

Key Messages to the Humanitarian Community

Nepal Earthquake Response, 2015

1. **Do not seek information on numbers of GBV cases.** Data on reported cases of GBV is not representative or reliable, and attempts to collect information on cases or numbers of cases during an emergency can present serious ethical and safety risks. The Government of Nepal documented a 50% prevalence rate of lifetime experience with GBV prior to earthquake, including a 15% prevalence rate of sexual violence. Risks of GBV, particularly sexual violence, have only increased in the emergency context. It is critical to address these risks and to establish appropriate support services for survivors—efforts should not focus on collecting evidence of a problem. The IASC requires all humanitarian actors to assume GBV is occurring and to take actions to address GBV from the earliest stages of an emergency, regardless of the presence or absence of concrete “evidence.”
2. **Identify and mitigate protection risks for women and girls.** All sector interventions should be designed and implemented in consultation with vulnerable populations. Too often, women and girls are further marginalized during emergencies-- both by communities and those involved with humanitarian assistance. The IASC Guidelines for GBV Interventions in Humanitarian Settings sets standards for multiple sector actors to integrate attention to GBV risks within different types of interventions. The IASC Gender Handbook also provides guidance on developing safe programming for women, men, boys and girls.
3. **Share key protection messages with communities.** Integrate information on protection risks and available services into community outreach efforts. Warn communities that some actors may promise education or work opportunities but really intend to traffic vulnerable individuals. Communities should report any attempts to send community members away, or any attempts to exchange assistance for sex.
4. **Orient all staff and volunteers to responsibilities related to PSEA.** In line with the UN Secretary General’s Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, all humanitarian actors are prohibited from exchanging money, employment, goods, or services for sex or sexual favors. Humanitarian actors are further prohibited from engaging in any sexual relations with people under 18 and should refrain from sexual relationships with all members of vulnerable communities. If you suspect an incident of SEA has occurred—whether by a member of your own organization or another—you are required to report the suspicion. Reports should be made to focal points/managers within organizations, and all organizations are required for developing safe systems for receiving an addressing reports of SEA.