduction in wages.
- Transfers or demotions.
- Suspension or dismissal for serious offenses.

2.4 Support for Victims

Victims of sexual harassment have the right to access support from designated counselors within WONGOSOL or externally, who will provide guidance and assistance throughout the complaint process.

2.5 Training and Awareness

WONGOSOL commits to providing training on this policy to all new employees during onboarding and annual refresher training for existing staff. Managers are responsible for ensuring that their teams are aware of this policy and its implications.

3.0 Commitments to Prevent Sexual Harassment and Abuse (PSHA) at WONGOSOL

WONGOSOL is committed to upholding the core principles of preventing sexual harassment and abuse through the following commitments:

1. Recruitment and Screening

- Managers and the Human Resources team will implement a robust recruitment screening process for all personnel, especially those who have direct or indirect contact with vulnerable individuals.

2. Code of Conduct

- A comprehensive Code of Conduct will be established, outlining the obligation for all employees and collaborators to refrain from any form of harassment, exploitation, or discrimination.

3. Ethical Code Accessibility

- The Ethical Code will be published on WONGOSOL's website and distributed to all collaborators, ensuring that everyone is informed about the organization's values, rights, and responsibilities.

4. Community Engagement

- WONGOSOL will actively engage with communities and government entities to prevent and respond to incidents of sexual harassment and abuse. Local communities will participate in developing the Complaint Handling Mechanism (CHM) to ensure it is culturally and gender-sensitive.

5. Complaint Handling Mechanism (CHM)

- A comprehensive and accessible CHM for reporting sexual harassment and abuse will be established. This mechanism will be integrated with existing feedback and complaint structures to streamline the reporting process.

6. Awareness of Core Principles

- All WONGOSOL employees and related personnel will be thoroughly informed about the core principles outlined in this policy, as well as those included in the WONGOSOL Staff Standard Operating Procedures.

7. Timely Response Protocols

- WONGOSOL will establish clear protocols for processing complaints of sexual harassment and abuse, including the immediate suspension of the alleged perpetrator from activities impacting beneficiaries and communities until the investigation concludes.

8. Reporting Responsibilities

- WONGOSOL will inform appropriate authorities responsible for conducting investigations into allegations of sexual harassment and abuse, adhering to both national and international laws.

9. Survivor Support

- Beneficiaries and community members will be informed about whom to report incidents to and what assistance they can expect. All potential and actual survivors of harassment will receive clear information about the complaint mechanism and reporting process.

10. Feedback and Communication

- Complainants and survivors will have the right to receive updates on the progress and outcome of their cases, and WONGOSOL will strive to maintain open lines of communication.

11. Disciplinary Action

- WONGOSOL will take appropriate disciplinary actions, including immediate termination and referral for criminal prosecution, against individuals found guilty of sexual harassment and abuse, in accordance with national laws.

12. Protection for Whistleblowers

- The organization will ensure the protection of victims, complainants, and whistleblowers after verifying reported incidents. WONGOSOL commits to providing assistance, including psychosocial support, medical treatment, and legal help, to any identified victims of harassment.

13. Third-Party Compliance

- WONGOSOL will require all third parties, including partners and suppliers, to adhere to the principles outlined in the PSHA policy. Acceptance of the PSHA policy will be a condition for establishing any relationship with WONGOSOL. If network members or partners lack their own PSHA policy, they must incorporate this policy into their contracts and agree to its terms.

By implementing these commitments, WONGOSOL aims to foster a safe and respectful workplace for all employees and collaborators.

4.0 Implementation of the Policy

WONGOSOL will ensure this policy is widely communicated and accessible to all employees. It will be included in the staff handbook, and all new hires will receive training on its content as part of their onboarding process. Annual refresher training will be mandatory for all employees.

4.1 Monitoring and Evaluation

WONGOSOL will monitor the effectiveness of this policy by collecting anonymous statistics on incidents and resolutions. Supervisors and responsible personnel will report on compliance annually, and the policy will be evaluated and revised as necessary based on feedback and outcomes.

4.2 Outside Complaints Mechanisms

Individuals have the right to pursue external avenues for complaints, including national legal frameworks and relevant authorities, should they feel unable or unwilling to report internally.

By adopting this policy, WONGOSOL affirms its commitment to a workplace where every individual can work free from fear of harassment, fostering a culture of respect and safety for all.

For any questions or to report an incident, please contact:

[Executive Director and or the Board Committee Chair on Safeguarding and Compliant Handling]

[Email: libngowomen@yahoo.com]

[Provident Compound, 14th Street Sinkor, Blw Russel and Cheeseman Avenues]

Prepared with funding from UNTF
Reviewed by: Willet L. Salue, Program Manager - WONGOSOL
Esther S. Davis Yango, Executive Director