

Tip Sheet



RESOURCE
& SUPPORT
HUB



Introduction to safeguarding

For CSOs in South Sudan

This tip sheet provides an introduction to what safeguarding is. It also explains some of the safeguarding measures that civil society organisations (CSOs) in South Sudan are putting in place.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding describes the measures that address abuse and harm that is caused by CSO staff, programmes and communications. This includes:

- Sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH)
- Other harms and abuses, e.g. neglect, physical or emotional harm

PSEA (protection from sexual exploitation and abuse) and PSEAH (protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment) are also terms used to refer to measures taken to protect people from sexual exploitation and abuse by CSO staff and programmes. PSEA does not include sexual harassment.

The causes

When a CSO works in a community it can make existing patterns of harm and abuse worse or bring new forms of harm and abuse. Harm and abuse caused by CSOs includes:

1. **Abuse perpetrated by staff**, volunteers or people contracted by the organisation.
2. **Unsafe programmes** or services may worsen existing, or cause new, harm within families or communities. E.g. Tensions may be caused if it is not clear why certain members of the community are receiving goods or services whilst others are not.
3. **Unsafe communications and media** can bring new and unwanted attention. This is particularly harmful when a story shares personal details, is not authentic or is disempowering.

Power and safeguarding

If a person has more power, they have more opportunity to exploit, abuse and harass others. If a person has less power, they are more likely to be targeted for exploitation, abuse and harassment. The amount of power someone has is closely linked to different factors:

- Structural inequalities linked to, e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, disability status, gender identity, sexual orientation, class, caste.
- Hierarchies within organisations, e.g., between senior and junior staff and international and national staff.
- Situational factors, e.g., a humanitarian worker having the power to determine access to humanitarian assistance, such as food or cash or vouchers.

Who is at risk of harms and abuses caused by CSOs?

- CSO staff and any member of a society who interacts with a CSO may be at risk.
- Women and girls are most at risk. People with disabilities and people who face other types of discrimination, e.g. because of their class, ethnicity or sexual orientation, are also at higher risk.

What do safeguarding measures include?

- All CSO staff have safeguarding responsibilities. Some staff have extra responsibilities, e.g. senior staff, HR staff, and staff who visit programme sites.
- Safeguarding measures need an organisation-wide approach. They can be separated into three areas: prevention, reporting and response.

Prevention

- Building an organisational culture that understands and promotes safeguarding and challenges inequality
- Creating policies, procedures and a code of conduct relevant to the CSO and context
- Safeguarding risk management
- Safe recruitment, e.g. vetting and references
- Staff safeguarding training
- Designing and delivering safe programmes with community members
- Gathering consent for communications and making stories authentic and empowering

Reporting

- Creating a system for all staff to report abuse and for the organisation to respond
- Creating community-based complaints mechanisms so that anyone who interacts with your CSO can report abuse or suspicions of abuse, and for the organisation to respond

Response

- Providing immediate response to an incident of abuse where necessary, this can include immediate support, helping a victim or survivor access medical or other urgent facilities
- Preparing for and managing investigations
- Delivering investigations where trained staff are in place