



SETTING UP COMMUNITY COMPLAINT MECHANISMS IN MOZAMBIQUE

Background

For the past few years, CARE Mozambique has invested in increasing staff and partners understanding of prevention, reporting of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. It is not to say that the understanding is perfect, but the June 2007 training workshop, revised code of conduct and increased conversations amongst staff and partners indicate that there has been significant progress over the past two years amongst staff and key partners. CARE staff have reported a stronger confidence in knowing their responsibilities, but also the necessary procedures. However, the missing – and perhaps most difficult part – is building up the community’s understanding of CARE and partners’ responsibilities and even more to develop a system for community members to complain about sexual exploitation or abuse, whether its during emergency or development.

There are deep challenges with this element of building up understanding of communities’ responsibilities to report. Like many countries in Africa, Mozambique has a strong culture of hierarchy, where challenging the person in power is very rare indeed. Hence, within the communities CARE works, the CARE workers are seen as powerful men (CARE Mozambique is over 60% male) with big cars and salaries. Poor rural girls and women in this context are expected to submit to the wishes of men in the general context, but certainly submit to the salaried and more educated CARE or partner staff. This imbalance in power relations makes it very difficult for community members to challenge or complain about CARE’s programming and even more difficult, especially if she’s a poor rural girl/woman to report sexual exploitation or abuse to CARE or a partner.

Anecdotally and within the June 2007 workshop, participants indicated that there are examples where CARE staff are “dating” community members, especially young women and it is justified in terms of community values and norms. The feeling in the room was that a poor family would be happy to have their daughter “date” a man with resources. These types of stories shared within the workshop were clearly linked to power relations and gender dynamics. Also, since Mozambique is highly prone to emergencies, there is a sense that there is even more urgency to take on this issue as emergencies expose vulnerabilities even more. And, whilst CARE Mozambique has made it clear in the revised Code of Conduct and the training workshop for staff and partners about our zero tolerance policy, the CO has a responsibility to do more for accountability on the community.

Over the past two years, CARE Mozambique has put “build up community awareness around prevention of SEA” in its Annual Operational Plans, however there has been much more focus on staff and partners for a variety of reasons including the fact that its easier to do this kind of work inhouse, but much harder to talk with communities about this given the cultural norms and the implications of what this means, especially for staff who are working far from their families.

A group of staff, particularly with leadership from Gerson Nombora who has participated in Prevention of SEA workshops, stated that CARE Mozambique should apply for this funding to keep up our momentum in building up understanding of prevention of SEA, but also to finally tackle the missing link – a community complaint mechanism based on

improved understanding of the communities' rights and responsibilities. In addition, the gender group indicated that this work is already identified as a major activity in CARE Mozambique's AOP 08.

Objective

In line with the CO's AOP and the revised Gender Strategy and Action Plan that resulted from the June 2007 workshop, CARE Mozambique's objective is to *build awareness, capacity and confidence among communities regarding prevention of SEA, but also develop complaint mechanisms to report incidents.*

Key Activities, Timeline , Pointperson and Budget

CARE Mozambique had already developed a specific action plan for prevention of SEA during the June 2007 workshop but the focus of this request for technical and financial assistance is more specifically on the fifth activity of our action plan.

Prevention of SEA action plan for FY 08 (as part of overall gender strategy/action plan)

Activity	Pointperson	Timeframe
1. Share policy on SEA	Manager of S/O	July-September 07
2. Review the policy of SEA including the national policy	Gender Group	July-September 2007
3. Share and finalise the document on SEA	Gender group (Gerson, Artur, Afonsina, Michelle)	October 2007
4. Disseminate the policies to all CARE staff and partners and beneficiaries	Head of gender in each S/O	November 2007 to June 2008
5. Propose structures and mechanisms to receive complaints and investigate (and implement!)	Gender group	February-May 2008

In more detailed form, the activity plan is as follows:

Objective: Build awareness, capacity and confidence among communities regarding prevention of SEA, but also develop complaint mechanisms to report incidents.

Activity	Pointperson	Timeframe	Budget
1. Define a strategy for awareness raising amongst communities within projects (and partners)	Gender group with TA from consultant	September-November	\$3,000 Consultant for 10 days, field visits and interviews at \$300 per day plus to advise on complaint mechanisms
2. Develop the complaint mechanism with feedback from other organizations and with technical assistance	Gender group with TA from consultant	September to November 2007	Included above for consultant
3. Have a CARE	Gender group	February-	\$7,000

Mozambique workshop with partners to share the mechanism, receive feedback and determine next steps for staff to raise awareness. At the same time, use the workshop as a refresher course on gender, prevention of SEA	and consultant	March 2008	Facilitator (working with gender group) plus workshop costs (venue, travel costs)
4 Document and share the lessons learned with CARE Angola, HR Network, CARE USA and other organizations within Mozambique	Gender group and consultant	March 2008-ongoing	\$700 Translation at \$26 per page from Portuguese to English
5. Monitor complaint mechanisms and adjust/finetune policy and mechanisms as necessary	Suboffice pointpersons and gender group	Ongoing	CARE Mozambique budget
6. Ensure that basic training/awareness raising for staff, partners and communities happens on an annual basis and prior/during all emergencies	Country Director and CO Leadership Team	Ongoing	CARE Mozambique budget

Total budget requested is \$10,700

Expected Outcomes

CARE Mozambique's gender working group believes that the financial assistance would very much help the organization to continue the progress made in FY 07, but also would result in the following outcomes:

- 1) Increased awareness and understanding of community of CARE and partners' roles and responsibilities around prevention of sexual exploitation and awareness (zero tolerance)
- 2) Increased understanding of community complaint mechanism, investigation and reporting mechanism for implementation and action.
- 3) Continued reinforcement of zero tolerance for CARE staff and partners (based on FY 07 work)
- 4) Continued refinement of complaint mechanisms, Code of Conduct, investigative procedures. The continual refinement indicates that this is a crucial issue for CARE's work and thus it stays a continual living issue within the CO and partners.

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