



Child safeguarding good practices summary

International Child Safeguarding Week 2024

English

Keeping
Children
Safe 

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Celebrating International Child Safeguarding Week 2024

As part of our mission to end child abuse, exploitation and neglect in organisations across the globe, Keeping Children Safe has collated this Summary of Good Practices submitted as part of the nominations process for our Child Safeguarding Champion of the Year award.

Keeping Children Safe sets the International Child Safeguarding Standards which help organisations meet the responsibilities set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child to protect children from harm caused by their staff, activities, operations and partners.

The Standards describe the key elements that should be in place to keep children safe from harm and list the requirements for organisations to meet the Standards. There are four standards covering: Policy, People, Procedures and Accountability.

By sharing these best practices, we aim to inspire others to integrate robust child safeguarding measures within their organisations, institutions and communities, reinforcing that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.

This document is divided into eight sections, each representing different practice areas, followed by practical examples.

The International Child Safeguarding Standards

Standard 1: Policy

The organisation develops a policy that describes how it is committed to preventing and responding appropriately to harm to children.

Standard 2: People

The organisation places clear responsibilities and expectations on its staff and associates and supports them to understand and act in line with these. Key staff are designated at different levels, (including director level), as 'focal points' with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

Standard 3: Procedures

The organisation creates a child safe environment through implementing child safeguarding procedures that are applied across the organisation.

Standard 4: Accountability

The organisation monitors and reviews its safeguarding measures.

1

Development of comprehensive child safeguarding policies

Nominees demonstrated their commitment to child safeguarding by leading the creation and implementation of safeguarding policies, in organisations in Mali, India, Kenya, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Zambia, Togo, South Africa, Senegal, Somalia, Nigeria, United Kingdom, Laos, Ghana, Mozambique and more.

As per Standard 1 of the International Child Safeguarding Standards, a well-crafted policy should include clearly defined commitments of the organisations and the roles and responsibilities of all individuals involved in the care and protection of children, including staff, volunteers and external partners.

Key elements

Clear contextualised guidelines and procedures (Standard 1): organisations must establish clear guidelines for identifying, preventing and reporting child abuse. These guidelines should be rooted in the International Child Safeguarding Standards and tailored to the cultural and legal contexts in which the organisation operates.

Staff and volunteer training (Standard 2): every staff member and volunteer should undergo mandatory training to understand the policy, including how to recognise signs of abuse and how to report concerns in a timely and appropriate manner.

Code of conduct (Standard 2): a specific code of conduct outlining acceptable and unacceptable behaviours when interacting with children and that is signed by everyone is crucial. This code ensures that staff and volunteers understand the importance of maintaining professional standards.

1. Development of comprehensive Child Safeguarding policies

Leading examples

Commitment to safeguarding at all levels: in Ethiopia, staff with dedicated knowledge have played a key-role in creating safeguarding policies for their organisations which included developing protocols for recognising and responding to abuse. The implementation of these policies was accompanied by extensive training for staff and children with tailored resources, reducing incidents of harm and fostering a vigilant safeguarding culture.

Cross-department integration: organisations in Africa integrated child safeguarding policies across all departments, ensuring that every project included a safeguarding component – from HR recruitment to staff training and data protection.

2 Training and capacity building

Many nominees have implemented regular training sessions for staff and volunteers. This helps ensure that all individuals working with children understand their roles in safeguarding, including identifying and reporting concerns.

To ensure that safeguarding measures are effectively implemented, ongoing training and capacity-building initiatives are necessary for staff, volunteers, children and communities.

Key elements

Tailored training programmes (Standard 2): safeguarding training should be tailored to meet the needs of the different stakeholders, including age-appropriate training for children, advanced training for safeguarding officers and community engagement workshops.

Regular refreshers and updates (Standard 2): safeguarding knowledge must evolve with changing circumstances. Regular training refreshers and updates should be provided to keep all staff and volunteers current with the latest research, legal requirements and best practices.

Empowering children and youth (Standard 2): training programmes should also focus on empowering children to understand their rights and recognise when they are at risk. This includes teaching children how to speak up if they feel unsafe and ensuring they know how to report incidents.

2. Training and capacity building

Leading examples

Training at schools: in Kenya exceptional commitment was demonstrated by training over 3,000 teachers and community members, enhancing their capacity to recognise and report child abuse in their schools and local areas.

Child-led training initiatives: in Uruguay and Spain innovative child-led training programmes were led, which empowered young people to take an active role in their own protection. These programmes helped children become advocates for their peers.

3

Child-friendly reporting mechanisms

Creating accessible, child-friendly reporting mechanisms is vital for ensuring that children can safely report abuse or violations of their rights.

These mechanisms must be confidential, easy to use and adapted to the child's age, needs and context.

Key elements

Multiple reporting channels (Standard 3): providing various ways for children to report abuse – such as through suggestion boxes, digital platforms, anonymous hotlines, or trusted adults – ensures that children have a range of options based on their comfort level.

Simplified language and age-appropriate tools (Standard 3): reporting tools and forms should be easy to understand, using simple language and visual aids where necessary to help children of all ages and literacy levels participate.

Transparency (Standard 3): it is important for children to feel heard. Reporting systems should include mechanisms to inform the reporters and children involved, so they understand what actions are being taken after a report is made.

Leading examples

Anonymous reporting systems: several experiences focused on the implementation of anonymous reporting channels to allow children to report abuse without fear of retaliation. In Papua New Guinea, for instance, anonymous feedback boxes were set up in schools, which significantly increased reporting by children who were previously afraid to speak up.

3. Child-friendly reporting mechanisms

Safe spaces for reporting: creating physical spaces where children feel safe to discuss their concerns, such as child-friendly rooms within schools or community centres, was a common and highly effective practice among nominees.

4 Community engagement and awareness campaigns

Actively working to involve community leaders and parents in child safeguarding efforts is key. Effective child safeguarding goes beyond the walls of an organisation.

Engaging the broader community – including parents, caregivers, local leaders and partner organisations – strengthens safeguarding efforts and ensures that children are protected in all areas of their lives.

Key elements

Raising awareness (Standard 2): community awareness campaigns can play a crucial role in changing attitudes towards child safeguarding. By educating communities on child rights and the signs of abuse, organisations can create a safer environment for children.

Parent and guardian involvement (Standards 2 and 4): parents and guardians must be informed of the organisation's commitments to keeping children safe and their own role in protecting children. By involving them in awareness programmes and providing resources in appropriate and transparent ways, organisations can foster a shared responsibility for child safety and strengthen their own accountability.

Advocacy for policy changes (Standard 4): organisations should advocate for policy changes at local, national and international levels to ensure that child safeguarding laws are in place and enforced and that child safeguarding is embedded across systems.

4. Community engagement and awareness campaigns

Leading examples

Community mobilisation in Ghana: a community-based child safeguarding programme was organised for the Health Services that involved training healthcare workers, volunteers and local leaders on the principles of child safeguarding, creating a united front in the fight against child abuse.

Collaborative campaigns: in Nigeria, community campaigns were led to raise awareness about child abuse, teenage pregnancies and violence against children, which contributed to a significant reduction in reported incidents.

5 Empowering children

Several organisations have empowered children to take active roles in their own protection by participating in child clubs and child-led initiatives. Empowering children like this is a key practice for effective child safeguarding. When children are given the knowledge and tools to advocate for themselves, they are better equipped to identify and respond to abuse.

Key elements

Child-friendly education programmes (Standard 2): education programmes that teach children about their rights, how to recognise abuse and where to seek help are essential in creating a protective environment.

Active participation in safeguarding practices (Standards 3 and 4): children should be encouraged to participate in the development, reviewing and implementation of safeguarding policies and practices. This ensures that policies are not only adult-driven but reflect the experiences and needs of children so that they can also become advocates for themselves and their peers.

Supportive environments (Standard 3): creating environments where children feel safe to express their concerns and seek help without fear of judgment or retaliation is critical to empowering them.

Leading examples

Youth-led advocacy: in Brazil, youth advocacy groups that worked alongside local authorities to implement safeguarding measures in schools and community centres were established. These groups helped youth educate their peers on recognising and reporting abuse.

5. Empowering children

Engagement through creative arts: in Cameroon, art and storytelling were used as a tool to teach children about their rights. By engaging them in the creation of cartoons and comic strips that depicted real-life safeguarding scenarios, children were empowered to share their stories and advocate for their rights.

6 Monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement

Child safeguarding is not a one-time effort; it requires constant evaluation and improvement. Organisations must regularly review their policies, practices and reporting systems to ensure that they remain effective and relevant.

Key elements

Regular audits and assessments (Standard 4): safeguarding policies should be reviewed at regular intervals and organisations should conduct audits to assess the effectiveness of their practices.

Feedback loops (Standard 4): incorporating feedback from staff, volunteers, children and the community is vital for identifying gaps in the safeguarding system and making necessary improvements.

Adaptation to new challenges (Standard 4): as new safeguarding challenges arise – such as the increase in online abuse – organisations must adapt their policies and practices to respond effectively.

Leading examples

Continuous policy updates: in Uruguay, systems were implemented where the organisation's safeguarding policies were reviewed annually, incorporating feedback from children and staff to ensure that the policies addressed real-world concerns.

Child feedback mechanisms: in some organisations, children were involved in the evaluation process, providing input on how safe they felt and how reporting mechanisms could be improved.

7 Handling of abuse and response systems

An effective child safeguarding strategy requires a clear, victim-centred approach to handling reports of abuse.

These systems should prioritise the wellbeing of the child subjected to abuse as well as the whistleblowers, ensuring that they receive the support and care they need.

Key elements

Confidentiality and support (Standard 3): ensuring that children who report abuse receive appropriate psychological, legal and emotional support is critical. Organisations must establish confidential reporting systems and follow-up mechanisms to address the need of those reporting too.

Immediate and effective responses (Standard 3): organisations should have a clear process for responding to allegations of abuse. This includes swift action to protect the child, investigation protocols and coordinated responses involving relevant authorities.

Confidentiality and respect (Standard 3): maintaining confidentiality and respecting people's dignity throughout the reporting and response process is vital. Ensuring a human rights-based approach during interventions helps rebuild trust and confidence in the system.

Leading examples

Multidisciplinary support systems: in several cases, there are experiences of implementing multidisciplinary approaches, bringing together social workers, legal experts and psychologists to support people subjected to abuse.

7. Handling of abuse and response systems

This integrated support system ensures a holistic response that addresses both the immediate and long-term needs of the child.

Handling cases: leading examples in Latin America show handling sensitive abuse cases with care, ensuring that the child receives appropriate support while maintaining confidentiality and adhering to legal requirements.

8 Advocacy for safeguarding

Advocacy is essential for promoting child safeguarding at all levels. By raising awareness and influencing policy, organisations can contribute to a more robust child protection system to safeguard children.

Key elements

Advocating for policy changes (Standard 4): advocacy efforts should focus on pushing for stronger child safeguarding laws and policies at the local, national and international levels. Engaging with policymakers and stakeholders can lead to systemic changes that enhance child safeguarding.

Raising global awareness (Standard 4): organisations should engage in campaigns to raise awareness about child safeguarding, highlighting its importance and the need for collective action. Public campaigns like International Child Safeguarding Week can mobilise support and drive change in societal attitudes towards child safeguarding.

Leading examples

Policy and advocacy initiatives: engagement with local forums and initiatives have demonstrated how advocacy can lead to increased funding and support for child safeguarding programmes. For instance, in Nigeria, successful lobby for stronger child safeguarding measures was carried out through community engagement.

National and international campaigns: several nominees engaged in international campaigns focused on child safeguarding, collaborating with organisations and networks to spread awareness and share best practices. This collaborative approach amplifies the message and mobilises broader support.

By developing comprehensive policies, providing ongoing training, empowering children, engaging communities and continuously evaluating safeguarding measures, organisations can create safer environments for children worldwide.

As we celebrate the Child Safeguarding Champion of the Year during International Child Safeguarding Week 2024, we encourage all organisations to adopt and adapt these good practices, ensuring that safeguarding is at the heart of every initiative.

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