

Tip sheet



Safeguarding effectively in partnerships

Developed for civil society organisations (CSOs) in South Sudan

This tip sheet covers safeguarding considerations for partnerships with and between Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in South Sudan. It is relevant for implementing partners, those carrying out project management and service delivery on the ground, as well as collaborative partners, those providing support to delivery, for example with finances and/or other materials. The content of this tip sheet is based on consultations with local and national CSO and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) representatives in South Sudan.

To effectively integrate safeguarding into partnerships and address safeguarding challenges, the development and humanitarian sector must ensure that partner organisations in South Sudan, especially national and local organisations, are valued as equal partners.

Balancing due diligence with context and culture



Safeguarding due diligence and applying international standards on Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEAH) are now central to partnership agreements in the development and humanitarian sector. Many donors require all organisations in the funding chain to have certain safeguarding measures in place prior to receiving funding and/or to establish safeguarding measures during the funding period. To be effective and uphold global standards, safeguarding measures need to be culturally appropriate and to have the commitment and ownership of partner organisations. [Click here](#) for more on the global standards on SEAH.

Safeguarding partnership challenges faced by local and national organisations in South Sudan

In addition to the technical and programmatic knowledge and skills relating to the services they deliver and areas they operate in, local CSOs/NNGOs accessing funding in South Sudan have long underscored their comparative advantage in:

- Understanding the reach, depth and nuance of South Sudan’s context
- Their affinity with locals and affected communities
- The wealth of cultural knowledge at their disposal to tailor and embed safeguarding practices where they work

Equally, local and national CSOs/NGOs have encountered various partnership-related challenges that have diminished their safeguarding prospects and inadvertently confined the discourse to fragility instead of resilience. The table below outlines what not to do when working with local and national CSOs/NGOs and why.

Do not:	Explanation:
Do not approach safeguarding within partnerships <u>only</u> from a compliance or due diligence perspective.	This can lead to “box ticking”, which may neglect considerations of quality, relevance, practicality, and actual use of the safeguarding measures.
Do not give local and national CSOs/NGOs unrealistic implementation timescales and conditions to strengthen their safeguarding measures.	This is unrealistic, unfair and unnecessary. Putting in place procedures too fast or that are not appropriate may cause more harm.
Do not assume that local and national CSOs/NGOs do not have safeguarding experience or expertise and do not dismiss their inputs on safeguarding.	Safeguarding risks and measures will look different in different contexts. Respectful collaboration and support to create measures that can prevent and respond to the specific risks faced by local and national CSOs/NGOs is key.

Some local and national CSOs/NGOs do not have the relevant expertise or resources (staff, funds, or time) to develop their own policies and systems. Do not leave them to adopt those of INGOs without plans to support the adaptation and use of the given policies.	This can remove ownership of safeguarding approaches and the opportunity to build their own capacity.
Do not provide limited or no budget to effectively deliver and promote safeguarding.	Without the budget and staff time, local and national CSOs/NGOs cannot designate safeguarding focal points or develop resources to create awareness and provide mandatory training.

Additional important challenges:

- The clash of local cultures with global safeguarding standards of conduct requires that our expectations are realistic and our posture in strengthening safeguarding practice is moderated by patience and persistence, garnering hope rather than despair. For instance, in some settings reporting concerns of SEAH is not culturally acceptable as it is deemed shameful and will result to either forceful marriage or payment of only a fine by the perpetrator. Even after paying the fine, the perpetrator may keep doing the same thing to different people as long as he can afford to pay the fine. Focus on patience and persistence and adapting measures so that they are appropriate, confidential, supportive and used.
- In situations where the funding partner does not prioritise or may not understand safeguarding, it can be challenging for local and national organisations to prioritise and resource safeguarding themselves.

Overcoming the safeguarding challenges of partnerships in South Sudan

Despite the challenges set out above, organisations can improve safeguarding practice in partnerships.

Policies and procedures

- Integrate safeguarding-related topics across the relevant policies already in place, and/or create a separate, new safeguarding policy. Note: You do not have to create a separate safeguarding policy if the policy/ies already in place already cover the same topics but under different title(s). For example, topics relating to safeguarding may be covered in your Protection Policy, in a Human Resources Policy and/or in a Whistleblowing Policy.

- Work with partners to develop and/or adapt, align and accept safeguarding-related policies, terms, responsibilities and measures so that they are locally appropriate and relevant for the organisation and context. Some ways to do this are:
 - Include locally relevant examples of incidents alongside the definitions of different types of abuse.
 - Use terms that are locally appropriate, or the most appropriate alternative if there is no direct translation. The [PSEA Glossary](#) is available for local translations.
 - Refer to local legislation and local referral mechanisms.
 - Refer to existing and traditional community reporting methods.
 - Create a roster of local or national professional investigators (where possible).
 - Map referral pathways, these should include local service providers that might be required by a victim or survivor. They can include psychosocial support, mental health, sexual and reproductive health support etc. [Click here](#) for a tool on how to map services developed by RSH in Ethiopia.
- Hold discussions and/or training sessions with leaders and staff to explore how to apply certain definitions and behaviours in the global standards that may be contrary to local norms. Terms like abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation should be defined in [local languages](#). Use a conversation on power and privilege to explain why it is important to uphold the global standards (read this [summary document](#) for more information).
- Translate safeguarding policies and procedures (or summaries) and other core documentation (e.g., on reporting mechanisms, or training) into local languages and dialects.

Capacity building (by partners and between local and national CSOs/NGOs)

- Funding partners should commit to helping strengthen the capacity of partner organisations who do not have safeguarding expertise or experience. This should be based on realistic timelines and organisational learning. For example, by asking all staff to complete [Safeguarding E-Learning](#).
- Assist local and national CSOs/NGOs to initiate a [standard recruitment practice](#) that includes a safeguarding statement in all job advertisements and consistently embeds safeguarding in the recruitment process.
- Guide local CSOs/NGOs to identify safeguarding risks associated with every project at the start of the project and commit to reviewing them regularly.
- Engage in networking to understand what safeguarding practices work in South Sudan. Emphasise research and shared learning as key.

Leadership

- Encourage the leadership of local and national CSOs/NGOs to steer safeguarding practice from the top through regularly reviewing capacity strengthening plans, responding to all reported cases, and assessing progress on actions and risks.

- Assign safeguarding lead at senior/board level. Review this [tip sheet](#) on the role of leaders in strengthening safeguarding in South Sudan.

Monitor and evaluate safeguarding progress

- Work with local and national CSOs/NGOs to develop a framework to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the safeguarding policies and procedures in place (e.g., a safeguarding Monitoring Evaluation and Learning framework). For example, make it a key marker of good safeguarding practice in all project locations for children and adults to know to whom they can go to complain, where they can go to report anonymously and where they can find information on the reporting channel if they do not know it by heart. It may be valuable to include learning across partners working in the same location.
- Use lessons learnt from internal anonymous surveys, reported incidents and risk mitigation to influence policy and develop safer practices across the organisation.
- Use the internal and shared lessons and the outcomes from monitoring safeguarding to lobby for sufficient safeguarding budget for all local and national CSOs/NGOs.

Reporting and investigations

- Be clear what reporting mechanisms are available for all partner organisations.
- Outline any “escalation requirements”, e.g. situations where one partner may want or need to share the general details of a case with a funding partner for support or advice so that they can respond appropriately.
- If a funding partner contractually requires CSOs/NGOs to share information on reports of SEAH, ensure that the timeframe and reporting requirements are practical and that data requested and shared remains anonymous and unidentifiable.
- Be clear that the amount of funding from a funding partner will not be affected in the case of a report of abuse and escalation.
- Be clear who will investigate if an allegation arises and how this will be coordinated between the different partners.