

Success Story: SAF's Transformational Journey in SEA Assessment

From High Risk to High Capacity: SAF's Commitment to Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

In an inspiring demonstration of resilience and organizational growth, Solidarity for Afghan Families (SAF) has significantly improved its standing in the month of May-Jun, 2024 SEA (Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) assessment. Previously categorized as a **low-capacity, high-risk** organization, SAF embarked on a rigorous journey of reform, culminating in its elevation to a **high-capacity, low-risk** entity. This achievement not only enhances SAF's credibility but also reinforces its unwavering commitment to safeguarding beneficiaries and staff.

Identifying the Challenge

In previous assessments, SAF was ranked as a high-risk organization due to gaps in its Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) framework. This ranking highlighted weaknesses in policy enforcement, limited staff training, and the absence of structured procedures for reporting and responding to SEA incidents. Recognizing the urgency for change, SAF took decisive action to address these concerns and align with international standards.

Strategic Actions for Improvement

To overcome these challenges, SAF implemented a comprehensive reform plan, focusing on key areas of improvement:

1. **Revision of PSEA Policy:** SAF undertook a thorough revision of its PSEA policy, aligning it with global best practices and UN standards. The revised policy provided a clear framework for preventing, reporting, and responding to SEA incidents.
2. **Development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):** To ensure effective implementation, SAF developed SOPs for various thematic areas, including:
 - o Complaint and response mechanisms
 - o Survivor-centered approach to case management
 - o Staff training and awareness programs
 - o Community engagement and reporting mechanisms
3. **Capacity Building and Training:** SAF conducted extensive PSEA training for its staff, equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to uphold the organization's safeguarding policies. Training sessions were designed to ensure that all employees, including field staff, understood their roles and responsibilities in preventing SEA.
4. **Uploading Documents to the UN Portal:** To enhance transparency and accountability, SAF uploaded all relevant PSEA policies, SOPs, and training records to the **UN-Portal**. This step demonstrated SAF's commitment to compliance and positioned the organization as a reliable partner in humanitarian and development efforts.

Achieving High-Capacity, Low-Risk Status

The culmination of these efforts was reflected in SAF's 2024 SEA assessment results, where the organization was officially recognized as **high-capacity and low-risk**. This new ranking underscores SAF's success in strengthening its institutional safeguarding measures and fostering a culture of accountability and protection.

Impact and Future Commitments

SAF's improved ranking has resulted in increased trust from donors, partners, and beneficiaries. The organization is now better positioned to secure funding, expand its programs, and contribute meaningfully to Afghanistan's humanitarian and development landscape.

Moving forward, SAF remains committed to:

- Regularly reviewing and updating its PSEA policies
- Conducting continuous staff training and awareness sessions
- Strengthening monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for PSEA compliance
- Enhancing engagement with communities to ensure safe and accessible reporting mechanisms

Conclusion

SAF's journey from a high-risk entity to a trusted and capable organization serves as a powerful example of transformation through commitment, strategic action, and collaboration. By prioritizing the protection of vulnerable populations and upholding ethical standards, SAF has not only improved its institutional standing but has also reinforced its mission to serve Afghan families with integrity and compassion.