

Oxfam International

Short Notice Audit – Summary Report

2020/11/18

1. General information

CHS Verification Scheme and audit phase	Certification scheme First audit cycle Mid-Term (MTA) phase
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1.2 Scope of the audit

This Short Notice Audit (SNA) assessed the extent to which Oxfam International's (Oxfam's) safeguarding mechanisms satisfy the requirements of the CHS in light of widespread allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, that were made public (The New Humanitarian, 29.09.2020) related to the DRC Ebola response. One of the about 50 cases referred to in the article concerned Oxfam.

The SNA assessed the following 4 key points:

1. If the mechanisms were in place to identify cases of SEA in a timely manner;
2. What measures are in place at the recruitment level to minimise the risk of SEAH;
3. Whether mitigation measures have been put in place in a timely manner;
4. If learnings from the case have been considered and what improvements made to Oxfam's systems, where necessary.

Key staff were interviewed, and a documentary review of relevant evidence (ref. Audit Report for full lists).

2. Findings


Since January 2018 Oxfam has prioritised its work on safeguarding and on ensuring that its systems for preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse, and harassment (SEAH) are fully in place, robust and operational across its Affiliates, country offices and programme work. The organisation is mid-way through its Safeguarding and Culture Framework (2019-2021), which incorporates its Safeguarding 10-Point Action Plan. Oxfam has revised, streamlined and harmonised its policies and procedures and is establishing a One Oxfam approach to safeguarding across the confederation.

Oxfam continues to work systematically with country programmes to establish and embed its survivor centred safeguarding approach into its ways of working. Oxfam has developed a number of procedures and toolkits to make its PSEAH commitments, strategies and processes clear to all staff across the organisation. A system and roll-out plan aimed at embedding these into the organisation's culture and in all its country offices and programmes, is being implemented. Oxfam's first phase of the roll-out prioritises and concentrates on high-risk, volatile and fragile contexts within which it is operating.

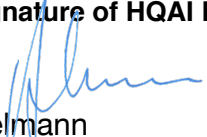
Prior to the specific case highlighted in this SNA, DRC was classified (in 2018) as a particularly high-risk country in regard to safeguarding and, at the time of the specific case, Oxfam's global safeguarding team had been working with the Oxfam DRC team to address these issues since May 2019. The global Safeguarding Manager and the Regional Safeguarding Advisor visited (August 2019) the DRC Country Office and 2 field bases, to support the teams, and conduct all staff training and specific in-country Safeguarding Focal Point training.

The specific DRC case highlighted in this SNA was reported through Oxfam's reporting channel in 2019 after these safeguarding mechanisms were strengthened and trust in the system had been built.



3. Lead auditor conclusion and recommendation

<p>Oxfam has demonstrated through this SNA that it has taken appropriate steps to establish a robust safeguarding system to prevent and respond to SEAH in the DRC Oxfam offices and programmes. A DRC Oxfam Safeguarding Lead and supporting Safeguarding Focal Points are in place, trained and equipped with the necessary resources to fulfil their roles. Work is on-going to continue to build trust and confidence in the system and to do all that it can to encourage safe reporting. Procedures to ensure a survivor centred approach are being implemented and safe referral providers are being thoroughly assessed. Recruitment procedures at the global and local level are institutionalising necessary steps to adequately vet, assess and interview potential staff, and to induct them into the organisation.</p> <p>Oxfam's comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures and system for safeguarding case management were followed for the specific case highlighted in this SNA. Recommendations and learnings from the investigation of the specific case have been reviewed and integrated into the development of Oxfam's safeguarding work.</p> <p>Based on the evidence obtained during this SNA, we confirm that we received reasonable assurance that Oxfam is taking all appropriate and necessary measures to address the specific safeguarding case in DRC that was reported and to continually improve on its safeguarding systems to prevent and manage any future cases robustly.</p> <p>In our opinion, Oxfam continues to conform with the requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability. We recommend that Oxfam's certification is maintained.</p>	
<p>Name and signature of lead auditor: Claire Goudsmit</p> 	<p>Date and place:</p> <p>Monday 16 November Falmouth, UK</p>

4. HQAI approval of report and validation

<p>Report approved</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes</p>	<p><i>Comments</i></p>
<p>Name and signature of HQAI Executive Director:</p>  <p>Pierre Hauselmann</p>	<p>Date and place:</p> <p>Châtelaïne, 27 November 2020</p>

5. Acknowledgement of the report by the organisation

<p>Any reservations regarding the audit findings and/or any remarks regarding the behaviour of the HQAI audit team:</p> <p><i>If yes, please give details:</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Findings:</p> <p>I acknowledge and understand the findings of the audit</p> <p>I accept the findings of the audit</p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>Name and signature of the organisation's representative:</p>  	<p>Date and place:</p> <p>30th Nov 20</p>