



# RSH Webinar: How organisations of persons with disability (OPDs) in Nigeria are keeping people safe

## Questions and Answers

1. The webinar is titled "How organisations of persons with disability (OPDs) in Nigeria are keeping people safe", but it seems that OPDs have very limited understanding of safeguarding and there's been limited implementation of safeguarding approaches so far. Can any of the panellists elaborate on what JONAPWD - as a leading national umbrella organisation - is doing to equip OPDs to improve their safeguarding practices?

Yes, that is correct. The findings from the research confirmed that there is limited understanding of safeguarding concepts and approaches. This research was designed to better understand the needs of OPDs to enable RSH, and JONAPWD, to develop approaches to improve the safeguarding practices, and approach of OPDs.

RSH works with less resourced civil society organisations to strengthen their understanding and capacity in relation to safeguarding, and OPDs are a key group we hope to continue working with. We have an organisational mentor programme and '[Ask and Expert](#)' service that OPDs can access [here](#), or by contacting our Nigeria team:

<https://nigeria.safeguardingsupporthub.org/contact-us>

Furthermore, JONAPWD habitually attempts to mainstream safeguarding commitments by bringing up discussions around providing a safe and trusted environment which safeguards anyone JONAPWD has contact with, including project beneficiaries and sub-national partners – who are majorly from OfPDs, staff, subcontractors and consultants. As

an organisational culture, JONAPWD prioritises safeguarding, and ensures anyone who experiences an incident or reports an incident are safe and supported. This assurance is reflected in other organisational policies/contracts.

Post research, JONAPWD plans to disseminate key research findings across the networks of sub-national OfPDs, while increasing support towards building their capacities on safeguarding in accordance with the mandates of the diverse disability rights movements. JONAPWD is similarly committed to partnering with and investing in OfPDs and mainstream civil society for a safer environment, which would be sustained under rights-based interventions.

**2. Can you share a scenario of poor safeguarding practice affecting persons with disability in the OPD's assessed? I noticed that most of the cluster findings presented focus on protection issues/concerns. Is this a result of the limited understanding of safeguarding in OPD's?**

From the research findings broadly, the disability community understands safeguarding as Protection. However, some scenarios of poor safeguarding practice are articulated here:

- Some examples were shared of OPDs reporting safeguarding issues, threats or physical assaults, to 'street boys' (informal gangs who attempt to maintain security), who take matters into their own hands to deal with issue.
- Many OPDs have no documented safeguarding mechanisms, systems and processes. "our eyes is our code, when we see something, we say something" (KII 2021 JONAPWD/RSH Research)

Generally, collating and sharing examples of poor safeguarding practice has been challenging. For instance, outside the research scope, JONAPWD has observed that women and girls with disabilities are at much higher risk of experiencing harm and abuse, and also have limited understanding of their rights and support services that exist in relation to the different dimensions of abuse and exploitation.

While this narrative fundamentally explains the underlying and intersecting drivers of violence against women and girls with disabilities, it also helps to point towards the actions we must take to address these drivers and how these actions must be implemented using good principles of safeguarding

**3. Could you provide a bit more information about the current national policy and legislation landscape on safeguarding in Nigeria? The Public Service code only seems to relate to the prohibition of "misconduct" - are there more specific laws or policies we should be aware of?**

There are no specific laws on safeguarding in Nigeria. Nevertheless, familiar context is mainstreamed into other policies or conventions like the Violence against persons prohibition act (VAPP), Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Child Rights Act 2003/State Child Rights Laws etc.

**4. Can we establish that those concerns reported to government agencies were followed up to reasonable conclusions?**

Whilst respondents from the organisations that we spoke with mentioned that certain cases were referred to government agencies, it was beyond the scope of the research report to ascertain whether the conclusions reached were satisfactory, both in terms of the law and also in relation to the survivors' expectations.

It is crucial that any reported incidents of SEAH are addressed following survivor centred principles, ensuring the best interests of the survivor are paramount, following do no harm principles and ensuring confidentiality at all times. The survivor should be kept informed of any investigation, or outcome therein.

The research was unable to ascertain whether these principles were or were not followed. However, JONAPWD intends to support the design of sustainable and context-based mechanisms across the 36 states to support monitoring of this.



## 5. Are there some examples of reporting mechanisms for diverse persons with disabilities and which ones are recommendable?

The report identifies a few examples where we recommend further research or follow up. We are unable to recommend any particular approaches as the research did not explore the efficacy, relevance or safety of these approaches, as that was beyond the scope. RSH is keen to learn more about what approaches work well and would be interested in hearing from any organisations implementing reporting mechanisms or prevention and response interventions, who would like to share their experiences with us.

Broadly speaking, JONAPWD currently activates organic reporting mechanisms (emails, phones, state coordinators etc.) But as earlier mentioned, the recorded number of reported cases has been poor; Largely due to the lack/poor understanding about the dimensions of safeguarding. In addition, a case of the Purple Corner was mentioned in the report; such gender-based dimensions are recommended for further research as potential approaches that could be scaled up, providing the evidence is clear on their efficacy and safety.