

# Why are persons with disabilities at greater risk of SEAH in **South Sudan**



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**Negative societal perceptions of persons with disabilities and safeguarding measures that are not disability-inclusive create opportunities for persons with disabilities to become victims of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) and other forms of harm, including by the organisations and individuals that support them.**



Persons with disabilities are commonly excluded when designing and delivering programmes/activities and safeguarding measures. This can mean that:

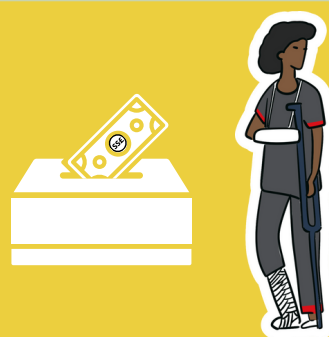
- Their specific needs are not taken into consideration, which may lead to SEAH or other forms of harm when participating in the programme or activity.
- They may not be able to access or fully participate in programme activities. This may leave them vulnerable to being sexually exploited, abused or harassed by civil society organisation (CSO) staff should they try to get access.
- Information on what to expect from staff behaviour, what abuse is, what to report and how to report is often not shared in a way that can be accessed, understood and used by persons with disabilities.



Embedded discrimination, stigma, power imbalances, and stereotypes mean that:

- There may be a belief that persons with disabilities will not or cannot report incidents of SEAH.
- A report by a person with a disability may not be taken seriously or responded to appropriately by the organisation or community.

Persons with disabilities participating in programmes or activities can be bullied, negatively spoken about or made fun of simply because of their disability. This can damage their self-esteem and decrease their confidence, making them more vulnerable to further abuse, affecting their trust in organisational reporting mechanisms and leading to other longer-term effects like depression.



Persons with disabilities may have more financial constraints, a smaller social network or fewer income or resourcing opportunities. This may make them more vulnerable to SEAH and other forms of harm.

## What steps can CSOs take to safeguard persons with disabilities?

With persons with disabilities, establish a range of safe and inclusive safeguarding reporting and complaints mechanisms that consider the needs and different factors that affect persons with disabilities.

Raise awareness of disability rights amongst staff and community members. Ensure that the needs of persons with disabilities are included when planning and delivering community awareness sessions on what SEAH is and how to report incidents.

Provide information on safeguarding regularly and in multiple formats.

Represent persons with disabilities in information awareness materials. Ensure that they are represented in a positive way.

Ensure that locations and facilities chosen for programme activities are accessible for persons with disabilities. Avoid over-dependence on other participants for support.

Hold "environment walks" or checks before and during activities to ensure the facilities are appropriate. This can be done with / advised by persons with disabilities .