



# PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE IN SYRIA

## KEY FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS ON COMPLAINTS & FEEDBACK MECHANISMS & HUMANITARIAN WORKERS' CONDUCT IN NORTHWEST SYRIA

In August 2018, the Turkey cross-border interagency PSEA Network under the Whole of Syria PSEA Programme, conducted community consultations in the governorates of Idlib, Hama and Aleppo on the conduct of humanitarian workers and the community's experiences, perceptions and preferences in using complaints and feedback mechanisms (CFMs). A total of 630 community members were reached in the consultations; 516 persons participated in Focus Group Discussions and 114 persons participated in personal interviews.

**Misconduct is prevalent and many of those affected prefer not to talk about it**



**1 in 6 persons reported that they had, or they knew someone who had, been asked to exchange something for aid**

When the relevant respondents were asked *what* had been asked in exchange for aid...



12 percent of respondents said 'personal relationships'



23 percent of respondents said 'money'



7 percent said 'personal belongings'



46 percent of respondents preferred not to reveal

**Existing CFMs are not trusted widely & not designed according to community needs**



91 percent of respondents reported that they had not been consulted in the design of any CFM



While 77 percent of males and 75 percent of females knew of at least 1 CFM, only 15% reported ever having used one



1 out of 4 respondents who had ever used a CFM had faced a problem

**Literacy rates are seen by the community as a factor determining whether people submit complaints**



37 percent of respondents perceived that those who cannot read or write are unlikely to submit complaints

**There is a disproportionately high risk of women from the affected population experiencing misconduct, and these women not reporting it**



72 percent of the sample perceived that women are the most likely to get asked for something in exchange for aid



Of those that reported having used a CFM, there are half as many women (33 percent) as men (66 percent)

**Persons with disabilities & adolescents have particularly low awareness levels**



1 in 6 persons did not know that humanitarian workers must follow a code of conduct. Half of these were persons with disabilities (33 percent) and adolescents (17 percent).



1 in 12 community members were not aware that aid is free; almost half of these (42 percent) were adolescents.



Community members would like to be consulted in the design, review and monitoring of CFM activities



Community members expressed preference for key institutions such as schools and hospitals to be engaged in the implementation of CFMs



Community members would like local actors to be engaged in the implementation of CFMs



Respondents demonstrated their preference for a variety of complaint channels including complaints desks (for in-person reporting), hotlines, complaints boxes and free messaging services such as Whatsapp.

**Community recommendations**

### Recommendation to Actors

#### Humanitarian Organizations

- Enhance commitment to PSEA implementation
- Increase PSEA awareness for staff on expected conduct and beneficiary rights
- Scale up PSEA awareness inside Syria for communities, ensuring persons with disabilities and adolescents are reached among other vulnerable groups
- Have staff sign PSEA-specific code of conduct
- Establish or strength internal PSEA systems to ensure effective prevention and response
- Strengthen and maintain multiple complaint channels in CFMs to ensure they are accessible to all

#### Donors

- Enhance advocacy for PSEA commitment and implementation amongst partners
- Enhance measures to ensure PSEA systems and procedures are put in place by partners

Establish inter-agency community-based complaints mechanism which allows for standardised SEA referrals across all existing CFMs

#### Humanitarian leadership

- Continue advocacy on PSEA systems for prevention and response at all levels
- Ensure all sectors of the Syrian humanitarian response are mainstreaming PSEA into their response plans
- Advocate for all organizations in the response to put in place PSEA-specific code of conduct

#### PSEA Network

- Enhance awareness amongst humanitarian actors including frontline staff inside Syria on expected conduct and beneficiary rights
- Enhance PSEA awareness among communities
- Increase capacity-building on PSEA including investigative capacity among local actors for effective prevention and response to SEA

The Whole of Syria PSEA programme is made possible by the contributions of the following donors:

