



forus CONNECT
SUPPORT
INFLUENCE

KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE:

A guide to safeguarding
for non-governmental
organizations and
platforms.





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THE GUIDE IS DIVIDED INTO THREE PARTS:

1 'Safeguarding basics' sets the basis for the conversation on Safeguarding work in your organization. Firstly, definitions for the different vocabulary employed throughout this guide is presented. This is followed by a quick overview on international safeguarding standards as well as some introductory key safeguarding principles.

2 'Safeguarding self-assessment' forms the backbone of the guide. The self-assessment is divided into eight sections, each addressing a specific topic on how to improve safeguarding:

- 2.1) Developing policies and procedures
- 2.2) Safeguarding responsibilities
- 2.3) Capacity development for management, staff and volunteers
- 2.4) Working with communities
- 2.5) Safeguarding in partnerships, with suppliers and contractors
- 2.6) Developing safe programmes
- 2.7) Developing and implementing report-handling mechanisms
- 2.8) Responding to safeguarding reports

Following the self-assessment, these same topics are further analysed with examples of actions, practices and key resources for in-depth reading on each specific topic. Included in every section is also an example from a civil society platform or organization, illustrating key questions, common challenges and evolving practices.

3 'Making it work' addresses how to create an enabling environment that can make safeguarding efforts succeed. This part of the guide looks at resource needs and suggests ways in which civil society platforms are uniquely placed to advance safeguarding efforts in the sector.



INTRODUCTION



In recent years, the media has shewn a spotlight on the failures of the civil society to keep people safe from abuse, exploitation and harassment. While individual organizations have had a long-standing commitment - and pioneered innovative approaches - to safeguarding, this has not necessarily been the case for the sector as a whole. There is a need for the sector to step up and take robust action on safeguarding, at multiple levels. And at a time when civic space is shrinking and the importance of a civil society that speaks and acts with integrity and accountability has never been greater, this guide has been developed from the recognition within Forus' membership that organizations need support in developing robust safeguarding policies, procedures and practices that go beyond compliance, and that platforms need guidance in supporting their members to get there.

It is increasingly recognized that working to high safeguarding standards includes facilitating the emergence of locally led and owned solutions. **While the term safeguarding may be unfamiliar to many, the essence of keeping communities and staff safe from harm is most likely not.**

From the increased global attention on safeguarding, and the collective work in progress, valuable experiences and learnings are being generated. Critical among these is the need to shift from a compliance-oriented approach to safeguarding, to one of genuine cultural and norm change. Engaging in safeguarding offers organizations a renewed opportunity to reappraise the basic preconditions for meaningful people-centred work.

There is also growing recognition of the importance of working with survivor-centred and intersectional approaches, in order to ensure that the prevention and response efforts reach all those that it needs to reach and that safeguarding practices in themselves do not cause further trauma or harm.





Who is this guide for?

This guide caters to a dual audience: NGOs of different sizes and levels of experience with safeguarding, and NGO platforms operating at national, regional and international levels.

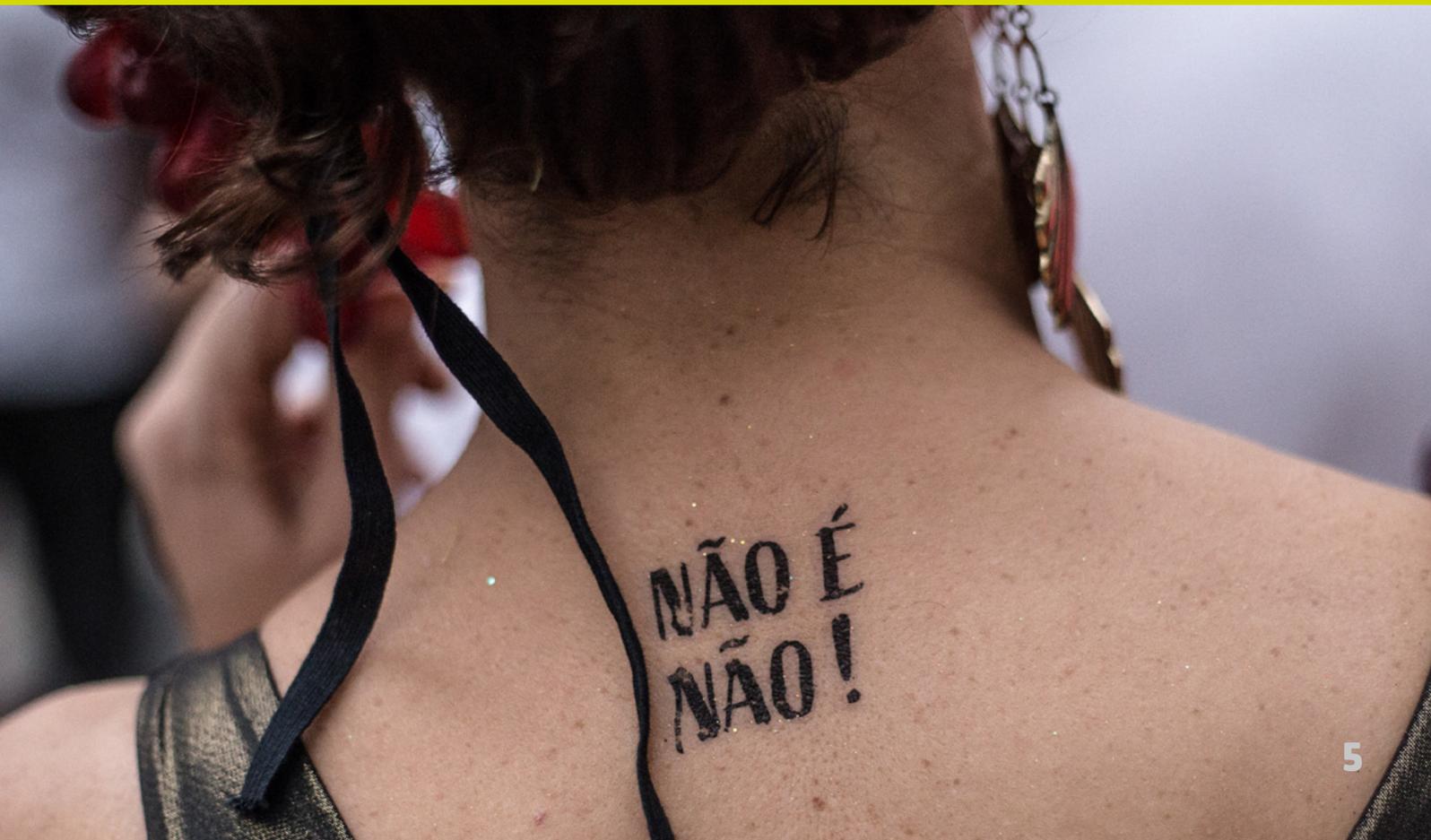
What is the purpose of this guide?

The purpose of this guide is to support organizations working to strengthen their safeguarding policies, procedures and practices to prevent bullying, harassment, abuse and exploitation, and to appropriately respond when said instances do occur. Building on international standards and evolving good practices on safeguarding, this resource offers guidance on both content and process - the 'what' and the 'how' of strengthening policies, procedures and practices.

The guide also aims to support membership-based CSOs looking for ways to support their members in their efforts on safeguarding, and offers peer learning on how to advance the conversation on safeguarding as a sector.

How to use this guide?

The guide is not a comprehensive manual on safeguarding, nor is it prescriptive. Safeguarding is a vast and complex field, and the settings and contexts where organizations work are extremely diverse. Thus, support needs will vary. Organizations that are new to safeguarding may use the different sections in the guide as checklists or entry points for where to start. For organizations that have safeguarding measures in place, reviewing current policies and practices against standards and evolving good practices, outlined in the guide, may be useful. Each section offers selected key resources for more specialized guidance including process notes, templates, training resources, communications materials and more. Even if some questions do not directly cater to all organizations, it is equally relevant and recommended to read through all of this guide.





Safeguarding basics

The 'Safeguarding basics' segment of this guide sets the basis for the following conversation and work around the assessment of your organization. Firstly, the section on the [Use of terms in this guide](#) will present useful definitions for the different vocabulary employed throughout this guide. The following section on [International safeguarding standards](#) outlines the main standards for how to keep people safe when working in this sector. The third part on [Key safeguarding principles](#) serves as a reminder that all work on safeguarding ought to be underpinned by a number of principles to ensure work in this area is serving survivors and is not contributing to further harm.

1.1 Use of terms in this guide

Assessment of report describes the actions taken by an organization to decide if there is enough evidence on a concern or incident to indicate the need for further fact-finding or an inquiry (description of these terms below). In this toolkit, it is used to describe the informal steps taken before a decision is made to carry out a fact-finding process or a formal enquiry.

Bullying is the act of seeking to harm, intimidate, or coerce someone who might be in a position of vulnerability.

Case management - following the appropriate policies and procedures to deal with a report of a safeguarding concern up to its final resolution.

Child - any individual under the age of 18, irrespective of local country definitions of when a child reaches adulthood.

Child protection - preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children - including [but not limited to] commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices.

Code of conduct - a set of norms or standards about behaviour that staff of an organization are obliged to adhere to. If an organization does not have its own Code of Conduct, it sometimes signs on to the Code of Conduct of a partner organization or an interagency Code of Conduct. For a Code of Conduct to be effective, it needs to be owned by everyone in the organization.

Concerns are a "cause of anxiety or worry." They are suspicions and/or rumours held by an individual that a staff member, associate, or the organization's operations or programmes have caused or are causing harm or maltreatment. These are currently not proven by evidence to be true.





Confidentiality - an ethical principle that restricts access to and dissemination of information. In investigations on sexual exploitation, abuse, fraud and corruption, it requires that information is available only to a limited number of authorised people for the purpose of concluding the investigation. Confidentiality helps create an environment in which witnesses are more willing to recount their versions of events and builds trust in the system and in the organization.

Consent is the act of agreeing to do something or giving the permission for something to happen. The term 'informed' must also be used when referring to consent. **Informed consent** is voluntarily and freely given, without any type of coercion, thus the individual concerned must be fully informed about the action and the consequences of it. The capacities of each individual need to be taken into consideration in order to assess their ability to provide consent. Children's informed consent should be voluntary with the informed consent of the child and a parent or guardian. Persons with disabilities may need specific support based on the nature of their impairment whether it be physical, intellectual, or mental, to give consent.

Contractors - Individuals, organizations or companies that have been contracted to deliver specific services.

Enquiry is "an [internal] analytical process designed to gather information in order to determine whether wrongdoing occurred and, if so, the persons or entities [that are] responsible"¹. Many organizations use the term "investigation", but most do not have the staff qualified to carry out a legal examination of the evidence, so here the term "enquiry" is preferred, unless referring to text or materials produced by others.

Fact-finding is the collection of basic information in order to clarify the nature of the report and to inform decision-making and next steps. It will help determine if there is enough evidence and whether a formal enquiry should commence.

Focal point - a person or a team whose responsibilities may include coordinating an organization's safeguarding prevention, mitigation and response work, or parts thereof.

Gender-Based Violence - An umbrella term for violence directed toward or disproportionately affecting someone because of their actual or perceived gender identity. The term 'gender-based violence' is primarily used to underscore the fact that structural, gender-based power differentials around the world place women and girls at risk of multiple forms of violence. This includes acts that inflict physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. While women and girls suffer disproportionately from gender-based violence, men and boys can also be targeted. The term is also used by some actors to describe targeted violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) populations, in these cases when referencing violence related to norms of masculinity/femininity and/or gender norms.

Harm or maltreatment caused by an organization's staff, operations, or programmes is personal abuse, exploitation, violence, harassment, or neglect against members of the affected community - including children and/or adults - or in the workplace against another staff member or associate. This is a plain-language alternative term to describe a safeguarding concern or incident.

¹ The United Nations Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, [English](#) version, definition under the term "investigation".



Incident is an event or an occurrence that took place on a given date, including a period of several dates, on which the reported breach of the safeguarding standards took place.

Initial assessment is an action to establish if there is significant reason to carry out further fact finding that would confirm if there was harm or maltreatment caused by an organization's staff, operations, or programmes.

Intersectionality - "the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage"². Taking an intersectional approach to safeguarding means understanding how interlocking systems of power affect those who are most marginalized in society, and translating this knowledge into, among other things, risk assessments and mitigation.

Partner refers to organizations, agencies, companies, foundations, trusts, independent actors, or inter-agency groups which are in a contractual relationship with an organization for the purposes of implementing programmes and projects or providing funding.

PSEA (Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse) - the term used by the UN and NGO community to refer to measures taken to protect vulnerable people from sexual exploitation and abuse by their own staff and associated personnel.

Rape - Penetration - even if slightly - of any body part of a person who does not consent with a sexual organ and/or the invasion of the genital or anal opening of a person who does not consent, with any object or body part. Please also see the definitions of "sexual abuse and "sexual assault".

Reporter is the person who shares details of a concern or incident with the organization, irrespective of their role in the incident(s), or their relationship to the survivor or potential wrongdoer.

Report is a broad term covering: all general programme feedback; complaints; concerns or suspicions of maltreatment or harm; and allegations of safeguarding incidents, once these have been received by an organization from either an internal or external source and the organization has started to process the report through their report-handling mechanism. The term complaint is used by many organizations to refer to reports of concerns or incidents involving maltreatment or harm of all kinds. In general, use of the word "**complaint**" infers a negative opinion or expression of discontent. Given that concerns or incidents raised may be criminal acts and/or human rights violations, it is felt inappropriate to use the term "complaint."



Safeguarding covers prevention, mitigation, and response actions to address the full range of personal abuse, violence, bullying and harassment committed or allegedly committed by staff or associates or caused by an organization's operations or programmes. A plain language alternative description for "safeguarding" would be protecting people from maltreatment or harm caused by an organization's staff, operations, or programmes.

Safeguarding report-handling mechanisms are a set of organization-specific policies, processes, and procedures that describe:

- How to receive information about concerns or incidents relating to physical, emotional or sexual harm or maltreatment by staff, operations or programmes.
- How to support survivors, and their children or other family members, friends, witnesses, and the (potential) wrongdoer to address their safety, security, medical, psycho-social, and legal needs.

² [Lexico](#) from Oxford University Press, 2019.



- How to respond to the report to confirm or dismiss allegations - including fact-finding, formal enquiry, and disciplinary action.
- When to document certain details of a concern or incident.
- Staff roles and responsibilities in relation to handling concerns, incidents, and reports.
- The timeframe for action for each step.
- How, when and to whom feedback should be given.

Sexual abuse - actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. All sexual activity with a child is considered as sexual abuse. "Sexual abuse" is a broad term, which includes a number of acts described in this list of terms, including "rape" and "sexual assault".

Sexual assault - Sexual activity with another person who does not consent. It is a violation of bodily integrity and autonomy and is broader than narrower conceptions of "rape", especially because (1) it may be committed by other means than force or violence, and (2) it does not necessarily entail penetration.

Sexual exploitation - any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

Sexual harassment - involves any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another, when such conduct interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Suppliers - organizations or companies that have been contracted to provide goods, equipment and other supplies used by the organization, including for the delivery of programmes and projects.

Survivor is a person who has experienced maltreatment or harm committed by a staff member or associate or that was caused by an organization's operations or programmes. The survivor may be a staff member or a member of the community - child or adult. The term **Victim** is often used in the legal and medical sectors, while the term 'survivor' is generally preferred in the psychological and social support sectors to a person who has experienced sexual or gender-based violence because it implies resilience.

Wrongdoer (potential wrongdoer): Potential is the 'possibility of something happening or of someone doing something in the future.' A wrongdoer is a person who does things that are immoral or illegal. Many organizations use the term "**alleged perpetrator**" throughout the handling of a report. The term alleged perpetrator refers to someone who is legally accused of committing a crime.

Key references/resources:

- The United Nations Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse can be accessed here in [English](#) and [French](#).
- The CHS Alliance's PSEA Implementation Quick Reference Handbook can be accessed here in [English](#).
- Bond's toolkit to strengthen safeguarding report-handling can be accessed here in [English](#).



1.2 International Safeguarding Standards

Safeguarding standards describe good practices for organizations to ensure that their programmes, operations, staff and partners do not put people at risk of harm (prevention) and to enable them to respond appropriately when concerns and incidents arise. The principal sectors of safeguarding standards, covering adults and children in humanitarian and development work, are briefly introduced here:

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Minimum Operating Standards for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) for UN and non-UN staff is the most widely used standard on PSEA, and covers the following eight areas:

- 1 - Effective policy development and implementation
- 2 - Cooperative arrangements
- 3 - A dedicated department/focal point is committed to PSEA
- 4 - Effective and comprehensive communication from headquarters to the field on expectations regarding raising beneficiary awareness on PSEA
- 5 - Effective community-based complaints mechanisms, including victim assistance.
- 6 - Effective recruitment and performance management
- 7 - Effective and comprehensive mechanisms are established to ensure awareness-raising on SEA amongst personnel
- 8 - Internal complaints and investigation procedures in place

The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) describes the essential elements of principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian aid. It is a voluntary and measurable standard, drawing together key elements of existing humanitarian standards and commitments. The CHS places the onus on organizations to commit to good safeguarding practices, communicate its commitments, and prevent and respond to safeguarding concerns and incidents when they do arise. Specifically, the CHS addresses means of safer programming; the importance of working with communities; and ensuring that staff and volunteers understand and work to safeguarding commitments.





The Keeping Children Safe's "International Child Safeguarding Standards"

In 2002, a coalition of humanitarian and development agencies that later became known as Keeping Children Safe, developed the first international child safeguarding standards, organized as follows:

1. Policy: All organizations whose work affects children should develop a child safeguarding policy that prevents harm and outlines the measures in place to respond when safeguarding concerns arise.

2. People: *Everyone* connected to the organization should know how to keep children safe and have appropriate learning opportunities in this regard. *Partners* should have child safeguarding measures, which are consistent with these standards. *Children and families* should understand the organization's commitments to child safeguarding and what to do if concerns arise.

3. Procedures: Safeguarding policy commitments are integrated into existing organizational processes and systems and, where necessary, new procedures introduced.

4. Accountability: The organization has in place measures and mechanisms for monitoring and review of safeguarding measures and to ensure upward and downward accountability.



Key references/resources:

- Plain language versions of the IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse translated by Translators without Borders is available in [100+ languages](#), including [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#) and [Portuguese](#).
- The IASC Minimum Operating Standards can be accessed here in [English](#).
- The Core Humanitarian Standard is available in [20+ languages here](#).
- The Keeping Children Safe's "International Child Safeguarding Standards" can be accessed [here in English](#). The accompanying self-assessment tool can be accessed [here in English](#).
- Information by UN Women on survivor centred approaches can be accessed in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).





1.3 Key Safeguarding principles

There are several key principles to observe when engaging in safeguarding. Whilst each of the thematic areas of safeguarding discussed in this chapter may have their own principles, discussed under the relevant sections, a number of key principles apply across this stream of work:

- **Working with survivor-centred approaches.** This means that the survivor has the right to:
 - Be treated with dignity and respect.
 - Choose a course of action in dealing with the violence.
 - Privacy and confidentiality.
 - Non-discrimination.
 - Comprehensive information to help make their own decision.

- **Paying special attention to the safety, protection and well-being of child survivors:**
 - All children have equal rights to protection from harm.
 - Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children.
 - Organizations have a duty of care to children with whom they work, are in contact with, or who are affected by their work and operations.
 - Supporting partners must meet the minimum requirements on protection.
 - All actions on child safeguarding are taken in the best interest of the child rather than the organizations' interest.

- **Making gender and intersectionality integral to safeguarding.** Understanding gender and intersectional dynamics is at the heart of safeguarding. This entails, among others:
 - Assessing the organizational policies, procedures and practices as well as programmes and approaches for their attention to power dynamics based on e.g. gender, age, ability, race, sexual orientation and their impact on equality.
 - Understanding how interlocking systems of power affect those who are most marginalized in society, and translating this knowledge into, among other things, risk assessments and mitigation.

- **Contextualizing approaches** is critical to effective safeguarding work. For the work to be successful, organizations need to be responsive to the legal and operational landscape, gendered and cultural norms, languages and preferred ways of communicating, etc.

- **Do No Harm** includes actions to prevent safeguarding breaches, caused by the staff, organization or its programmes, to occur in the first place, and actions to ensure no harm is caused through the efforts of preventing and responding to safeguarding concerns.

- **Linking accountability to safeguarding.** A critical part of safeguarding work is having processes for people affected by harmful situations to raise their concerns and to give feedback about how they have been harmed.





Safeguarding self-assessment

Check your safeguarding readiness! Self-assessment helps measure an organization's work against the standards they wish to uphold, and to monitor what is working well and where improvement is needed. Regularly performing self-assessments may help organizations to systematically document information and evidence; track progress; assess interventions and present results. This checklist for self-assessment is to be used by individual organizations who wish to assess their current preparedness and to begin to take steps towards strengthening their respective safeguarding systems.

Below you will find a quick description of each one of the eight sections found both in the self-assessment and in the eight sub-sections that follow the self-assessment table.

The first section, [Developing policies and procedures](#) outlines a suite of core policies related to safeguarding as well as associated policies. The section includes suggested content as well as process guidance for effective policy making. [Safeguarding responsibilities](#) takes as its point of departure that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and discusses roles and responsibilities for different functions including trustees/Board members, Management, Human Resource Managers, and Programme Staff. The third section on [Capacity development for management, staff and volunteers](#) engages with the question on "who should know what" in relation to safeguarding and suggests content for different groups of staff, including critical safeguarding-focal points.

[Working with communities](#) addresses the essential question of ensuring that communities are aware of their rights and of expected staff conduct. It looks at the importance of consultation with diverse groups and catering to a variety of communication needs. The fifth section, called [Safeguarding in partnerships, with suppliers and contractors](#), looks at how to ensure that people are kept safe throughout the implementation chain and what support might be needed to ensure all partners, consultants, contractors, etc., work to high safeguarding standards. [Developing safe programmes](#) addresses safeguarding-related aspects of programming such as risk assessment and mitigation and offers practical guidance for programme and project design and implementation, from a safeguarding perspective.

The seventh section [Developing and implementing report-handling mechanisms](#) looks at key considerations when designing and implementing a report-handling mechanism, as well as the core elements of comprehensive mechanisms. Working through the guide, organizations will be able to design report-handling mechanisms or assess and revise pre-existing ones. The eighth and last section deals with [Responding to safeguarding reports](#) and outlines the core elements of procedures that put the survivors and their needs at the centre of the response.

The checklist found below is for guidance only and is not exhaustive. For each statement, tick the box which corresponds: 😊 = in place; 😐 = partially done; 😞 = not in place. By grouping the results, this will provide an indication of your organization's progress and help guide further steps on measures needed.





While this self-assessment is divided into different thematic areas, each component is essential for a well-functioning safeguarding system. Having state-of-the-art policies in place will matter little if they are not widely owned and promoted by the management and throughout the organization. The act of accepting safeguarding reports needs to be accompanied by rigorous training for those in charge of handling reports, so as not to add to protection concerns and to risks of doing further harm. **In short, while each component of the self-assessment is important, the organization's commitment to handling safeguarding as a concern that sits at the heart of all that the organization does is key to its success.**

Tip for users!

For organizations: Make the self-assessment a collective exercise for your organization, to help bring out different perspectives, concerns and suggestions for improvement!

For membership-based organizations: Work with members undertaking the self-assessment as a guide to identify good practices and gaps in policies, procedures and practices. Use this information to facilitate peer learning and tailored support to members!





Safeguarding self-assessment

😊 = in place 🙄 = partially done 😞 = not in place

2.1. DEVELOPING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES		😊	🙄	😞
A	The organization has signed an interagency Code of Conduct or the organization has its own Code, in line with good safeguarding standards and practices.			
B	The organization has developed policies on safeguarding, disclosure of malpractices in the workplace (protecting the reporter from retaliation), complaints, and procedures for dealing with safeguarding reports.			
C	The organization has established procedures for monitoring concerns and incidents, to better identify trends and improve the assessment of program risks.			
D	The organization has an action plan in place for mainstreaming safeguarding.			
E	The organization has developed policies that can support a positive safeguarding culture including policies on gender/inclusion, on discipline/grievance, on bullying, on harassment and on non-discrimination.			
F	The organization monitors the gender balance of staffing and strives to be gender-balanced at all levels of responsibility, in both national and sub-national offices, and amongst nationally and internationally contracted staff and volunteers.			
G	The organization has reviewed impediments to achieve gender balance and implemented strategies to remove such obstacles.			
H	The organization has reviewed its policies and procedures for any weakness in managing disciplinary cases, survivor referral and support systems, and Human Resources practices that may increase potential for abuses and has acted upon or advocated for change when necessary.			
TOTALS				

2.2. SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES		😊	🙄	😞
A	The board of the organization is gender-balanced and inclusive, with meaningful participation of all its members.			
B	The board provides a safe and trusted environment and an organizational culture that prioritises safeguarding and people protection.			
C	The board has regular safeguarding prompts on its agenda, making it an ongoing priority.			
D	The board has an appointed safeguarding focal function.			
E	Senior management leads by example by modelling appropriate behaviour, prioritising safeguarding concerns in management meetings, and taking responsibility for its prevention.			
F	Senior management works with others to prevent the rehiring of wrongdoers.			
G	Senior management ensures safeguarding is mainstreamed in supervision and performance-management tools.			
H	A focal function within the organization has been appointed for the implementation / follow up of safeguarding activities.			
I	The safeguarding focal function attends regular coordination meetings with all actors to ensure a concerted effort in prevention and response to safeguarding concerns and incidents.			
J	Training and written guidance on safer recruitment practices are provided for those responsible for recruiting and selecting staff.			
K	All job advertisements reaffirm the organization's commitment to the Code of Conduct and to keeping people safe from harassment, abuse and exploitation.			
L	Applicants must fill in job application forms, which require the applicant to give information about criminal convictions, reasons for leaving previous jobs and periods when no employer is listed.			



M	During the recruitment / interview process, the organization discusses the policies of staff/community relations and assesses interviewees responses to questions related to sexual relations with the community and vulnerability.			
N	References are rigorously gathered and follow a specific format / checklist, and questions about current and previous disciplinary actions are included.			
O	All staff contracts include the main principles of the Code of Conduct, including on safeguarding, or have the Code of Conduct attached.			
P	Before signing contracts, staff are made explicitly aware of the provisions relating to safeguarding to ensure they have read and understood the responsibilities.			
Q	Job descriptions, employment contracts and performance appraisal systems etc. for managers have been revised to ensure adequate attention to their responsibility to prevent and respond to safeguarding concerns and incidents.			
TOTALS				

2.3. CAPACITY DEVOLPMENT FOR MANAGEMENT, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS				
A	The Code of Conduct is visible and accessible to all in operational and office areas.			
B	The organization has distributed the Code of Conduct, in relevant languages, to all staff.			
C	All existing staff have read and signed the Code of Conduct and have knowledge about the consequences of breaches.			
D	Guidance is provided to new employees/volunteers on the cultural context, gender dynamics and relations and appropriate behaviour expected of staff/volunteers.			
E	During the induction process, the employee/volunteer is rigorously taken through the Code of Conduct and the safeguarding report-handling mechanism. Staff/volunteers are given the time to discuss and fully understand the policies and procedures. Staff/volunteers formally acknowledge receipt and acceptance of the policies. For staff, documents are kept on personnel files.			
F	A manager is responsible for ensuring that a training strategy (covering all personnel categories) is being implemented to raise awareness of gender and intersectionality, gender-based violence, human rights, prevention of and response to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, and the Code of Conduct.			
G	All staff, especially those who have direct contact with communities, have received training on sexual exploitation and abuse and its prevention, including report-handling mechanisms and referral pathways for survivor support and assistance.			
H	Safeguarding focal functions have received professional training in order to be able to understand and explain safeguarding; to undertake risk assessments; to embed safeguarding measures into recruitment processes and to develop reporting and referral pathways.			
I	Human Resources have been capacitated to develop safeguarding content of policies and procedures and to perform applicable background/reference safeguarding checks.			
J	Management has a thorough understanding of all policies and procedures related to safeguarding.			
K	Members of the Board are trained on their role in setting a safe culture and any tools used by the organization.			
L	All relevant safeguarding guidelines and reference materials are available at all offices of the organization (HQ, field) for staff reference.			
M	Employees with prolonged and largely unsupervised time with women and children are especially targeted for safeguarding support, advice and training.			
TOTALS				



2.4. WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES				
A	The organization has identified the different stakeholders with which it works and understands the diverse communication needs and preferences, barriers to and preferred ways of reporting.			
B	The organization has strengthened communication and information systems to ensure that all communities they work with, regardless of ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, age and ability, receive information in appropriate forms, that goods and services are for free and do not require payment of any kind.			
C	The organization has disseminated the Code of Conduct amongst the communities with which it works and ensures that copies (translated if needed) of the Code of Conduct are freely available for community members.			
D	Information on safeguarding report-handling mechanisms, and available support services, in relevant languages, are visible and accessible to communities.			
E	The organization ensures that field staff have the ability to promote and encourage standards of accountability and the Code of Conduct to communities in its programs.			
F	The organization promotes regular interaction between communities and senior staff.			
G	There is an open-door policy for all meetings between communities and staff.			
H	A gender/intersectional power analysis has been carried out with communities to inform specific risk factors for marginalized groups for sexual exploitation and abuse.			
I	The organization creates the conditions (spaces and processes) for the community to determine their expectations for staff behaviour and what constitutes a Safeguarding breach.			
TOTALS				

2.5. SAFEGUARDING IN PARTNERSHIPS, WITH SUPPLIERS AND CONTRACTORS				
A	There is a shared understanding of safeguarding within the partnership.			
B	Networks and collaborations with e.g. organizations working on women's rights, child's rights, LGBTI's rights, inclusion, etc., are in place to leverage expertise and resources related to safeguarding.			
C	Local knowledge of social and cultural norms, safeguarding risks and mitigation measures, applicable laws and available support services, languages and preferred ways of communicating with communities are factored into policies and procedures.			
D	Tools and materials on safeguarding, including facilitation support, are shared between HQ, field offices and partner organizations, alongside guidance and facilitation support, where necessary.			
E	Prior to contracting, suppliers and contractors are assessed for their contact with communities and capacity to implement safeguarding measures (e.g. whether Codes of Conduct, policies and procedures are in place and to what extent they have been implemented).			
F	Reference checks and background checks (as appropriate) of suppliers/contractors are carried out.			
G	All contracts with partners or service providers incorporate the core principles of the Code of Conduct as part of the agreement.			
H	It is written into the contract that any violation of the Code of Conduct by that partner/service provider can result in the termination of said contract.			
I	All partners/service providers are aware that they are responsible for ensuring the Code of Conduct is made known to the community with whom they are working.			
J	The organization has strengthened collaboration and coordination among all sectors and partners in addressing safeguarding with emphasis on the needs of the survivors; e.g., case management, advocacy, information-sharing and emotional support.			
TOTALS				



2.6. DEVELOPING SAFE PROGRAMS				
A	Risks and vulnerabilities (social, legal, etc.) of exploitation and abuse of different segments of the community are analysed and well understood.			
B	Strategies to reduce risks and promote accountability are integrated into regular programme planning, monitoring and evaluation processes.			
C	Project work plans incorporate safeguarding.			
D	Project implementation does not create opportunities for increasing the vulnerability of affected community members nor the opportunity for false allegations by affected community members.			
E	The organization has undertaken a gender and power analysis of all programs to ensure gender-sensitive and inclusive programming and implementation.			
F	The organization ensures that basic services and goods are adequate.			
G	Safeguarding awareness and sensitivity is mainstreamed in all programmatic activities.			
H	The organization has developed referral mechanisms to support services for child protection and to avoid gender-based violence.			
I	Budgets include safeguarding funding lines for e.g. risk analyses, resource mapping, community consultations, training, response and monitoring.			
J	Regular programmatic monitoring and evaluation incorporates safeguarding as a matter of course.			
K	Supervisory staff engage with communities and report on progress made to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse.			
L	Regular evaluations of assistance (distribution of commodities, health services, education) take place with significant participation of community members.			
M	Senior managers regularly visit the field.			
N	Composition of teams visiting the field is gender-balanced.			
TOTALS				

2.7. DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING REPORT-HANDLING MECHANISMS				
A	The organization has established, in close consultation with the community the organization works with, a confidential and safe safeguarding-report handling mechanism suitable for staff and communities that acknowledges and builds on the work of other actors.			
B	All staff and community members that the organization works with, regardless of designation and work location, know where and how they can report a safeguarding concern or incident.			
C	A means to file anonymous safeguarding reports is also available e.g. complaints box / telephone hotline.			
D	Staff who receive reports of safeguarding concerns or incidents are trained on how to deal with reporters/ fill in referral forms and advise on support services available.			
E	There is also a form for receiving incidents and a form for receiving concerns.			
F	The organization has a clear and documented guideline on reporting concerns and incidents to management, which includes a system to bypass the reporting pathway as needed.			
G	The organization promotes a culture and environment in which everyone regardless of their gender, gender identity, age, ability, race, sexual orientation, religion etc. are listened to and respected as individuals.			
H	The actions taken by the organization when a safeguarding concern or incident is reported are satisfactory to the survivor/reporter.			
TOTALS				



2.8. RESPONDING TO SAFEGUARDING REPORTS				
A	The organization promotes the development of a culture, which ensures that reported abuses are immediately reported upwards and acted upon.			
B	Responses are survivor-centred, keeping the needs and wishes of the survivor at the forefront of any fact-finding or enquiry process.			
C	Support to survivors according to their needs and wishes (including e.g. medical, psycho-social, legal- and safety and security) is available as necessary and is not necessarily linked to a formal report.			
D	The organization responds to reported incidents and concerns according to documented guidelines following safeguarding standards and good practice.			
E	The organization ensures that all confidential information is channelled correctly and handled with the utmost discretion.			
F	The organization will coordinate fact finding, inquire and investigations with other agencies when and if appropriate.			
G	The organization has staff with the skills and expertise to undertake fact finding, enquiries and investigations related to reported safeguarding concerns and incidents OR has established routines for how to outsource such functions (including resourcing).			
H	Administrative, logistical and psycho-social support is available to those performing an enquiry or investigation to carry out their job properly.			
I	The organization provides appropriate feedback to the potential wrongdoers / reporters / survivors/ communities on the progress of fact finding, inquiries and investigations.			
J	The organization ensures that all concerns and incidents are properly tracked and followed-up to ensure that the survivor receives the optimum support required.			
K	Senior managers have a clear understanding about if, and when, to report a case to the police.			
L	Appropriate disciplinary action is always taken against wrongdoers.			
TOTALS				

Other self-assessment tools can be found below:

- Information about the CHS Alliance’s self-verification scheme can be found here in [English](#).
- The Keeping Children Safe self-assessment tool can be accessed [here in English](#).





2.1 Developing policies and procedures

A beneficial safeguarding culture is one where policies and practices across the organization align and reinforce each other, providing a clear message that bullying, discrimination, harassment, exploitation and abuse are not tolerated, and that procedures are in place to ensure that concerns are raised and properly addressed. Such an organizational culture makes it more difficult for safeguarding incidents to occur without reporting and action.

Policy development and implementation related to safeguarding is as much about the 'how' as the 'what'. Listed here is a suite of 'core' safeguarding policies and associated policies. The precise make-up of the policy suite will differ between organizations.

Essential safeguarding policies

Policy/procedure	Purpose	Key elements
Code of Conduct	Describing expected conduct of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizational mission, norms and values - Expected standards of behaviour (including on integrity; prohibition of bullying, harassment, abuse and exploitation; promotion of health and safety of all; use of information, assets and resources; conflict of interest; confidentiality) - Procedures and practices to be observed by staff including information on how to report Code of Conduct breaches
Safeguarding policy	To protect people, particularly children, adults at risk and communities, from any harm that may be caused due to them getting in touch with an organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purpose and aim of the safeguarding policy - Legal and policy basis of the policy - Definitions - Roles and responsibilities - Mitigation and implementation - Recognising concerns - Reporting procedures and process - Monitoring, review and complementary policies
Policy on disclosure of malpractice in the workplace	To protect the reporter/whistle-blower from victimization in the event of a report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of malpractice - Non-victimization of the reporter/whistle-blower - Preparation when raising a concern - Reporting pathways for different scenarios - Expectations of notification of outcomes and confidentiality
Complaints policy	Outlining the organization's commitment to receive and respond to complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definitions of complaints - Definition of complainants (i.e. partners, community members, members of the public) - How to make a complaint
Procedure for dealing with safeguarding reports	To set out the process for dealing with reports of breach of the organization's safeguarding policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Receiving reports - Proceeding with reports - Roles and responsibilities for case management - Survivor support - Risk assessments - Next steps (e.g. inquiry, referrals) - Inquiry management (if needed) - Decision making based on inquiry - Case closing



Associated Policies

Other policies that can work to support a positive safeguarding culture include:

- **Gender/diversity/inclusion policy** - which may include goals, principles, programmatic and organizational workplace priorities, resource allocation, external communication, staffing and recruitment, etc.
- **Discipline/grievance policy** - which outlines the organization's informal and formal procedures for dealing with misconduct that is different from safeguarding breaches.
- **Anti-bullying and anti-harassment policy** - which includes definitions of harassment and bullying and outlines informal and formal reporting procedures.
- **Non-discrimination policy** - which outlines prohibition of discrimination on a range of grounds and the organization's policies regarding how this is managed in hiring and management practices.

Good practices in policy-making

- **Bring it back to basics.** Policy making can seem like a technical area, and it is vital to consistently connect these processes to the basic questions that policies are trying to assist with. Questions to ask include:
 - How are decisions made?
 - How are staff involved?
 - What are the power relations between different groups (international; national staff; community-based volunteers; staff and volunteers from partner organizations)?
 - Are there genuine opportunities for communities or staff to critique the organization?
 - What does the organizational culture tell us - is there informal behaviour that is permitted which serves to undermine formal processes?
- **Undertake an in-country legal analysis.** In cases where the legislation of the country where work is being implemented differs from the country of the organization (e.g. age of consent, labour laws, law relating to sex work and homosexuality), in general, the laws of the country of work take precedence, unless they contravene a UN treaty. When developing policy, check to see which treaties the concerned country has signed and make explicit which laws and/or treaties the organization's policies comply with.
- **Make policy-making a participatory process.** For policies to be relevant and widely owned, the importance of staff, partners and communities participating in making, reviewing and challenging organizational policies cannot be overstated. Analysis of context, language and culture should underpin locally relevant policies. **To develop the policy, consider running a consultation with staff, raising awareness on what safeguarding means and asking for their inputs on what the policy should say.** Make sure to circulate the draft and ask for comments before finalising the policy.
- **Monitor progress.** Design an implementation plan to help identify gaps in implementing safeguarding as well as actions to address the gaps. Make sure the plan is reviewed and updated regularly.

Key references/resources:

- The CHS Alliance NGO checklist for developing or revising codes of conduct can be accessed [here in English](#).
- CHS Alliance PSEA Quick Reference Handbook which outlines the key elements and steps for formulating a functioning policy can be accessed [here in English](#).
- A detailed process template from Scotland's International Development Alliance on how to develop a safeguarding policy can be accessed [here in English](#).
- Bond's Safeguarding Policy Templates can be accessed [here in English](#).



Case example: Coordinadora ONGD (Spain) and the process of developing common indicators

In 2019, led by the Code of Conduct Commission and the Transparency and Good Governance Working Group, the platform revised its Code of Conduct, in order to include and clarify safeguarding measures. The platform has also developed, over time, a tool on transparency and good governance for the membership, which to date includes 79 indicators. Of relevance to safeguarding, three new indicators were added in 2019, following more than a year of deliberations among members.

The indicators include (1) a requirement for organizations to have their own Code of Conduct and (2) a whistleblowing channel. Moreover, (3) a Safeguarding Response Group needs to be in place to deal with complaints. Protocols were improved for communication on outcomes of safeguarding reports within the organization / assembly / board. Progress on these indicators is published annually in a report, which is also shared with members. The expectation is that these indicators will be implemented from 2019 and will start being included in reporting from 2020 onwards.

While these are important improvements, there is still a need for integration of a gender perspective at all levels, including in policies and in connection to leadership issues. There is a need to better harness the knowledge that is generated from programmes on gender-based violence, on how best to support survivors. This is work in progress.





2.2 Safeguarding responsibilities

While safeguarding is everybody's responsibility, the role of leadership in developing a good safeguarding culture within their respective organizations cannot be overstated. A healthy safeguarding culture³ is one where:

- The rights and protection of all adults and children involved in or benefitting from the organization's work are prioritised above all other considerations.
- Personnel and communities are and feel safe and valued throughout their involvement with the organization.
- Individuals know who to go to with any concerns and are confident that they will be listened to and heard, without personal or professional repercussions.
- The organization strives to adopt the highest standards of practice across all areas of safeguarding rather than settling for the minimum standard in order to be legally compliant.
- Protecting vulnerable groups will always take precedence over protecting the organization.

○ **Boards can play a critical role in organizational safeguarding efforts by:⁴**

- Recruiting the right CEO and ensuring that organizational culture is included in their objectives and performance review.
- Ensuring the organization's mission, vision and values are sound and prioritise safeguarding.
- Being inclusive and diverse with meaningful participation of all its members.
- Approving a suitable executive structure, including appointment of safeguarding focal points.
- Engaging actively for a sound organizational culture.
- Assigning a safeguarding focal point on the board.
- Having safeguarding as a standing agenda item.
- Ensuring that the organization adopts a survivor-centred approach.

○ **(Senior) management can commit to good safeguarding practices by ensuring that:**

- Robust and inclusive policies are in place and continuously reviewed.
- Procedures, including for report-handling, are in place and well understood.
- Feedback mechanisms exist.
- Safeguarding work is appropriately resourced including for training and support to survivors.
- Staff are allocated enough time to work on safeguarding.
- They work with others to facilitate transparency to prevent the rehiring of wrongdoers.
- Safeguarding is mainstreamed in supervision and performance management tools.
- All new employees receive safeguarding policy training as part of their induction.
- Safeguarding measures are implemented within their area of responsibility.
- Safeguarding issues are addressed and followed up appropriately.

○ **Consider appointing safeguarding focal points that are relatively senior. Roles may include:**

- Awareness raising/training for staff, stakeholders and communities.
- Documenting who has signed the safeguarding policy and code of conduct and who has received what training related to safeguarding.
- Receiving safeguarding reports and coordinating the response.

³ Adapted from [Scotland's International Development Alliance's process template for developing safeguarding policy](#).

⁴ Adapted from Bond's resource [Good Governance for Safeguarding](#).



- **The safeguarding responsibilities of Human Resources staff may include:**
 - Implementing the necessary measures when recruiting new staff and volunteers including:
 - Referencing safeguarding in job descriptions.
 - Conducting appropriate reference checks.
 - Obtaining, as appropriate and available, criminal background checks.
 - Ensuring new employees are familiarized with and sign the safeguarding policy and the Code of Conduct.
 - Ensuring that all staff and volunteers receive induction.
 - Ensuring that all staff and volunteers receive training relevant to their safeguarding responsibilities and (where relevant) annual refresher training on safeguarding.
- **Programme staff ensure that communities are aware of** (see also section 2.4 on Working with Communities):
 - Expected standards of staff behaviour.
 - The safeguarding policy.
 - How to report concerns and incidents.
- **All staff:**
 - Sign the organization's Code of Conduct which includes safeguarding.
 - Adhere to the safeguarding policy, Code of Conduct and related policies (e.g. gender / inclusion).
 - Report concerns through the designated report-handling mechanism knowing that they are protected from retaliation.

 **Key references/resources:**

- Bond's resource Good Governance for Safeguarding can be accessed [here in English](#).
- InterAction CEO Pledge can be accessed [here in English](#).
- CHS Alliance PSEA Quick Reference Handbook can be accessed [here in English](#).
- Partos' Integrity System Guide can be accessed [here in English](#).
- A process template from Scotland's International Development Alliance on developing safeguarding policy can be accessed [here in English](#).
- The Interagency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme can be accessed [here in English](#).
- UNHCR staff brochure on reporting SEA concerns can be accessed [here in English, French, Arabic and Spanish](#).
- A sample Terms of Reference for in-country PSEA Focal Points can be accessed [here in English](#), and an example of a Terms of Reference for an in-country PSEA Network (Jordan) can be accessed [here in English](#).





Case example: Coordination SUD (France) on conducting a gender and power analysis of board meetings.

At Coordination SUD, the Gender Commission is conducting an exercise in observing interactions between directors during board meetings, through a gender lens. Members of this commission will be present at board meetings using an observation grid (a table with several indicators/criteria). The tool is designed to test the assumption that power inequalities in personal interactions correlate with gender.

Observations will take place over a long period of time (several Board meetings) in order to establish significant trends. The data collected during the observation period will be aggregated and will be used to prepare a general observation/diagnosis report of possible power inequalities (awareness). Mechanisms to correct these inequalities will then be proposed to the board members (practical processes).





2.3 Capacity development for management, staff and volunteers

Regular training and capacity development on safeguarding is important for all people working in, and associated with, an organization. Capacity development on safeguarding is an opportunity for organizations to focus on and socialize its core values and principles, to ensure that these are fully understood and universally owned within the organization.

Linking capacity development on safeguarding to broader themes of human rights, gender, gender-based violence, power, consent, inclusion and intersectionality, helps ensure that safeguarding is not understood primarily as a technical area of work, but as a fundamental precondition for quality, accountable development and humanitarian practice.

Who needs to know what?

- **All staff and volunteers:** Safeguarding is relevant for all personnel, from senior management to volunteers. Training on safeguarding basics may include:
 - Expected conduct.
 - Implications of breaching the Code of Conduct.
 - How to report any safeguarding concerns.
 - How to handle reports on safeguarding concerns and incidents according to one's role.
- **Safeguarding focal points:** Where possible, designated focal functions should receive professional training, including to be able to:
 - Understand and explain safeguarding.
 - Assess the programmatic and operational risks that an organization's work may induce and propose appropriate mitigating actions.
 - Embed safeguarding awareness and measures into recruitment processes.
 - Develop safeguarding referral and reporting pathways based on a mapping and quality check of appropriate service providers.
- **Human Resources staff:** They have critical roles to play when it comes to safeguarding. Depending on the level of safeguarding preparedness within an organization, human resources capacity development needs may include:
 - Advocating management for strengthening internal safeguarding systems.
 - Safeguarding content of policy and procedures.
 - Participation in common systems of reference checks.
- **Managers and Board:** Training may work well in the form of peer learning and opportunities to share experiences on safeguarding leadership. Training on safeguarding for management and governance should support a thorough understanding of:
 - All policies and procedures related to safeguarding.
 - Risk assessment and mitigation.
 - The report-handling mechanism, including the feature of bypassing reporting pathways in some cases and what that means practically (especially in smaller offices).
 - The board's role in setting a safe culture and how to put organizational culture, as well as safeguarding, on the board's agenda.
 - Oversight of any tools used to measure the organization's level of readiness of the organization when it comes to Safeguarding.





Good practices when building capacity on safeguarding

- **Acknowledge sensitivities and offer support:** Be mindful that people undergoing training and capacity development on safeguarding may have personal experiences of bullying, harassment, or abuse and exploitation. Tread carefully, discuss trigger warnings and, if possible, have people who can offer mental health support present in training sessions and/or provide contact details to such resources in training and communication materials.
- **Use multiple communication channels:** Awareness-raising materials such as posters or leaflets, can be used to remind staff of the Code of Conduct. Include safeguarding in communications about organizational values and principles, for example in public displays and presentations, job advertisements and email signatures. Consider having participants in face-to-face and online events agree to a Code of Conduct.
- **Leverage learning across organizations:** Working through communities of practice/ working groups and building on the strengths of diverse organizations with specific expertise in safeguarding can enhance the quality of work across organizations.
- **Keep it up!** Staff turnover and temporary mobilization of volunteers calls for good record keeping of who has received training and a flexible training schedule that can accommodate ongoing and varying training needs. Annual refresher training opportunities may be provided to ensure knowledge is up to date. Employees with prolonged and largely unsupervised time with women and children could be especially targeted for safeguarding support, advice and training.



Key references/resources:

- The Humanitarian Leadership Academy's Safeguarding Essentials course, for those working in the humanitarian and development sectors, with a focus on working in a field context. The on-line, one-hour course is free and provides the learner with a digital badge following course completion. The course can be accessed [here in English](#), [Arabic](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).
- The Quebec Committee on Women and Development has developed several awareness-raising and training resources related to sexual violence, LGBTI, intersectionality. The resources can be accessed [here in French](#).
- World Vision's PSEA poster for staff can be accessed [here in English](#).
- UNICEF's Training of Trainers on Gender-Based Violence: Focusing on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse can be accessed [here in English](#).





Case example: Plataforma Portuguesa das ONGD (Portugal) on the process through which the platform set up a self-assessment tool for its membership.

The platform's work on developing a Code of Conduct started in 2011, with a round of several workshops and it was approved at the General Assembly in 2017. For platform members, having a Code of Conduct will become mandatory in 2020. A training workshop was held in 2018 on Safeguarding and Codes of Conduct and the Portuguese Platform is thinking in ways to extend the support to its members for organizational capacity building to progress on the issue. In parallel they have developed a self-assessment monitoring tool to implement the Code of Conduct for member organizations.

A draft of this tool was developed by the Ethics Working Group and was revised by the members. The next step will be to do a testing round of the tool, followed by feedback by the Board members. After these steps, the feedback will be integrated, the tool will be ready to be presented at the General Assembly to all the members and disseminated to start being applied. By that time, the Ethics working group will organize a workshop for all the members to clarify any doubts and provide help on how to implement it.





2.4 Working with communities

How organizations interact with communities in humanitarian and development contexts varies, and the specifics of how to engage communities on safeguarding will look different from context to context. In all circumstances, it is essential that the communities that organizations work with are aware of:

- Their rights.
- The standards of staff behaviour.
- Reporting mechanisms.
- Available support services.

Good practices for working with communities on safeguarding

Identify the stakeholders

- Who are the stakeholders and how do their vulnerabilities differ? Consider when, where and how certain groups may have increased vulnerability to harassment, exploitation and abuse, and prioritize needs.
- Consider the different groups you work with: how do their communication needs differ (e.g. by age, ability, location, etc.)?

Consult the community

- The topic of safeguarding is sensitive for many reasons. Collaborate with community members to identify fruitful ways of communicating the issue and ensure that staff are aware of cultural specificities related to communication.
- Work with the community to generate a common understanding of expected standards of staff behaviour and of what constitutes a safeguarding breach.
- Explore with individuals and groups in the community potential barriers to and preferred ways of reporting concerns and incidents.
- Ensure the voices of the most marginalized groups in the community are heard.

Communicate effectively

- Informed by community consultations, consider how to convey the key messages of your safeguarding policy and procedures in a way that makes cultural sense, and that considers age, native language, literacy rates, access to digital means, etc. Consider using various tools as appropriate, such as posters, leaflets, theatre or social media.
- Consider that the way we write policies is a language in itself: policies tend to be unspecific so that they can cover diverse scenarios. Use concrete and jointly defined examples of what kind of behaviour constitutes safeguarding breaches and how these can be reported.
- Always include information on available support services.

Do No Harm

- The act of reporting a safeguarding concern or incident must never put the reporter, survivor or any other person at risk. This means that a robust report-handling mechanism must be in place by the time communities are made aware of safeguarding and of how to report (see section 2.7 on Developing and implementing report-handling mechanisms).

Key references/resources:

- InterAction's report on "The language and culture of PSEA" can be accessed [here in English](#).
- CHS Alliance's "PSEA Implementation Quick Reference Handbook" can be accessed [here in English](#).



2.5 Safeguarding in partnerships, with suppliers and contractors

Any organization is responsible to ensure that communities and staff are not harmed by the organization or its programmes throughout the chain of implementation, or, in other words, that safeguarding is mainstreamed. At a time when the partnership approach is an ever-growing programming modality, this responsibility is made complex, due to reasons of social and cultural norms, legal frameworks, unequal power dynamics, resource allocation, proximity to communities and so on.

Working to ensure high safeguarding standards in partnerships

- **Consider the relative strength of each partner, identify and address the gaps**, whether related to capacity, tools, resources, networks, etc.
- **Create a shared understanding of safeguarding within the partnership.** While the term safeguarding may be unfamiliar to many, the essence of keeping communities and staff safe from harm is most likely not.
- **Avoid constructing safeguarding primarily as an area of compliance.** Such an approach risks creating a box-ticking culture rather than well-designed and effective systems that are owned by organizations and communities and that promote a safeguarding culture based on values.
- **Local organizations are often well placed to understand safeguarding risks and mitigation measures** - elevate such knowledge of social and cultural norms, language and preferred ways of communicating effectively with communities, knowledge of the legal frameworks, and available support services, when working to develop locally appropriate policies and procedures.
- **Create an enabling organizational culture** where respect, inclusion and accountability are core values that permeate its operations.
- **Share tools and materials** between headquarters, field offices, and partner organizations, alongside guidance and facilitation support where necessary.
- **Develop networks to leverage expertise and resources** - Facilitate collaboration with gender focused/women's rights organizations, child protection organizations, LGBTI organizations, organizations working on disability, and organizations working on other grounds for exclusion, as well as in-country safeguarding networks and mechanisms.
- Safeguarding is a sensitive area of work. **Support the facilitation of difficult conversations** as necessary, by e.g. working through joint definitions, including that of a healthy safeguarding culture.
- Recognize that **smaller organizations may need more time** to develop safeguarding approaches in ways that align with donor expectations.
- **Work collaboratively among organizations by sharing tools and resources and allowing for safeguarding to be an arena of collaboration, rather than competition.**
- Design and monitor strategic directions, policies and action plans in relation to safeguarding together with partner organizations at a country-level.
- **Advocate for more direct, predictable and multi-year funding for partner organizations** from donors to cover safeguarding costs long-term.



Working with suppliers, contractors and consultants on safeguarding

The relationship between an organization and its partners can be rather different from that with the suppliers/contractors/consultants with whom the organization works. The latter may be more transactional, and likely of shorter duration, which means that opportunities to engage in in-depth processes on safeguarding may be fewer. Still, it is critical to ensure that all suppliers/contractors/ consultants are aware of and work to high safeguarding standards. The following measures are a guide:

- **Assess prospective consultants and/or companies.** Before contracting arrangements are made, assess suppliers/contractors/consultants for their contact with stakeholders, and capacity to implement safeguarding measures. Check whether Codes of Conduct, policies and procedures are in place, and to what extent these have been implemented. Reference checks and, in relevant cases, background checks of individuals, may be carried out. This will help decide whether to work with a specific individual/company and what support to offer.
- **Mainstream safeguarding in contract agreements.** Develop contracts for suppliers/contractors/consultants which include safeguarding requirements and commitments (if necessary) to supporting the company to meet requirements. Provide the option for suppliers/contractors/consultants to sign onto your policy and Code of Conduct. Such a process would need to be accompanied by a thorough briefing.
- **Provide support to meet standards.** Consider the best approach for offering safeguarding training to suppliers/contractors/consultants (particularly where these entities will have contact with communities) by taking into account context and available resources. If feasible, include the suppliers/contractors/consultants' staff in the organization's staff-training events.
- **Monitor and exchange information.** Agree with contractors/suppliers/consultants on how to exchange information on safeguarding, including progress reports on implementing safeguarding measures, and how concerns and incidents related to the contractor/supplier/consultant will be reported to your organization.

Key references/resources:

- Bond's Safeguarding in successful partnerships - Change Statement can be accessed [here in English](#).
- CHS Alliance's PSEA Implementation Quick Reference Handbook can be accessed [here in English](#).
- World Vision's Guidance Note: Application of Child Protection Standards to Staff and Sub-Contractors of Contracted Individuals or Companies can be accessed [here in English](#).





Case example: SeedChange (Canada) on the process of working towards value alignment in partnerships

SeedChange has a long history of working through partners in remote field locations. The organization started looking more in-depth at Safeguarding when experiences brought up risks and challenges. It has led to a re-examining of partnership-recruitment strategies. Increasingly, SeedChange looks for value alignment, which includes the expectation of a feminist core: that sexual abuse and exploitation is unacceptable is a given, which gives the organization and the partner a mutual interest in intervening.

SeedChange has had pride in maintaining long-term relationships and working in a true partnership approach. It can be a challenge to shift long-term partnerships that are working well on agriculture but not on the Gender-Based Violence frame. They might not have the background, skills or expertise. There is a need to find entry points.

The Canadian government has a feminist international assistance policy, which addresses Sexual and Gender-Based Violence. The theory of change underlying the programmes being developed is the idea of cultural change leading to the prevention of sexual violence. SeedChange wants strong technical partners, but also concern for culture and values, and is looking at the whole organization. Is the prevention of sexual violence owned and integrated, or is it about ticking the box? How can these commitments be meaningfully assessed? This is a big shift. SeedChange now looks for organizations that see agriculture as a tool for cultural change.





2.6 Developing safe programmes

Understanding risks and vulnerabilities in designing and implementing safe programmes is one of the key preventative actions linked to safeguarding. These actions are context-based and context-specific. Here are some of the key questions to ask when conducting assessments and designing programmes:

Understanding risks and vulnerabilities

- What are the characteristics of the stakeholders that the organization works with that may increase their vulnerabilities to sexual abuse and exploitation? For example, do they lack legal identity, is their sexual orientation criminalized?
- When and where are different stakeholders vulnerable? Who performs what tasks? Is there enough understanding of stakeholders' lived experiences? Is the organization or its programmes exacerbating vulnerabilities? Where are the blind spots?
- What are the characteristics of the programme's activities that may increase risk for stakeholders and for staff? Are the goods and services provided adequate, sufficient and predictable? Can people say no to activities?
- How are the stakeholders involved in determining context-based and context-specific criteria of what constitutes a Safeguarding breach?

Addressing identified risks through design and monitoring

- Is awareness raising and communication on safeguarding incorporated into programme/project activities?
- Are there monitoring tools in place to receive feedback on whether the stakeholders perceive the programme/project to be safe? Have they experienced, witnessed or learnt about whether harm or abuse has arisen due to the programme/project being implemented? What would help to prevent this from arising in the future?
- Are stakeholders aware of your report-handling mechanisms? Have they reported concerns through the mechanism? Would they feel comfortable doing so? How can stakeholders report once the field presence/project period of your organization has ended?
- Have programmes/projects that present safeguarding risks been adapted or redesigned? Are designs, project cycles and budgets sufficiently flexible to allow for this?
- How can a survivor be linked to services that are available? What are the gender based violence support structures for the region/country where the organization works? What are the local and national child-protection mechanisms and related support services for referral?

Budgeting for safe programmes

- Are costs for risk analysis, resource mapping, awareness raising and consultation with stakeholders, training on safeguarding, and response and monitoring included in programme/project budgets?
- For funders, how are needs for safeguarding budgetary posts communicated with potential grants holders? What technical support can be offered?

Key references/resources:

- CHS Alliance's PSEA Implementation Quick Reference Handbook can be accessed [here in English](#).
- The IASC Guidelines on Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action can be accessed here in [English](#), [Arabic](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#).



Case example: Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS) on the innovation of working with district platforms.

The FCOSS Code of Accountability has been used to drive better standards between members and staff of the secretariat at the national and district level. There is a plan to review the code in 2020 as there is an expectation from the government that FCOSS works to establish a Code of Conduct for CSO Humanitarian Actors.

As FCOSS has been moving from direct implementation to a coordinating platform for members, the platform has worked to link members and staff in district-level platforms. The district platforms of members have their own committees and have been assigned a “desk officer” from FCOSS. It was made mandatory for each of the district platforms to have online chat rooms that include the executive director and another team leader as well as their responsible desk officer. The online platforms for discussions across the twelve district platforms, which also include Board members and staff, are a great way of fostering discussions around governance and mutually accountable exchanges. The approach was trialed in 2019 with some good results, but with recognition that new competencies were needed within FCOSS to ensure better coordination. It is early stages, but there are already signs, such as the reporting of possible fraud in 2019, that the system may work.

Success factors have been the building of better relationships and exploring potential new entry points in a context of closing civic space. The actions taken also impact the credibility of the platform in the eyes of donor organizations, as the platform is actively building its membership base and demonstrating this in advocacy. It is hoped that the whole model - going to sub-national level and concentrating on just coordination, is something that could be replicable by other platforms.





2.7 Developing and implementing report-handling mechanisms

Well-functioning safeguarding report-handling mechanisms will **prevent** as well as **respond** to concerns and incidents, by increasing awareness of safeguarding policies and report-handling, supporting early detection of harm, reducing impunity, and rapidly responding to stop further harm.

Organizations will have different needs when developing and implementing a report-handling mechanism. The size and scope of the organization, its policies and procedures, the specifics of its operating environment, the nature of its programmes and its history and practice of dealing with stakeholder feedback, are all factors to consider when developing a report-handling mechanism, reviewing a pre-existing mechanism or linking to a joint mechanism.

Developing trust through feedback

One of the main challenges of any report-handling mechanism is earning the trust of people to use it; trust that they will be listened to, that there will be an adequate response handling their report, and that they will not be victimized as a result of reporting. For this to happen, the onus is on organizations to demonstrate a culture of respect, accountability and transparency throughout their operations and through the way they deal with broader accountability and feedback. The following are good-practice principles to ensure accountability mechanisms are accessible, meaningful and effective. These can be applied across the range of organizations, operations and programmes:

Key principle	Questions to ask
Context specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are cultural and gender norms that impact feedback? - Who are the marginalized individuals and groups to consult with? - How can the organization consult in a way that encourages open discussion? - Which are the barriers to reporting? - What is the operational/legal landscape that can impact the safety and willingness to report? - Is there a pre-existing mechanism to build on? - Are there multiple channels available for reporting? - How can the organization ensure the channels stay appropriate over time? - Which advocates of marginalized groups can be connected with and learned from?
Inclusive and accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What can be done to overcome barriers to reporting? - How can the organization make sure the mechanism is accessible, safe and easy to use? - How can proactive and reactive report-handling mechanisms be ensured?



Empowering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is the mechanism survivor-centred? - Does the mechanism address the power dynamics between the organization and the community/within the community, that may impact reporting?
Consistently closing the loop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there a functioning and well trusted mechanism for broader feedback? - How can the organization ensure confidentiality is maintained, response is timely, enquiries effective and transparent, and communication fair and consistent? - How is feedback channelled into program design?
Collective re-sponsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can the sector take a larger collective responsibility? - How can effective referrals be ensured? - How can coordination happen even in the absence of a formal coordination mechanism?
Impartial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there a parallel/fallback channel?
Do No Harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can the organization ensure that confidentiality is respected, and that the survivor and/or whistle-blower is not exposed to stigma, retribution or retaliation?

Core elements of a comprehensive safeguarding report-handling mechanism

For safeguarding report-handling, a documented mechanism should be in place. The table below lists the core elements that make up a comprehensive safeguarding report-handling mechanism.⁵ The table is intentionally non-linear, so that elements can be linked together in a flow chart that can be adapted to what already exists and can be used for both internal and external communication purposes.

Range of reporting mechanisms	Systems to bypass the reporting pathway	Timeframe for action	Sort incoming reports
Prioritize reports	Document	Safeguarding Focal Point/Team	Senior decision-making
Action Plan	Initial protection	Medical support	Mental health and psycho-social support
Legal Authorities	Initial assessment of report	Fact finding and enquiry	Disciplinary action
Feedback and communication	Donor feedback and reporting	Interagency coordination and collaboration	Case closure and organizational learning

Key considerations when developing and implementing a safeguarding report-handling mechanism

Establishing the scope of the safeguarding report-handling mechanism

- What form of incidents does it address? While the mechanism may address broader misconduct (e.g. fraud), the handling of safeguarding cases will be different.
- What geographical area does it cover?
- Which organizations are included in the pathway? Will partner organizations operate their own mechanisms? Will you operate joint mechanisms? If it is your organization's mechanism, how will you process feedback about the partner?
- Does it cover reports that come from internal and/or external sources?
- What other mechanisms exist that this report-handling flowchart connects with?

⁵ Adapted from Bond (2019), '20 core elements: a toolkit to strengthen safeguarding report-handling'.



- **Mapping of existing community and national report-handling mechanisms** to assess preferences in usage and points for collaboration. Also ensure links to any pre-existing inter-agency report-handling mechanisms.
- **Mapping of legal frameworks**, including mandatory reporting requirements, definitions of offenses, risks for survivors/witnesses/wrongdoers if cases are brought to the police.
- **Mapping of survivor-support mechanisms in-country**, including referrals for and provision of psycho-social support, medical services by trained health-care providers, legal assistance, school-reintegration support and/or access to life-skills training, and provision of basic care.
- **Choosing the name of the mechanism carefully, in collaboration with local stakeholders.** The choice of terms such as “complaint”, “report” or “feedback” may have an impact on the willingness to report through the mechanism.
- **Deciding, in close consultation with stakeholders, on the means for receiving reports.** These may include telephone hotlines, SMS, community meetings, appointing community focal points, help desks, having an office ‘open door’ day, etc. It is critical to offer a variety of channels. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, it is less likely that ‘visible’ channels will be used. Proactively seeking out reports in ways that are safe and appropriate are more likely ways for concerns to surface.
- **Building on good governance and effective leadership.** Safeguarding report-handling is served by a Board that:
 - Is diverse and uses a balance of skills, experiences and knowledge to function effectively.
 - Employs decision-making processes that are informed, rigorous, timely and delegated.
 - Ensures that control, management and risk-assessment systems are set up and monitored.
 - Strives for an organization that is transparent and accountable.
- **Assigning responsibilities and developing capacity across the organization.** Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility but boards and senior management have a responsibility to ensure that different functions have the necessary knowledge, skills and capacity to work to high safeguarding standards in accordance with their respective areas of responsibility (see section 2.2 on Safeguarding Responsibilities and 2.3 Capacity Development of managers, staff and volunteers)
- **Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) relating to the handling of safeguarding concerns** (for details see section 2.8 on Responding to Safeguarding Reports).
- **Ensuring appropriate resourcing** including physical infrastructure, staff training, awareness raising, and sustainability after the organization leaves.
- **Testing, monitoring and evaluating the mechanisms.** Notice changes in the way people are using the mechanism. Seek feedback proactively and let communities know who to contact for feedback. Analyse the trends of concerns and incidents being reported. Review, and learn from closed cases.

 **Key references/resources:**

- The Bond resource on principles for trust building can be accessed [here in English](#).
- Bond’s toolkit to strengthen safeguarding report-handling can be accessed [here in English](#). A set of case stories associated with the toolkit can be accessed [here in English](#).
- InterAction’s course materials for setting up a community-based complaints mechanism can be accessed [here in English](#).
- The IASC, IOM, Save the Children and UNHCR Best Practice Guide on Inter-Agency Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms for PSEA can be accessed [here in Arabic, English, French and Spanish](#).



Case example: AwazCDS-Pakistan on the development and functioning of its complaints-handling mechanism.

For AwazCDS-Pakistan, the work on safeguarding has been evolving out of the work on Do No Harm. With the passing in 2010 of the Act on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, the government and the private sector set up committees and complaints mechanisms related to the issue, and ombudspersons at federal and provincial levels. AwazCDS then developed a Complaint Response Mechanism (CRM). Since the inception of CRM in 2013, 32 cases have come through the system in the last five years, though most of them were related to emergency relief demands and only three complaints were related to harassment.

This has opened the discussion on issues related to safeguarding in the broader society. AwazCDS-Pakistan, in 2017-18, decided to have a separate and inclusive policy on safeguarding. The organization took time to develop the policy, with the process going on for nearly two years. Now there are SOPs related to corruption, harassment and intimidation, and complaints mechanism with different channels including an email and a telephone line. The focal points register each case, there is one focal point from the organization and one from the board of directors, both of whom are nominated in the policy.

The arbitration body is made up of three people: the Programme Manager, the Focal Point and the Human Resources manager. This body assesses the complaints, conducts the investigations and shares the results with the management. If the management is involved in the case, the board steps in.





2.8 Responding to safeguarding reports

When an organization receives a report or is made aware of a safeguarding concern, a documented process should kick in to determine the appropriate course of action. If this does not already exist, **establishing written procedures on how to respond following the receipt of a report is the first step to take.** Such procedures⁶ should include guidance on:

- **Receiving and logging a report.** A report may be received through a variety of means.
 - If the report is received in person, focal points should be trained to do so:
 - Listen and empathise with the person. Reassure the person and be sure to express your respect and understanding of the severity of the situation. Remind them about the steps of the procedure and confidentiality they can expect.
 - Ask who, when, where, what, but **not why** something has happened.
 - Repeat what the reporter has told you to check your understanding of the situation
 - Report to the appropriate staff within a specified timeframe (normally 24 hours).
 - When receiving and logging a report, notes should be made about who the reporter is and what the concern or incident that prompted the report is, when and where it happened, and whether other people were there, and how the reporter can be contacted again.
 - Concerns, rumours or witness observations should be logged in the format of a report, in order that they can be followed up on at a later stage.
- **Assessing how to proceed with a report, including:**
 - Whether there is enough information available to follow up on the report.
 - Whether the report relates to a breach of the organization's safeguarding policy.
 - Whether the report involves someone under the age of 18 (requiring expert advice).
 - Check your obligations on informing relevant bodies when you receive a safeguarding report, such as funding organizations, umbrella bodies/networks and/or statutory bodies.
- **Appointing roles and responsibilities for case management**
 - The decision-maker should be a senior staff member, not involved in the case in any way.
 - In cases of serious safeguarding incidents, a case conference may be appropriate including the decision maker, the person who received the report (such as the focal point, or manager), the Human Resources manager and the safeguarding adviser (or equivalent) if there is one.
- **Providing support to the survivor as needed/requested**
 - Support could include (but is not limited to) psycho-social care or counselling, medical assistance, protection or security assistance (e.g. being moved to a safe location).
 - Support should be provided even if the report has not yet been investigated.
 - **All decision-making on support should be led by the survivor.** It is important that the process is flexible, and responsive to the needs and wishes of the survivor.
 - It is critical to allow unlimited time for reporting.
- **Assessing protection risks to stakeholders**
 - Undertake an immediate risk assessment to determine whether there are any current or potential risks to any stakeholders involved in the case and develop a mitigation plan if so.
 - Acknowledge that survivors may have different needs. LGBTI survivors may have specific protection concerns depending on prevailing social norms and legal frameworks.
 - Children may not identify as survivors, nor be aware of what constitutes abuse. There may also be mandatory reporting requirements that go against a child's wishes. This is an added challenge in contexts where child protection systems are not developed. The best interests of child survivors and adults with disabilities, as well as the principle of Do No Harm, will guide a decision on external reporting to legal authorities.⁷
 - The protection of human rights of the potential wrongdoer also needs to be considered before deciding on referrals to legal authorities.
 - Continue to update the risk assessment and mitigation plan regularly throughout and after the case.

⁶ Adapted from Bond's [template on procedures for dealing with safeguarding reports](#).

⁷ IASC, 2016, '[Best Practice Guide Inter-Agency Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms: Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#)', p.68



- **Deciding on next steps** (e.g. no further action; a formal enquiry; immediate disciplinary action or referral to relevant authorities).
 - If an investigation is required, identify resources (expertise, human, and financial).
 - If the report concerns personnel from another organization, disciplinary processes do not apply. However, contracts with a company may be terminated based on the conduct of their staff, and further ways of pursuing an investigation may be explored.
 - If a formal enquiry is required, it should be undertaken by experienced and qualified professionals in line with the relevant standards, to enable an impartial and confidential enquiry to take place, in line with Do No Harm principles. If there is no-one within your organization with these qualifications and training, consider accessing external resources for this process.⁸

- **Making decisions on the outcome of the fact finding/enquiry/ investigation report**
 - Decisions relating to the potential wrongdoer should be made in accordance with existing policies and procedures for staff misconduct.
 - If at any stage in the process criminal activity is suspected, the case should be referred to the relevant authorities unless this may pose a risk to anyone involved in the case. In this case, the decision-maker together with other senior staff will need to decide how to proceed.

- **Concluding the case**
 - Document all decisions made resulting from the case clearly and confidentially.
 - Store all information relating to the case confidentially, and in accordance with the organization's policy and local data-protection law.
 - Record anonymised data relating to the case to feed into organizational reporting requirements (e.g. to the Board and donors and to feed into learning for dealing with future cases).

At all stages of the report-handling, it is imperative that appropriate confidentiality measures are being implemented. Information is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis.

 **Key references/resources:**

- Bond's toolkit to strengthen safeguarding report-handling can be accessed here in [English](#). The template on procedures for dealing with safeguarding reports can be accessed here in [English](#).
- The CHS Alliance's [Guidelines for Investigations](#), available for download [here in Arabic, English, French and Spanish](#).
- Information about the CHS Alliance's training courses can be accessed [here in English](#). They have previously organized trainings such as "PSEA Investigations for Managers".
- The joint gender based violence Guidelines and Area of Responsibility pocket resource on how to support a survivor of gender based violence (when there is no support structures for gender based violence in your area) can be accessed here in [English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Turkish and Burmese](#).

⁸ The CHS Alliance operates a roster of trained investigators and runs trainings in PSEA investigations.



Case example: CILONG (Chad) and the role of platforms in providing support to survivors

In Chad, several organizations have their own safeguarding systems. In serious cases, the information passes through the platform and the platform supports with liaising with national and international actors as needed. Several prevention measures have been set up, including an alert and protection group. As one of CILONG's key measures, they have been working on the relocation of human rights defenders at risk through a network that defends cases of human rights violations beyond the organization members of the platform. Between 2017 and 2019, they have relocated human rights defenders several times to neighboring countries, such as Cameroon, Burkina Faso and France thanks to the support of its partners. This process highlights the importance of international cooperation and how this work requires the synergy of several actors who have to work together for the protection of the survivors.

In one case, the platform got involved with organizing the relocation of a human rights defender who was in danger, and to ensure their personal protection. The confidentiality aspect was critical and was well-managed. The platform has participated in several dialogues with the authorities and technical and financial partners on the issue of protection of human rights defenders. This work is resource intensive, with estimated costs for relocating and supporting a human rights defender in danger to be around £4000 (including intercity and local transport, rent, communication, catering, and medical care).





Making it work

This part of the guide addresses how to create an enabling environment - one that can help safeguarding efforts succeed, where adequate resourcing is an important component. This segment also looks at the unique roles civil society platforms can play to leverage safeguarding efforts across the membership as well as in wider dialogues on behalf of the sector. Civil society platforms can assist their members and ensure that systems in place are well designed, effective and value-based.

3.1 Resources

Adequate resourcing of safeguarding work what could be covered?

Funding structures and resource availability may directly and indirectly link to safeguarding risks, level of preparedness and ability to respond to concerns and incidents. While every organization's precise needs are different, the below list includes key cost posts necessary for working to safeguarding standards, and that need to be budgeted for:

- **Development of policies and procedures and other tools.** This includes investment of time and money in contextualization, translation and adaptation of existing resources.
- **Dedicated staff time** for developing and implementing safeguarding systems.
- **Community consultations** on risks, reporting mechanisms, and communication approaches.
- **Survivor response.** Costs of medical, psycho-social and legal support, or other costs.
- **Capacity building** (including awareness raising on safeguarding issues, policies and procedures), refresher training, and mentoring.
- **Outsourcing of certain functions** - such as hotlines, safeguarding advice, fact finding or enquiries. This may be relevant for small organizations with limited internal capacity.
- **Physical infrastructure** (e.g. safe shelters) and support costs (e.g. transport and communications).





Making resources go further

While getting all the elements in place does require resourcing, there are ways to work innovatively and collaboratively as a sector, to make resources go further, such as:

- **Sharing information of funding opportunities** among organizations.
- **Pooling and translating resources** (such as policy templates, training resources, checklists and others).
- **Collaborating among organizations** including referrals where appropriate.
- **Working with pro-bono lawyers** to conduct a legal mapping or to support an investigation.
- **Creating a sector wide insurance scheme** to fund safeguarding report-handling.

When it comes to funding costs related to safeguarding investigations, the IASC has established a fund, managed by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), to provide rapid grants to IASC entities who lack investigative capacity, to support investigations into SEA and sexual harassment allegations. The funds can be used to:

- Contract investigative staff or to commission an investigation
- Reimburse a provider of investigative services
- Fund auxiliary investigation costs e.g. travel, translation services in country of investigation

Key references/resources:

- Information about the IASC/OCHA Fund for Investigations into Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment can be accessed [here](#) in English. The request application is [available here](#).
- Bond's toolkit to strengthen safeguarding report-handling can be accessed [here](#) in English.

3.2 Leveraging safeguarding efforts: a role for NGO platforms

As membership-based organizations, NGO platforms at all levels have unique contributions to make in support of the sector's collective efforts on safeguarding, locally, nationally, regionally and internationally. By leveraging safeguarding efforts within their respective spheres of influence, resources can go further, the quality of safeguarding efforts can be improved, and the multiple conversations that need to take place within and beyond the sector can be advanced. Sector platforms are well-placed to broker conversations with donors, and - through media - with the public, to build capacity and to facilitate commitment to commonly agreed standards.



Case example: Bond's (UK) approach to support capacity among members

Bond makes available resources, tools and guidance that are useful to members. The approach is to signpost to existing materials rather than produce own resources, unless there is an identified gap. Bond also offers training courses, including tailored in-house training, and creates engagement opportunities for members, such as events, workshops and seminars, bringing the sector together to share experiences and learnings on safeguarding.

Bond has a community of practice, an on-line platform that functions as a forum where members can ask each other questions. There are regular on-line meetings and deeper dives into specific topics, with contributions from members and experts. As many of Bond's members are small, this includes inviting smaller organizations that do safeguarding well to share their experiences and knowledge with the wider Bond membership.

Key references/resources:

- Partos' Integrity System Guide can be accessed [here in English](#).
- Bond's article on the role of sector platforms in Safeguarding practices can be found here in [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#) and [Portuguese](#).



Issue	Key Action	Questions to ask
Understanding and meeting members needs on safeguarding	Carrying out surveys to better understand members' needs around safeguarding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there specific areas of safeguarding where more support is needed? - What role should the platform play?
	Awareness raising with member organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there specific areas of safeguarding where there are gaps in awareness and knowledge?
Working collectively with members	Bringing together members and creating a shared understanding of safeguarding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can language and definitions be harmonized?
	Developing or revising Codes of Conduct for members of platforms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can the platform best ensure that members have agreed ways of working? - How can ownership of the issue by individual organizations be maintained, whilst fostering collective accountability?
	Running peer support groups and communities of practices to work on specific areas of safeguarding and share experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there gaps in guidance that could be filled to benefit the sector?
Building capacity of and with members	Sharing guidance, tools, resources and other key information with members on websites, in resource libraries; providing training; and running events, conferences, seminars and workshops for members to share learning and expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which expertise exists within the membership (e.g. gender / child / LGBTI / disability focused organizations) and how can this be leveraged? - What good practices exist that can be shared and built on?
Developing, compiling and sharing information and resources	Mapping out relevant legislation (formal and informal) to ensure safeguarding report-handling mechanisms respect the legal structures in the country.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the mandatory reporting requirements? - What are definitions of sexual, physical and emotional offences? What are the legal repercussions if cases are presented? - What are the risks for survivors, witnesses, and potential wrongdoers if a case is presented to local police? - What are traditional customary mechanisms for justice? Is it appropriate to seek out and work with these traditional customary mechanisms?
	Mapping of existing reporting and response mechanisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What mechanisms (formal and informal; community, district, and national-level structures) are already in place? How can these mechanisms be built on/adapted? - Who is being included in which mechanisms, who is being excluded? - How can inclusive mechanisms be developed?
	Brokering information with members related to survivor support mechanisms in-country, including referrals for and provision of psycho-social support, medical services by trained health-care providers, legal assistance, school re-integration support and/or access to life skills training, and provision of basic care (including dignity or hygiene kits, clothing, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which feminist / gender focused /experienced organizations exist (who may be the providers of such support and/or have access to related information)?
	Translating key safeguarding resources to make them more accessible to members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there opportunities to cooperate with other platforms to share and/or exchange resources for translation?
	Developing context-relevant policy templates, with process notes, for adaptation by members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are there existing good-practice templates available that can be used as a starting point?
	Facilitating access to rosters of experts/trainers/investigators (publicizing information or organizing a country or region-specific roster).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is expertise available in country? - Could the platform support the development of such expertise?
	Advocating on behalf of the sector	Advocating for going-beyond policies and looking at wider issues of culture, inequality, power imbalances to address underlying issues that can lead to safeguarding incidents.
Advocating with donors for harmonized safeguarding requirements to reduce administrative or bureaucratic burden for members.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can the sector work proactively with donors to ensure standards are met without undue administration burden?
Advocating with donors around the need to re-source safeguarding work.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are the actual costs involved in implementing safeguarding standards in a specific context?



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Feedback

Safeguarding is a rapidly evolving field where peer learning is continuously generated. Forus welcomes and encourages all forms of feedback on this resource. Let's keep this conversation going.



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