Practical examples for implementing safeguarding at the project level

September 2021 edition
Introduction

UK Aid Direct grant holders implement a range of measures to ensure that they have project level safeguarding in place to protect their beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, and anyone else who comes into contact with their project, from harm and abuse.

In this document – the 2nd in our series of project level examples - we have collated some further examples of ways grant holders are implementing safeguarding at a project level.

Thank you to the following five organisations for their contributions: ActionAid Rwanda, Action on Poverty (APT), Children in Crossfire, Feed the Minds, Near East Foundation UK, and Saferworld.

About this publication

This safeguarding guidance was published September 2021. An accessible version of this document is also available to download from the UK Aid Direct website.

Additional reading

UK Aid Direct recommends visiting Bond’s website:

- [www.bond.org.uk/resources-support/safeguarding](http://www.bond.org.uk/resources-support/safeguarding)

You can also read [UK Aid Direct’s first practical safeguarding examples publication](https://www.bond.org.uk/resources-support/safeguarding) which was published in March 2021.
1. Ensure visibility of information

With a UK Aid Direct Community Partnership grant, APT (Action on Poverty) delivered a project supporting youth living in refugee hosting communities in Uganda with skills training for sustainable livelihoods.

Posters with key safeguarding information in local languages were displayed in areas where people gathered in the settlements, such as offices, training centres, health centres and water collection points. These provided information about safeguarding and informed/reminded people of the reporting mechanisms in place.

APT’s downstream partner VEDCO’s safeguarding policy was also attached to memorandums of understandings, signed with the businesses offering work placements to the youth. The businesses were taken through the policy and their responsibilities related to it, to protect all beneficiaries from harm and abuse.

[Photo credit: Christine and Action on Poverty]

2. Involve community members

With a UK Aid Direct Impact grant, NEF (Near East Foundation) implemented a women’s empowerment project - ‘Empowering women for prosperity and stability with value chain development and entrepreneurship’ - in Sudan.

They worked hard to ensure the target communities and beneficiaries understood their approach to safeguarding. As part of this, they conducted safeguarding workshops for the village association groups they worked with.

Following the workshops, NEF agreed with the association leader the appropriate reporting mechanisms for participants to raise any safeguarding concerns. Each community also selected safeguarding representatives to act as focal points for project staff.

Tips

- Make sure project stakeholders are aware of your organisation’s approach to safeguarding by providing them with a copy of your policy and briefing them on how it is used to protect the individuals you engage with from harm.

- Ensure printed communications around safeguarding is shared in an open space, accessible to all users.

Tips

- Involve community members in the establishment of reporting mechanisms to ensure they are appropriate and contextualised for the local community and target beneficiaries.
3. Ensure your staff are safeguarding aware

With a UK Aid Direct Impact grant, Saferworld implemented a women’s empowerment and participation in peacebuilding project. The project was called ‘Enhancing women and youth’s role in peacebuilding in Yemen’.

Over the past year, the organisation worked closely with project staff - including downstream partner staff - to ensure strong safeguarding measures were implemented at the project level. The reporting mechanisms are explained in detail to all staff and the focal points (and their contact details) shared.

Project staff members were engaged in the development of a safeguarding matrix where all the possible safeguarding risks linked to the project’s activities were mapped, and appropriate mitigation measures identified and discussed.

During the sessions, project staff raised the issue that the website for reporting concerns did not support Arabic. As a result, the website’s reporting mechanism was translated into Arabic and will be available shortly.

4. Consider all safeguarding risks and make a plan

ActionAid Rwanda had a UK Aid Direct Impact grant to address sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence in Rwanda.

During the COVID-19 lockdowns, with participants of their programme locked down at home with their families and schools closed, the safeguarding of participants on their programme became a significant focus.

Mentors followed up with girls through phone calls or home visits to find out if they were safe in their respective families and how they were coping. Counsellors at safe houses continued to collaborate with local leaders and follow up on all gender-based violence cases.

193 of these cases were referred to Isange One Stop Center and Rwanda Investigation Bureau for medical, psychosocial and legal support.

Tips

- Involve project staff in the identification of safeguarding risks and subsequent mitigation strategies at project set up and on an ongoing basis.

- Given the changing context and increased risks associated with pandemics/epidemics, ensure all staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities, know how to identify and mitigate risks, and are briefed on any changes to the project’s safeguarding approach in light of the situation.

- Ensure safeguarding is accessible to all staff and beneficiaries including through translation of policies and reporting mechanisms into local languages.

Tips

- Organisations should recognise the increased safeguarding risks posed by COVID-19 and other pandemics/epidemics.

- Map out local referral mechanisms including support services, local police and medical facilities so that project staff have this to hand should an incident or safeguarding concern occur.
5. Ensure all your stakeholders are safeguarding aware

Children in Crossfire had a UK Aid Direct Impact grant to implement an early childhood education project in Tanzania: “Watoto Wetu, Tunu Yetu”: Improved early learning for three to five year olds in Dodoma.

Due to COVID-19, the project pivoted to home-based learning for the children and as part of this pivot, the project team educated parents on safeguarding risks that could result from children and families staying at home. A print workbook was developed by the team, in partnership with the ministry of education, which promoted a ‘do no harm’ principle to provide to children in rural settings, who could not access digital resources, with learning activities that could be done safely at home.

Both parents and teachers were also provided with information on existing systemic reporting channels in case safeguarding incidents occurred either in the family home or community, as well as project contacts.

Additionally, counselling and guidance training was provided to 58 pre-primary teachers, 58 head teachers, and 58 ward education officers. This covered aspects of mindful listening and psychosocial support to children behaving differently because of child abuse and stressful living experiences.

6. Think before you share

Feed the Minds, a recipient of a UK Aid Direct Impact grant, implemented a food security project in South Sudan entitled, ‘Increased food security and income among vulnerable farmers in Mvolo County, South Sudan’.

The organisation was successful in applying for a Rapid Response grant from UK Aid Direct, which provided additional funding to existing Community Partnership and Impact grant holders, to help them to scale up their response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Feed the Minds piloted new approaches alongside their local partner organisation for informed consent and ethical content gathering. The team subsequently developed ethical content gathering guidelines based on new sector-wide guidance, which will be issued to project teams and partners. The guide promotes a participatory approach to content gathering and addresses power imbalances between the contributor and content gatherer. It also ensures a wider and local context is captured in the stories, in a participatory approach between Feed the Minds, their local partners and contributors. Most importantly, the guide puts the safety of the participants sharing their story first.

Tips

- Consider the different types of stakeholders your project interacts with and ensure you provide them all with an appropriate level of safeguarding sensitisation and training.

- Think about the format of any safeguarding materials you produce and adapt them accordingly for their intended audience.

• Ensure the safeguarding risks have been considered before asking someone to feature in communications material (a person may risk backlash from their community, for example) or before sharing personal information that could lead to harm.

• Make sure you consider the power imbalances when asking a participant to feature in communication materials and ensure informed consent is received from the participant prior to it being published.
Getting in touch

If you would like to get in contact with any of the grant holders featured to find out more about their safeguarding approach or strengthening measures, please contact us by email at ukaiddirect@männiondaniels.com and we will try to facilitate this.

You can also visit www.ukaiddirect.org for more information about the UK Aid Direct fund and for additional learning materials.

Reporting a safeguarding concern

If you have a safeguarding concern, you can report it by contacting the UK Aid Direct Safeguarding Lead by email at ukaidsafeguarding@männiondaniels.com Alternatively, you can contact the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) directly, through the following secure email address: reportingconcerns@fcdo.gov.uk.

Photo credit: Naomi, a project participant with Feed the Minds, in Mundri, South Sudan, by her riverside garden where she is growing crops.