



The role of leaders and safeguarding

For CSOs in South Sudan

This tip sheet explains why leaders in South Sudan should prioritise safeguarding in their organisation and what their roles and responsibilities are in ensuring quality safeguarding systems.

Why is strong leadership important for safeguarding?

Safeguarding means ensuring that the organisation you lead does not cause Sexual Exploitation, Abuse or Sexual Harassment (SEAH) or other harms and abuses to **anyone** in the process of delivering the work. It is the action taken to promote the welfare of staff, service users and anyone who interacts with your organisation and to protect them from harm.



15 safeguarding action points for leaders to commit to!

1. Create and maintain an organisational culture that understands and values safeguarding. This includes creating a safe working environment where all diversity is embraced and inequality is challenged, for instance giving equal opportunities to all.
2. Be a role model, encourage positive behaviour and challenge inappropriate behaviour. Leaders should demonstrate to the staff what is expected of them. For example leaders should act appropriately and avoid using improper/sexist comments towards female staff.
3. Communicate strong and regular messages (informal and formal) on safeguarding and the organisation's safeguarding progress. For instance messages should be put on flyers, on walls of offices and verbally during breaks and social events.
4. Put survivors' risks and views at the center of all of your safeguarding measures. Leaders should put emphasis on survivor's security (treat information with confidentiality so that survivor is not at risk), medical (refer survivors) and psychosocial support (counseling).

5. Demonstrate zero tolerance by responding to all reports appropriately and creating accessible, confidential and appropriate and trusted reporting systems taking into consideration the communities which are mostly illiterate. So for communities, help desks and a community focal person nominated by the very community should be encouraged.
6. Appoint, work with and support, safeguarding focal point(s) and staff with safeguarding responsibilities (e.g. HR) to put safeguarding measures in place.
7. Appoint a “safeguarding focal person” from the board and report concerns to them. For instance, report any noticed arrogance from the alleged perpetrator to resist compliance to the internal disciplinary measures.
8. Make sure that safeguarding is included in your organisational risk management procedures.
9. Put procedures in place so you are prepared for and can manage investigations. This includes assessing and managing the risks of investigations. For instance set up a committee to promptly carry out investigations and report back for action.
10. Monitor progress on safeguarding measures and make changes where needed.
11. Include safeguarding in policies, strategies, plans, budgets, codes of conduct, recruitment documents, contracts and MOUs etc.
12. Discuss general safeguarding issues at leadership meetings, board meetings and with your leader peers. (But, for confidentiality, don't discuss the details of a case unless you are talking to people who are in the case handling or investigation team).
13. Implement management recommendations and learn from incidents.
14. Organise safeguarding trainings, orientations and refresher trainings for all staff and representatives.
15. Encourage open conversation on safeguarding. For those organisations that conduct devotions or meetings before work every morning, you can include safeguarding as part of the morning emphasis before staff start their daily duties.