

Safer Together

ICYE's policy addressing sexual
violence in international volunteering



International Cultural Youth Exchange

ICYE

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Introduction¹

ICYE is committed to providing a safe environment for everyone working or interacting with ICYE which is free from discrimination and violence. This policy is addressing the issue of sexual violence, including sexual harassment.

The policy emphasises that ICYE will operate a zero tolerance policy for any form of sexual violence. Both prevention and response addressed in this policy have the aim to ensure the protection of all forms of sexual violence for everyone associated with ICYE.

ICYE acknowledges that anyone can be a victim of sexual violence, regardless of their gender and of the gender of their perpetrator. We recognise that sexual violence is a manifestation of power relationships and mostly occurs in the context of relationships, which means that victims and perpetrators are often known to each other. At work or when volunteering it often occurs within unequal relationships, for example between manager and supervisor, staff and volunteers.

Besides legally defined criminal offences there is no "objective" measure on which kind of behaviour or situation is experienced as sexual violence by an individual, but that the decisive factor is the subjective judgment of the person affected.

ICYE commits itself to treat every person making a complaint with respect, to believe them and to take them seriously. All allegations will be promptly investigated in accordance with the survivor and the law.

¹ This draft is based on international as well as on ICYE good practice. These include existing sexual violence policies from Care, Oxfam and Plan International, an info-flyer for volunteers from Weltwärts as well as the results of a workshop on sexualized violence by ICJA and partners, held in Berlin, Germany in October 2018.

No action will be taken without the consent of the survivor - except it is legally mandatory to report (e.g. in case of minors). ICYE staff or co-workers found to have sexually harassed or violated another person will face administrative or disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment as well as referral to the relevant authorities for further action, including filing criminal charges. Anyone else associated with ICYE will also face consequences (e.g. terminating the cooperation) as well as referral to the relevant authorities for further action, including filing criminal charges.

The ICYE Policy against Sexual Violence "Safer Together" aims to protect every person associated with ICYE from any form of sexual violence.

No type of sexual violence, including sexual harassment, will be tolerated in ICYE. Our working culture is based on mutual respect and collaboration and we reject all forms of sexual violence as a serious violation of every person's rights, dignity and value.

This policy will include a definition and examples of sexual violence, details about complaint mechanisms and how to report incidents, an overview of the investigation and disciplinary processes and which rights people associated with our work have. It also explains our responsibilities, how we handle claims, sanction sexual violence and help survivors recover.

Victim versus Survivor

In this policy, we are using both terms 'victim' and 'survivor', as we acknowledge that they serve different purposes.² The term 'victim' is often used in legal contexts, where a person has been subjected to a crime which a perpetrator committed. Individuals who have recovered from acts of sexual violence though might not want to be defined primarily as someone against whom a crime was committed but rather highlight their resilience and own their process of healing. That is why many prefer the term 'survivor'.

2 Based on <https://sakitta.org/toolkit/docs/Victim-or-Survivor-Terminology-from-Investigation-Through-Prosecution.pdf> and <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/faqs/types-of-violence>

ICYE acknowledges that it is for the person who experienced sexual violence to define the terminology and we will be respectful of their wording.

“Survivor is a term that empowers me and allows me to communicate that I have been through an ordeal, but I have come out the other end. I certainly do use the term victim, especially when I am describing the assault itself. I use the term victim to express that this crime is horrific, life changing, affects everyone that is near and dear to me.

I think that what has really been important throughout my journey, regardless of who I am speaking with—whether it is an advocate, a detective, or a prosecutor and whatever term they utilise when speaking with me. That isn’t what I remember—what I remember is the kindness, the regard, the patience; that is the most important thing.”

Sexual Assault Victim-Survivor³

Purpose

ICYE is fully committed to fostering a safe and healthy organisational culture and environment for all and a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence, including sexual harassment. The goal is to protect employees, co-workers, volunteers, partners, community members and other stakeholders interacting with ICYE from unwanted and abusive sexualised behaviour and sexual violence in all its forms.

Scope

This policy applies to all ICYE employees, co-workers and board members as well as every person interacting with ICYE, including volunteers, interns, partners, community members, visitors,

³ <https://sakitta.org/toolkit/docs/Victim-or-Survivor-Terminology-from-Investigation-Through-Prosecution.pdf>

consultants, contractors, children and youth - regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, educational background, class, function, seniority and status. Sexual violence will not be tolerated inside or outside of ICYE premises. The policy will be applied both during as well as outside of normal working hours.

ICYE is committed to carrying out all the elements of this policy and monitoring its effectiveness. Hereby we will also engage the host projects. We will work with expert organisations to improve the policy and our processes on a consistent basis.

Overall Principles

No one has the right to sexually harass or violate anyone. Any form of sexual violence that ICYE becomes aware of, will be dealt with in a way that is respectful and transparent for the victim. Any person within ICYE, who is found guilty to have committed sexual violence, will face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment as well as filing criminal charges.

ICYE believes that sexual violence is never too minor to be dealt with. Any kind of sexual harassment or violence can wear down volunteers, staff, co-workers, partners and community members and create a hostile environment. Every claim will be heard and the victims will be believed and supported.

ICYE will do everything to prevent sexual violence and protect survivors from any further victimization or blaming. If staff, co-workers or volunteers report about sexual violence they experienced, ICYE guarantees to treat the case confidentially. They will be fully supported and there will be no adverse action against them.

ICYE will secure that every complaint will be pursued.

ICYE staff, especially directors and office managers, are obliged to act when they have suspicions or receive reports. Letting this behaviour go on or encouraging it, will result in disciplinary action. Any ICYE staff or co-workers who witness an incident of sexual violence, including sexual harassment, or has other kinds of proof, has to report this in accordance with the complaint mechanism provided below. ICYE will support the national authorities regarding any crime committed.

ICYE will respect the will and wish of the survivor at any step while dealing with the allegation.

Since sexual violence victimizes the person, it is fundamentally important to respect and restore the autonomy of the individual. Therefore, ICYE will make sure that the survivor is always involved and informed as far as they wish. ICYE staff will make sure that all the persons concerned are aware that all incidents of sexual violence are anonymously reported every year to the Federation.

For ICYE the victim can decide how much they want to be involved in the whole process and we will not generally not act without their approval. Yet we also recognize that there might be cases where it is important or mandatory to take legal steps, e.g. when minors are concerned or when it is necessary to ensure someone's safety. Each NC has to decide on a one-to-one basis how to handle each specific case and will do so in close cooperation with specialised organisations/ the authorities to support the survivor and ICYE in the decision making process.

Prevention of Sexual Violence⁴

The impact of sexual violence on a person is often traumatic and can have lasting effects on the victim as well as their environment.⁵ ICYE's zero tolerance policy to any form of sexual violence therefore starts with primary prevention which is at the core of our commitment to providing a safe environment for everyone working or interacting with ICYE.

Primary prevention challenges out-of-date and victim-blaming attitudes and norms that e.g. place the focus on potential victims to protect themselves and frames sexual violence only as a public health issue. Effective prevention strategies aim to change internalized discriminatory attitudes, violent behaviour patterns and the cultural, political, economic and social frameworks that enable sexual violence.

On its own, this policy will not entirely prevent incidents of sexual violence from occurring, but it forms the basis of our implementation guidelines to both prevent and address such incidents. Persistent prevention efforts will in the grand scale create an atmosphere where sexual violence is renounced as unacceptable and survivors will be more willing to report on their experiences.

4 Also see: <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/SV-Prevention-Technical-Package.pdf>

5 The GIZ has calculated that violence against women in Peru e.g. generates and annual loss of more than 6.7 billion US dollars due to 70 million missing working days which is equivalent to a loss of 3.7% of the GDP <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/12205.html>

Risk Factors

It is necessary to understand and analyse contributing factors which increase the risk of potentially becoming a victim or perpetrator of sexual violence.⁶ These are usually influenced by a range of interacting factors at individual, social and systemic level.

On a national level, it is the responsibility of every National Committee (NC) to at least be aware of the risk factors in their region when it comes to sexual violence. This knowledge will not only inform their matching and placement processes, but also allow them to prepare and enact precautionary measures, such as training or targeted messages that are unique to their area of operation. In some societies, white women e.g. are seen as promiscuous - which might put white female volunteers at risk while in others, black women are assumed to be sex workers and equally at risk of sexual violence.

Prevention Strategies

Prevention measures within the Federation start right from the recruitment process of ICYE members of staff, co-workers and volunteers and continue throughout our programme cycle.

A key part of our prevention work is on awareness raising and training. ICYE commits itself to being intentional about messaging both online and offline. How we address the issue in ICYE trainings or the general code of conduct for example, will emphasize our collective message of zero tolerance to sexual violence. Setting the tone from the beginning that sexual violence is taken seriously and addressed in an appropriate manner helps to create an organisational culture where survivors are willing to speak about their experiences, as they will be more likely to believe the organisation will react appropriately to such incidences. ICYE commits to going a step further in creating awareness on the severity of the issue especially in communities where the topic of sexual violence tends to be dismissed or treated with nonchalance.

6 See examples of risk factors here: <https://www.nsvrc.org/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/Risk%20%26%20Protective%20factors.pdf>

ICYE will ensure that this policy is widely disseminated to all relevant persons. Global training of trainers workshops will be organised by the International Office in which participants will be provided with the tools and skills on how to address reports of sexual violence appropriately. The policy will be included in the Guide for NCs and, if existing, in each NC's staff handbook. Each NC will train all its employees and co-workers on the content of this policy and make sure that all the volunteers and hosts are familiar with the content of this policy. Awareness raising sessions will be included in induction plans and regular internal communication.

Every two years, ICYE will require employees to attend an online refresher training by the International Office on the content of this policy.

Responding to Sexual Violence

Complaint Procedure

We listen!

Sexual violence can exhaust those who endure it. Speaking up about this issue is often tough for fear of not being heard, upsetting managers and challenging the organisation's culture. Please don't let these fears deter you. ICYE will do everything possible to prevent sexual violence, while also protecting you from retaliation when reporting incidences of sexual violence in good faith. ICYE NCs need to know what is going on so they can act on it. Raising your voice can be an important step to cope with what you have experienced, can form part of your own empowerment and can contribute to preventing other people from being violated.

ICYE will ensure that all allegations of sexual violence, including sexual harassment, are thoroughly examined and where needed, investigated and/or referred to another agency for investigation or reported to law enforcement.

Cases can be reported in one of the following ways:

- A person who wants to report a case of sexual violence within their placement or host family, can notify either directly or through a person of their trust the Hosting NC. In the event the incident occurs within the hosting NC, the sending NC should be notified.

- Cases can be submitted to the officially designated and trained ICYE officer or to somebody inside ICYE who the complainant trusts. This often helps to determine what action should be taken.
- Cases can also be sent directly to the ICYE International Office which will treat all cases with the necessary confidentiality and according to the commitments in this policy: reporting-cases@icye.org
- You can also use local or national complaint mechanisms or specialised organisations (like women's rights organisations) or reach out to:
 - Any person whom you trust and who can then approach an ICYE representative
 - An Ombudsperson⁷
 - An Employment Tribunal
 - Your sending committee
 - A national or international NGO working on this topic

When the designated ICYE officers are made aware of an incident involving sexual violence, they will:

- as far as the victim is concerned, make sure they are safe and provide emotional support,
- clarify the need for a medical examination (e.g. due to transmissible diseases, evidence of sperm, protocol of injuries, prevention of pregnancy),
- clarify the need for external professional psychological support or treatment,
- clarify the need for legal assistance,

⁷ An ombudsperson is someone who investigates, reports on, and helps settle complaints.

- ensure confidentiality as far as there is no existing threat to the persons or somebody else health or safety,
- ascertain the victim's views on what course of action they wish to take and who should be informed/involved in the process,
- ensure that the victim understands the organisation's procedures for dealing with the complaint,
- record the dates, times and facts of the incident(s), as far as necessary and possible for the victim
- discuss and agree to the next steps: either informal or formal complaint - on the understanding that choosing to resolve the matter informally does not preclude the survivor from pursuing a formal complaint if they are not satisfied with the outcome,
- keep a confidential record of all discussions as long as it is necessary for the handling of the case and as long as the person concerned does not object,
- respect the choice of the victim at every point and not try to argue or convince or influence them at any point,
- ensure that they know that they can lodge a complaint outside of the organisation through the relevant country/ legal framework,
- if it's about an international volunteer, inform the respective sending NC and copy in the IO.

Sanctions and Disciplinary Measures

The aim of the policy is to protect all victims while also maintaining a professional approach in following up on each potential case:

If **ICYE staff or co-workers** are accused of any act of sexual violence to whomever and as described in this policy, the corresponding NC should suspend the staff or co-worker pending investigation. In the event this course of action is not followed, the NC will need to justify their decision in writing to the BoM and the IO. In case the accusation is confirmed, the NC will take disciplinary actions to ensure consistency across all incidents of sexual violence according to this policy and in line with the country's legislation.

If either **a representative or staff of the host project or a member of the host family** are accused of any act of sexual violence to whomever and as described in this policy, the NC should immediately stop the cooperation with either host project or host family pending investigations. In the event this course of action is not followed, and the NC decides to continue the cooperation with the project or host family, they will need to justify their decision in writing to the BoM, the IO and any relevant NCs. In the case that the accusation is confirmed and relevant under national criminal law, the NC will support the victim if they want to take legal action as well as work together with the national authorities, as necessary.

In the event a **volunteer** is accused to have committed any act of sexual violence to whomever and as described in this policy, the NC should remove them from the host project and host family pending investigation. In the event this course of action is not followed and the volunteer is allowed to continue with the project, then the hosting NC will need to justify their decision and inform the sending NC and the IO. In the case that the accusation is confirmed, volunteers may have to face legal or other consequences as stipulated in the host country.

Other more transformational measures like educational activities or restorative justice will be explored on an individual case basis.

Supporting Survivors

In addition to helping to prevent and responding to incidences, support will be provided to the survivors of sexual violence. This may include referral to expert organisations, medical treatment, legal assistance, sick leave, psycho-social support or financial compensation as per law. A survivor-centred approach⁸ will be key in our approach.

ICYE will make sure that the position and rights of the survivor will not be jeopardised or altered if any of the options above or other means of support are used.

⁸ “A survivor-centred approach aims to put the rights of each survivor at the forefront of all actions and ensure that each survivor is treated with dignity and respect. By putting the survivor at the centre of the process, such an approach promotes their recovery, reduces the risk of further harm and reinforces their agency and self-determination. Practising a survivor-centred approach means establishing a relationship with the survivor that promotes their emotional and physical safety, builds trust and helps them to restore some control over their life. <https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/15831/file/Module%202.pdf>

ICYE Responsibilities

Duty Of Care

In ICYE we are aware of our responsibility regarding the prevention and response to sexual violence. We distinguish between “legal duty of care” and “moral duty of care”. “Legal duty of care” refers to those acts that individuals or organisations are obligated to undertake as specified by law. “Moral duty of care” refers to those acts that individuals or organisations should undertake because it is the right thing to do.

Taking into account the nature of working relationships between ICYE members of staff, volunteers, co-workers, host families, projects and hosting communities there will more often than not be a joint legal and moral duty of care whenever an incident occurs. We also acknowledge that if a member of the community who is in no direct relationship with ICYE reports a case of sexual violence to us, we still have a duty of care towards that person.

In general, everyone working with or being associated with ICYE (e.g. board members, employees and co-workers, volunteers, host projects and host families) needs to sign that they have been informed about the ICYE Policy "Safer Together" and that they commit to uphold it. It is expected that **no** ICYE staff member nor co-worker will engage in any types of behaviour which constitutes sexual violence, including sexual harassment but will instead contribute to build a safe environment for all and speak out against sexual violence, if and when witnessed.

Managers and supervisors will ensure that all staff and co-workers are aware and informed about the Policy and will make sure it is understood. They are also responsible to include this into the induction of all new staff and co-workers and to make sure, everyone is thoroughly and regularly trained or sensitised on the issues the Policy addresses. They encourage staff to report incidences and respond promptly and with respect and sensitivity to every complaint. Managers and supervisors will monitor the implementation of the Policy against Sexual Violence and annually report on the compliance with this policy.

Responsibilities of individual stakeholder groups

The Secretary General at the International Office is responsible to

- share the ICYE Policy "Safer Together" with all National Committees,
- ensure all NC representatives have signed the ICYE Policy "Safer Together" to show their agreement with its contents,
- ensure that the global policy is kept up to date as required,
- offer regular training of trainers workshops as well as refresher trainings,
- supports the NCs to raise awareness and sensitise all staff, e.g. by providing training material,
- prepares a report on the implementation of the Policy with anonymized information about cases of sexual violence in the Federation and how they were handled as part of the annual review report,

- support finding funding opportunities around implementation of the policy (e.g. needed for training, counselling, legal help, experts/professionals),
- maintain an updated database on designated staff members in each NC assigned to handle incidences of sexual violence,
- set up a system for volunteers on sharing feedback on how NC implement the ICYE Policy "Safer Together" ,
- act according to the ICYE Grievance Procedures in cases of conflicts.

The Board of Managers is responsible to

- promote the ICYE Policy "Safer Together" and its implementation,
- together with the IO monitor the implementation of the Policy,
- update it whenever necessary,
- assess the evaluation/ annual feedback from volunteers,
- act according to the ICYE Grievance Procedures in cases of conflicts.

National Committees are responsible to

- review, sign and submit their agreement to implement the ICYE Policy "Safer Together" to the International Office,
- develop a Code of Conduct specific to their country of operation and ensure all members of staff, co-workers and volunteers follow this code of conduct and the commitments of this Policy,

- assign one person who serves as the contact person for handling cases of sexual violence,
- perform due diligence when recruiting staff members, co-workers, members of their board, volunteers, host families and host projects to ensure all persons and organisations selected share the same values as ICYE,
- create a safe space where volunteers feel comfortable talking about and addressing the issue,
- implement a structured reporting and response procedure for cases of sexual violence, including clear evacuation procedures for volunteers who have been involved in an incident of sexual violence whether directly or indirectly
- keep an updated database of experts (e.g. on counselling, experienced and sensitised medical and legal services) in the field within their country for reference purposes and facilitate any legal aid or financial compensation if required by law when an incident occurs
- organise training on the topic for staff, volunteers, host families and host projects. The training workshops for volunteers should include transparent conversations with volunteers and fellow NCs about risk factors in their countries and areas of volunteer placements. The training should take place before their departure, upon their arrival in the hosting country and throughout the programme as a shared responsibility of both sending and receiving NCs,
- raise awareness about the ICYE Policy "Safer Together" and the topic with volunteers, host projects, host families and host communities
- keep track of previous cases in order to avoid placements that might represent a risk for future volunteers,

- work within their capacity to ensure protection against retaliation for anyone who reports an incident,
- report to the International Office at least once a year about incidences of sexual violence maintaining the anonymity of persons involved at all times
- share best practises and support other NCs at regional and federation levels.

ICYE members of staff are responsible to

- review, sign and have a good understanding of the ICYE Policy "Safer Together",
- adhere to the Code of Conduct developed by their specific NC,
- act as role models, by e.g. neither being a perpetrator or enabler of sexual violence, but by speaking up against sexual violence and harassment, inside and outside of work
- participate in trainings on the topic of sexual violence
- act as a person of trust to co-workers and other staff
- follow all reporting procedures with transparency, non bias, integrity and confidentiality,
- be attentive, mindful, considerate, and understanding when a person reports an incident,
- be willing to provide a police check document or personal reference if required,
- immediately notify the member of staff within their organization tasked with handling all cases of sexual violence in case they learn about a case.

ICYE Co-Workers are responsible to

- review, sign and have a good understanding of the ICYE Policy "Safer Together",
- adhere to the Code of Conduct developed by their specific NC,
- neither be a perpetrator or enabler of sexual violence but instead act as role models, by e.g. speaking up against sexual violence and harassment, inside and outside of work
- participate in trainings on the topic of sexual violence
- be willing to provide a police check or personal references if required
- act as a person of trust to volunteers
- take all incidents seriously, supporting affected person, no matter which role they have in the organisation

ICYE Host Projects are responsible to

- review, sign and have a good understanding of the ICYE Policy "Safer Together",
- make sure their staff and co-workers are also aware of the policy and actually implement the policy. In cases where host projects already have their own policy against sexual violence, make sure their policy and the ICYE policy are aligned,
- participate in ICYE trainings on sexual violence prevention and response policy,
- inform themselves about the cultural differences towards inappropriate behaviours and commit to an Intercultural

Understanding approach when engaging in the topic,

- take all reports on cases of sexual violence seriously and communicate cases with relevant NCs and stakeholders, upon the victims' consent,
- seek out and consult experts and authorities to make sure all the right steps are taken, without causing more harm or risk, beyond the policy.

ICYE Volunteers are responsible to

- review, sign and have a good understanding of the ICYE Policy "Safer Together",
- adhere to the Hosting NC's code of conduct,
- participate in trainings about this topic,
- observe and comply with the laws and rules of the host country concerning this issue,
- inform themselves about the specific local risk factors and respect the unspoken rules of the host countries, adapting their behaviour accordingly,
- listen to recommendations from host families/projects/ NCs
- be cautious and critical when using social media to share about cases of sexual violence,
- confirm the NC in writing in case they choose to not pursue assistance from the NC in dealing with a case of sexual violence.

Host Families are responsible to

- review, sign and have a good understanding of the ICYE Policy "Safer Together",
- adhere to the Hosting NC's code of conduct,
- participate in training sessions on the topic,
- understand and communicate cultural differences towards intimacy, consent and physical contact,
- inform volunteers about risk factors in their region,
- offer a safe space for volunteers,
- communicate with the NC cases of sexual violence in which the volunteer is involved and discuss what steps to take.

Implementation of this Policy

ICYE is aware that in order to successfully implement this policy it is vital to

- seek assistance from external consultancy
- be aware that this is an enduring process
- include all staff and co-workers as well as partners and volunteers in the process to implement this policy.
- create more awareness and sensitivity for the topic inside the NC as well as with the co-workers, host families and projects
- develop and disseminate an international directory in which local organisations working with this issue are listed.

Financial support

The Federation and the NC are committed to also provide the necessary finances to implement the policy and will include these in their budgets.

Through the TPD Fund, the Federation will provide resources for the global training of trainers. A Sub Committee will be set up to develop a training manual with the support of external experts for NC to use to conduct the training workshops with their staff and co-workers.

Monitoring and Evaluation

ICYE recognises the importance of monitoring the implementation of this policy. It will ensure that it anonymously collects statistics and data on how it is used and whether or not it is effective.

Furthermore, ICYE will monitor the implementation of this policy by asking relevant questions in the volunteer's online evaluation Part III.

Supervisors, managers and those responsible for dealing with cases of sexual violence in the National Committees will report anonymously (not revealing the name of the survivor) on compliance with this policy, including the number of incidents, how they were dealt with, and any recommendations made to the ICYE BoM and IO. This will be done every time there is a case of sexual violence. Based on these reports, the organisation will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy with the assistance of an external professional organisation and make any needed changes.

Definitions

Consent⁹: refers to “an agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity or enter into marriage. It must be freely and actively given and cannot be provided by someone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or by someone underage. Consent is specific, meaning that consent to one act does not imply consent to any others, and reversible, meaning that it may be revoked at any time.”¹⁰ Central to consent is communication: No means No and Yes means Yes.

Primary Prevention: refers to approaches that are employed before any sexual violence has occurred to prevent initial perpetration and victimization. Primary prevention includes building an environment that encourages well-being and healthy choices.”¹¹ Primary prevention can be targeted towards the population in general to e.g. work on discriminatory norms or raise awareness on sexual violence, or it can include strategies to work with vulnerable groups at increased risk, e.g. trans-people who face sexual violence or potential perpetrators to reflect on harmful norms around sexual violence.

9 A great educational video on consent is “Tea and Consent”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Exobo1GmYjs>

10 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/faqs/types-of-violence> and <https://www.rainn.org/articles/what-is-consent>

11 <https://www.atsa.com/sexual-violence-prevention-fact-sheet>

Sexual violence:

is defined as “any sexual act committed against the will of another person, either when this person does not give consent or when consent cannot be given because the person is a child, has a mental disability, or is severely intoxicated or unconscious as a result of alcohol or drugs.”¹² Sexual violence includes e.g. unwanted sexual advances or sexual harassment, rape, sexual slavery, sexual abuse.

Sexual harassment:

“encompasses non-consensual physical contact, like grabbing, pinching, slapping, or rubbing against another person in a sexual way. It also includes non-physical forms, such as catcalls, sexual comments about a person’s body or appearance, demands for sexual favors, sexually suggestive staring, stalking, and exposing one’s sex organs.”¹³ It also refers to all digital forms of abuse and sexual violence.

UN Women highlights the following issues when talking about sexual harassment:

- “sexual harassment is a human rights issue, a form of gender-based discrimination, in a context of unequal power relations;
- it takes a range of forms from sexual assault through aggressive touching, image-based abuse and verbal sexual and sexist conduct;
- sexual harassment follows the contours of power and inequality, the intersections

12 ibid, also see https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77434/WHO_RHR_12.37_eng.pdf;jsessionid=99992B2729746A001D290C09AA2B2D53?sequence=1

13 <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/faqs/types-of-violence>

of sex/gender with other structural social inequalities - race, ethnicity, age, disability, nationality, religion and any other social structures which disadvantage the abused and afford privilege to the harasser;

- the language used in definitions should not trivialise, make moral judgments through terms such as 'offensiveness', nor should they presume what the impacts might be;
- in the context of employment sexual harassment should be understood as unwelcome sexual and/or sexist conduct;
- sexual harassment encompasses single incidents, courses of conduct and can become a pervasive workplace context."¹⁴

ICYE considers sexual harassment as an act of violence. We reject all forms of victim blaming and won't belittle or trivialise this kind of behaviour.

As ICYE is working in countries all over the world, we understand that there are diverse cultural contexts and that some behaviours could be perceived differently. Catcalling e.g. is common in many countries and often not regarded as sexual harassment by the society. It is important to highlight though that this is a form of violence and therefore not acceptable behaviour. At the same time, we realise that volunteers, host families or communities e.g. might have such different perceptions and it is therefore ICYE's responsibility to raise awareness among volunteers, host families and communities what constitutes sexual harassment.

¹⁴ <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/discussion-paper-towards-international-standards-on-training-to-end-sexual-harassment-en.pdf?la=en&vs=2351>

- Staff members:** are considered all employees who are paid staff.
- Co-workers:** are individuals who work with a National Committee on a voluntary basis, like volunteers, mentors, collaborators.
- ICYE Host Families** are individuals who accommodate ICYE Volunteers for the duration of their international volunteer service.
- ICYE Host Projects:** are local organisations that host ICYE volunteers in a country.
- ICYE Volunteers:** are all International volunteers selected to participate in the ICYE Exchange programme.

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