

Section 6

Safeguarding for Systemic Action Research



People-driven solutions:

An introduction to facilitating deep participation for systemic change through Systemic Action Research programming

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A scene in a neighbourhood of Dhaka which is centred around the leather supply chain.
CREDIT: CLARISSA

This learning and reflection brief is designed to help teams identify some possible actions to enhance or adapt their safeguarding approach to support a deeply participatory, learning- and action-oriented, whole systems approach within their programme. It is also useful for any team seeking to review or enhance their participatory safeguarding approach more generally. This brief highlights useful learning from CLARISSA but it does not provide a comprehensive overview of how to set up and implement a safeguarding policy or plan. The brief is designed for teams already implementing a safeguarding policies and plans. If teams are not already familiar with safeguarding, it is suggested they first refer to the additional guidance suggested in the resource boxes below.

Specifically, this learning and reflection brief can help teams:

- Learn about how safeguarding can be implemented within a deeply participatory child- and people-centred programme.
- Learn about the key skill of 'building rapport and trust' and why it is so important, especially for people- and child-centred, deeply participatory safeguarding.
- Access key tools and support on Psychological First Aid, ethical decision-making and relationship-building activities, and learn how these can support strong, participatory safeguarding.
- Reflect on their own programme(s)'s safeguarding approach and plan, and identify possible actions which could enhance safeguarding elements and shift towards a deeply participatory, child- and people-centred approach.



1 VIDEO

Watch the video '[Safeguarding for Systemic Action Research](#)' where CLARISSA team members from Bangladesh and Nepal give some examples and highlight their learning around safeguarding in CLARISSA. While you watch the video, note down any safeguarding points mentioned which you feel resemble the approach your own programme or team undertakes safeguarding. Are there also any aspects which you feel are different, or new to you? Add to these notes as you work through the learning and reflection brief and be prepared to discuss during the team reflection.

A CLARISSA facilitator talks with a boy who works in the leather supply chain.

CREDIT: FROM THE CLARISSA VIDEO '[SAFEGUARDING FOR SYSTEMIC ACTION RESEARCH](#)'

2 WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING?

Safeguarding means protecting all children and vulnerable adults (including programme workers) from any harms, abuses or distress that can happen as a result of an organisation's programming and operations. Safeguarding usually includes organisational or programme policies and codes of conduct (for staff, volunteers and partners); prevention; reporting; and responses. Safeguarding is different from **Protection, including Child Protection**, because protection focuses on making the world safer for children and vulnerable adults, and refers to actions undertaken to protect specific groups of people or children, or individuals, from risks or harms. **Research Ethics** is usually understood to be the ethical principles which guide research involving people, including monitoring, evaluation and learning. Research ethics are underscored by ensuring participants in research are respected; that they are not harmed; and that they are treated fairly – in other words that participants benefit equally from the research. **Ethical Conduct** refers to programme workers', including volunteers', responsibilities and how they behave in a community or towards programme participants more generally. For instance being respectful, being role appropriate, as well as ensuring research and learning is ethical. While Safeguarding, Protection, Research Ethics and Ethical Conduct are different, they also overlap in many areas, and are fundamental considerations for

Terms used in this Brief:

GIS: Geographic Information System

A computer programme which can collect (sometimes from different sources) and show data in relation to its geographic position. A simple example is Google Maps showing all the cafes or schools in a neighbourhood.

any team already collecting data, including for monitoring, evaluation and learning, or planning any kind of research, development or humanitarian programme. Teams should consider exploring the key practical resources provided below for additional support on safeguarding.

In practice, safeguarding policies and approaches within different organisations are diverse, with many developing their own policies and guidance around specific contexts and programme approaches. For instance, an organisation might develop a policy for child safeguarding; for disability-inclusive safeguarding; for the prevention of sexual abuse and exploitation; for older people; for LGBTIQ+*; or for refugees and asylum seekers. Safeguarding should always be inclusive and participatory, and centre itself around the perspectives, experience and input of less powerful or marginalised groups or individuals. Safeguarding is part of the *Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability* (see Resource box below).

ETHICAL CLEARANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARDS

If any organisation is planning to conduct research for the purpose of producing or sharing research reports, or the research poses risks, for instance, a risk of trauma, best practice is to seek ethical clearance from a relevant independent Institutional Review Board(s). More generally, organisations may already, or be planning to, collect various data for their own monitoring, learning and evaluation processes, or community members might be supported to collect data as part of their own people-led research process. It is important that the principles of research ethics are applied within any evidence- and learning-oriented programme, for example, how data will be collected, stored, used, and who it will benefit. Any write ups of the process should reference these principles and explain, for instance, how informed consent was given, how participants were recruited, and how the data was collected, stored and used, and the safeguarding process.

For CLARISSA, IDS sought ethical clearance for the whole programme at the onset from its Research Ethics Review Board. It then submitted bi-annual updates during the operational period, including submitting additional updates for specific processes, such as Action Research groups and Children's research groups. Country teams also received training on research ethics as part of their initial training, there was a data management plan, and programme safeguarding policies. It was agreed that the best way to deal with a highly adaptive programme such as CLARISSA was to make further submissions to the Research Ethics Review Board outlining programme processes as they became 'live', and at a time when the details of the work were clear. For example, when Action Research groups were about to start, CLARISSA outlined to the Research Ethics Review Board the key considerations for preventing harm, including using safeguarding, trust-building and a facilitation approach.

Terms used in this Brief:

LGBTIQ+

Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Bisexual, Intersex, Queer/Questioning, Asexual.

MHPSS

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

Mitigation strategy

A strategy to prepare for or reduce a risk or threat to a person.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS: TO COMPENSATE OR NOT TO COMPENSATE – BANGLADESH

The question of whether and how to compensate children participating in the Action Research groups presented a complex dilemma for the Bangladesh team and the whole CLARISSA team. In the first stages of the programme, children engaged in the Life Story collection processes were compensated with money to offset their lost earnings, as missing work often resulted in severe penalties, such as losing an entire day's salary for an hour of absence. However, during the transition to the Action Research group phase, which required strong ownership from the children, a debate emerged regarding the use of compensation, revealing contrasting views between the two main implementing organisations. One organisation, influenced by a previous negative incident, opposed monetary compensation, fearing it might undermine Action Research groups' participatory nature. They were concerned that children might participate solely for financial gain, rather than genuine interest in the group activities. The other organisation, recognising the children's sacrifice of work hours and their income loss, argued in favour of compensation, and favoured monetary payments because this was also the preference of the children. After nearly a year of deliberation, a compromise was reached in early 2022. It was decided that all Action Research group participants would receive in-kind compensation in the form of monthly food packages. This solution worked well, although it introduced a substantial administrative and logistical burden for the teams. Children were informed about the reasoning behind the approach and continued to appreciate the support. However, there were still some cases of children whose engagement remained weak, and who seemingly participated mainly because of the food packages.

3 SAFEGUARDING: PRACTICAL LEARNING FROM CLARISSA

What emerged from the CLARISSA process was a tension between wanting to ensure safeguarding, while also working in a 'entrepreneurial' way. These two concepts can sometimes be understood as conflicting. On the one hand, safeguarding is designed to actively lower the risk of harms and distress posed by a programme, while on the other hand, a Systemic Action Research approach encourages 'risk taking' and embraces uncertainty in the quest for deeper systemic change. In Systemic Action Research, people lead the research, decision-making and interventions, and it is acknowledged that much can be learned from failure by using the lessons learned to adapt the programme. However, in a safeguarding setting, failure is clearly not an option, a programme cannot fail to safeguard those participating or working in a programme. CLARISSA successfully practiced strong safeguarding while also navigating the uncertainties of a Systemic Action Research methodology. Central to this was the child- and people-centred approach and the acknowledgment and trust of the programme team that children and other stakeholders were mostly best placed to guide safeguarding decisions about themselves. In practice, this meant establishing open and ongoing two-way communication between team members and participants enabled by high levels of

“The attitude was not so much one of saying “that cannot be done” (because of safeguarding concerns), but of, “let’s find a way to do it that incorporates good safeguarding.””
IDS CLARISSA team member



trust, strong relationships, and certain programme mechanisms, such as collecting children’s feedback after each activity. Additionally, safeguarding was considered central to all programme operations at all levels, and was implemented, reviewed and revised in an active, ongoing way throughout the duration of the programme.

Safeguarding for Systemic Action Research needs to be informed by a child- and people-centred approach. Programme participants are mostly the best source for identifying risk mitigation strategies* in their local context, because they have the relevant lived experience which many programme staff may not have. Programmes therefore need to plan for adequate time, budget and capacity so that participants can engage meaningfully and inclusively with the programme’s design, implementation, learning, actions, and safeguarding. By fostering trusting, strong relationships and open, two-way communication around potential risks, a team can collaboratively develop with participants, including children, a participant-centred and -led safeguarding plan which can help prevent risks from the outset.

In the context of child safeguarding, this concept of trust has also been further developed, and is sometimes understood as ‘relational safety’. This refers to providing a warm, trusting, positive and stable relationship for children with a key adult, who applies boundaries consistently, communicates sensitively to the child, and expresses their care for and understanding of the child’s perspective. Building relational safety for children can contribute to unlocking positive long-term outcomes such as children’s re-engagement in education or in decision-making that affects their lives; and increasing their self-esteem and their long-term psychological safety (see Module 3 of *Moving towards children as partners in Child Protection in COVID-19 Guide: from participation to partnerships* for more on relational safety).

Safeguarding doesn’t have to get in the way of participants’ deep participation and own agency. Safeguarding doesn’t have to limit how participants generate evidence, do analysis, or take action. By enabling participants to lead in the

Children in the CLARISSA children’s advocacy group, Nepal, take a vote.

CREDIT: CLARISSA

“Ethics and safeguarding isn’t actually a tick box exercise, it is a lively engagement [...] you have to be reflexive all the time, individually, but also in a group, and you need to have had enough safeguarding conversations with the children in advance that you feel comfortable to bring things up in real time too...you feel comfortable to step in and say “no” actually, we’re drawing a line here.”

IDS CLARISSA team member

design from the very beginning – in the CLARISSA context this meant involving children, parents, business owners, and local authorities – and by collaborating with participants in an ongoing way, this potential barrier was avoided to a great extent in CLARISSA. The example of the children’s GIS neighbourhood mapping in Kathmandu below is a good example of how safeguarding was adapted to support deeply participatory and safe work. This is followed by another example in Bangladesh – *An example of Bangladeshi working children’s input for a ‘Day in the Life’ mapping activity, some using GIS devices.*

Safeguarding for Systemic Action Research is an ongoing and adaptable process. Systemic Action Research generates participant-driven evidence, analysis, learning and actions. A programme needs to be adaptive to support this kind of approach, as does the safeguarding. For instance, CLARISSA undertook regular participatory reflection around safeguarding, and used the learning to jointly decide how to modify or adapt some activities’ safeguarding plans.

“Adaption is also in the safeguarding, and a lot of people might feel a bit uncomfortable about that. Although I think that’s actually what happens in real life anyway.”

IDS CLARISSA team member

AN EXAMPLE OF HOW A GIS* MAPPING METHODOLOGY WAS ADAPTED FOR BETTER SAFEGUARDING, GUIDED BY CHILDREN

A GIS journey mapping activity in Kathmandu was planned with children to collect data on tablets. When asked about safeguarding, children said that they felt the tablets would stand out too much, that it would draw too many questions from the community, and it would not feel safe. They agreed on using mobile phones instead, as these were already used by the adult team researchers and would not draw the same level of attention to the children compared to tablets. The GIS programme methodology was subsequently modified for mobile phones. However, after some time, it became apparent that the children had to spend too much time typing in text on their phones which was also drawing attention. After further consultation with the children, the GIS software was again modified to enable them to easily add an audio note to their phone, which was automatically transcribed and added to the map. These adaptations took additional time and resources, but were important in reducing child-identified risks. The GIS methodologies were adapted based on children’s insights into what they considered safe or unsafe in their environment. This adaption allowed the child-led GIS activity to go ahead, but with significantly reduced levels of risk.



Neighbourhood of Gongabu, Kathmandu.

CREDIT: CLARISSA



AN EXAMPLE OF BANGLADESHI WORKING CHILDREN’S INPUT FOR A ‘DAY IN THE LIFE’ MAPPING ACTIVITY, SOME USING GIS DEVICES (PHONES)

Children played a meaningful role in designing the activity as well as the safeguarding plan, and took part in the analysis later.

Children learning about GIS mapping in Kathmandu.

CREDIT: CLARISSA

Safeguarding issues identified by the children	Suggested possible mitigation plan by children
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment in the streets • Hijacking • Accident/vehicle-related accident • Employer issues: they don't give permission to use the phone/ be accompanied by an adult person inside the factory/workplaces. • Uses of mobile during school/ lessons for mapping • Restriction by community/parents/ employer • Risk of natural disaster • Sudden sickness • GPS logger programme might close (and not capture the data) • Risk of losing the mobile phone if carried in different places by children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can get help from the police • Keep the mobile phone very safely. If possible do not carry the mobile phone (use an adult) • Be very careful when walking in the road • Get help from the community mobilisers/CLARISSA research team if needed • Be very alert when we have the phones

Example of safeguarding considerations for GIS mapping of neighbourhoods (see table over page). This is an edited and simplified example of how safeguarding considerations and adaptations were built into the design of a CLARISSA journey mapping GIS activity by children engaged in the worst forms of labour in Bangladesh.

Safeguarding considerations and adaptations for children’s journey mapping in Dhaka

Main question for the activity	Mapping questions children will answer	Data collectors	Ethics and safeguarding considerations based on team’s (local staff and safeguarding leads) and children’s joint input
<p>How do children move through their neighbourhoods (including between places of work)?</p> <p>We want to learn where children go and what they experience</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What have you come here to do? 2. How do you feel in this place? 3. Why do you feel this way? 	<p>10 children from Children’s research group</p> <p>1 day each (12–24 hours)</p> <p>1 adult researcher to accompany</p>	<p>An overall CLARISSA programme safeguarding risk assessment and planning has already been undertaken with children. An additional safeguarding risk assessment needs to be undertaken with the group of children engaging in this GIS journey mapping. Some considerations are listed here:</p> <p>Children are accompanied by adult for 12–24 hours? Best practice is two adults accompanying a child, but two adults accompanying a child for a long period might limit the behaviour of the child, and attract the interest of the community. In this case, if two adults accompany one child, it will possibly make the process riskier. Suggest for girls, one female staff member and for boys, one male staff member. A 12-hour slot is preferred, both the child and the adult staff member are at risk if working 24 hours at a stretch. 12 hours during the daylight is safe. If 24 hours is planned it is important to ask the parents what they think, because after dark most of the children stay at home. At night, accompanying a child might be awkward/disturbing for parents. Having the staff in their house might create extra pressure to serve a guest. The male head of household might not like to host an outsider at night. There are safeguarding risks for an adult staff to stay in community at night.</p> <p>Can we give the adult the tablet/phone to make it safer? It might be fine to have a tablet/phone with staff as they use mobile phones anyway. It might be better to use phones instead of tablets to avoid people asking “<i>What they are doing?</i>” Ask for the perspective of country level teams. Children will need to be consulted as part of the risk assessment to guide this question.</p> <p>How do we make children comfortable to navigate their neighbourhood as they usually would? This question to be answered by the children once risks and mitigation measures are identified. Normally the children will identify and discuss what makes them feel safe and comfortable in their neighbourhood. If they think the mapping process will make them feel unsafe, we’ll explore with children what can be done to minimise the unsafe/uncomfortable feeling the process might create.</p> <p>What issues in the community will we face from accompanying children, especially after dark? How can we navigate these? These questions need to be explored with the children. The safeguarding focal points and the researchers should use existing knowledge and information and consult with children on key issues and how to manage. There are also risks of abuse for both adult staff and children; the family of the child might feel awkward and need to answer queries of other community members/neighbours; head of household/father might not approve of the process but will not want to say; having an additional member at their house might be uncomfortable for the family, including eating in front of strangers; they might feel pressure to offer the guest/staff food as s/he will be staying; staying in the child’s house might be uncomfortable for the staff and risky. Additional risks to be identified with local teams.</p> <p>Keep individual journey maps private and only share the collective journey stories. All journeys will be anonymised. This is because children talking about their own journeys in a group will mean sharing confidential information with others.</p>

AN EXAMPLE OF SAFEGUARDING WHERE THE RISK WAS DEEMED TO BE TOO HIGH TO FINISH THE ACTIVITY

In Kathmandu, children helped design and undertake a GIS mapping activity of a neighbourhood where they lived and worked. It was in a bus park area and the aim was to learn how the street changed from day to night. The children, each accompanied by an adult, started mapping the area during the day. However, at night, the area started to feel very different, including that it was inappropriate for girls and women to be there. However, the children really wanted to carry on, and the accompanying adult researchers could see that the children were seeing things as insiders that the adults could not. Despite this, the decision was made by the adult researchers to step in and end the activity because they considered the setting had become too risky. An IDS team member observed that despite the children's enthusiasm, and the fact that children already experienced this neighbourhood on a daily basis anyway because they lived there, adult researchers felt comfortable to highlight the risks to children in real time and make the decision to stop the activity. There had been many ongoing safeguarding conversations with the children prior to this event which facilitated this type of decision.

CLARISSA RESOURCES ON SAFEGUARDING

[Safeguarding the mental health of children in child labour in Nepal](#). A CLARISSA Blog.

[Building rapport for Action Research with the community in Bangladesh](#). A CLARISSA Blog.

[A chance to build trust and rapport in the global pandemic \(Nepal\)](#). A CLARISSA Blog.

4 SKILLS, METHODS AND TOOLS FOR SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding information, training and expertise: CLARISSA invested in safeguarding at all levels, including, training field staff, partner organisations, management, and communications and advocacy teams. CLARISSA also appointed safeguarding leads within teams and countries and engaged a skilled safeguarding advisor for the whole programme. For example, in Nepal, CLARISSA trained all its team members in safeguarding, including its local partners, and provided refresher training at least twice a year. It also distributed safeguarding brochures with emergency numbers to all staff and ensured that emergency numbers were clearly visible in the office and for Action Research group meeting places.

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support: For CLARISSA, Life Story telling and analysis by children engaging in the worst forms of child labour had the potential to re-traumatise. CLARISSA also coincided with COVID which added another level of vulnerability for many children and families. Safeguarding and MHPSS were therefore high priority processes in CLARISSA, especially during COVID. Where deemed necessary, children were referred to MHPSS services. In Bangladesh, all facilitators

were trained in Psychological First Aid, and a CLARISSA social worker was also appointed, who was central to MHPSS. Implementing good COVID safety procedures also helped to build trust with parents and children, for instance, by providing tests and safe spaces to undertake CLARISSA work. Additionally, the analysis of children's Life Stories, which involved the retelling of the stories a group setting, was organised in such a way that the children in the group who had contributed their own Life Story would not be required to listen to and analyse their own story in the group.

Psychological First Aid (PFA): Any team working in a deeply participatory way should consider the participants and context where it is working to determine whether practitioner skills such as PFA are required. CLARISSA facilitators were trained in PFA, a tool which can be used by first responders in situations where children are experiencing extreme distress or trauma. Using PFA enabled CLARISSA staff to support children experiencing psychological distress or trauma without putting children at risk of further harm. Children could then be referred to the appropriate service provider if needed.



Children doing a body mapping activity in Kathmandu.

CREDIT: CLARISSA

SAFEGUARDING DURING COVID

When COVID restrictions started, teams initially felt that the project was no longer possible – it was impossible to visit the communities and conduct Participatory Action Research in such circumstances. However, teams quickly developed ideas on how to overcome each operational challenge. For example, considerable thought was given to the safeguarding and operational processes used to get in touch with the children, obtain the required consents, and then conduct interviews. Masks, gloves, and hand sanitisers were used to provide phones to children, allowing remote interaction with researchers, and conducting and recording interviews using Facebook Messenger — the communication tool used in the communities.

Building rapport and trust: While all of the skills mentioned throughout this CLARISSA learning and reflection brief series are considered important for safeguarding, building rapport and trust with programme participants is critical for strengthening the 'relational' aspect of safeguarding as well as making safeguarding participatory and child- and people-centred. CLARISSA research required that facilitators became known in the communities where they were planning to work, so that community members would become familiar with them, trust them, and be comfortable to share their stories. This required taking the time to walk about in the community – often during out-of-office hours – sharing meals with community members, meeting and talking with different community members in an informal way, as well as sharing their own Life Stories with the community. This process

took considerable time, around six months, before any story collection started. The CLARISSA experience showed how rapport building cannot be rushed, and also how individual rapport building was especially effective and important, as it led to developing stronger trust compared to group activities only. However, building trust was not only important for the relationship between the facilitator and the child and adult participants, but also with the wider social network, including parents, caregivers, and gatekeepers. Another important aspect of building rapport and trust in CLARISSA was managing the expectations of participants and the wider community, and being clear about what the programme could and could not help with, or provide.

In general, rapport building with children focused on spending time together and playing fun, participatory games which helped everyone to get to know each other better and break down barriers. For instance, in Bangladesh, children were keen to play sport (cricket), which was facilitated by CLARISSA. In a different example from Nepal, the COVID outbreak slowed down the project but was also an opportunity to further build rapport and trust by providing 'COVID relief kits' (masks, toiletries, food) to children and young people working in the adult entertainment sector. It is important the facilitators who are working in the community or with participants are prepared to try and blend in with what is going on locally, that they leverage popular local culture (perhaps singing, dancing, poetry, or storytelling) to inspire activities, and that they feel comfortable, and practice facilitating fun activities and events, such as sports.

GUIDANCE AND TOOLKITS FOR DEEPLY PARTICIPATORY SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding

Terre des hommes Child Safeguarding Policy: An example of Terre des hommes' safeguarding policy.

Dhaka **PhotoVoice COVID exhibition**: A short post about this exhibition and a link to the photos.

Disability-inclusive Child Safeguarding Guidelines. Guidance on how to include children with disabilities in safeguarding by AbleChild Africa and Save the Children.

For more guidance and many tried and tested tools on how to work in participatory way with children around safeguarding: **Moving towards children as partners in Child Protection in COVID-19 Guide: from participation to partnerships** Module 3 provides guidance on *Ethics and Safeguarding during COVID-19*. While the guidance is designed to support child protection work during a time of COVID, it can also be used in many other contexts.

The **Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub** has many tools and guidance for those seeking to strengthen safeguarding generally.

Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability sets out nine commitments to ensure that organisations support people and communities affected by crisis and vulnerability in ways that respect their rights and dignity and promotes their primary role in finding solutions to the crises they face.

Research ethics and ethical conduct

CLARISSA **Working Paper 3: Towards Ethical Good Practice in Cash Transfer Trials and their Evaluation**. ISBN: 978-1-78118-660-2

For those wanting to learn more about research ethics in relation to children, the *Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC)* website is a rich source. This includes a useful **reflexive tool** which can help teams start thinking about ethics in their work.

Box continues on next page ►

For more guidance around ethical considerations and decision-making when working in communities, refer to [Thinking Through Facilitators' Ethical Responsibilities](#) from the Child Resilience Alliance's *Toolkit for reflective practice in supporting community-led child protection processes*.

[Key ethical issues in humanitarian research](#), a 'Research Snapshot' by ELRHA.

Save the Children have written some useful guidance about [Ethics and Child Safeguarding](#) in its Safe Schools Common Approach guidelines.

Individuals and team can practice navigating ethical dilemmas in the field based on real-life challenges in a range of education in emergencies contexts with this resource: [Navigating Ethical Dilemmas in Education in Emergencies \(EiE\): A Compendium of Vignettes for Research & Practice](#).

CLARISSA used visual methods and tools for learning. [The practice and ethics of participatory visual methods for community engagement in public health and health science](#) provides ethical guidance for practitioners using these methods.

Ethical guidance for those considering using GIS has been considered in detail in [Ethical Considerations When Using Geospatial Technologies for Evidence Generation](#) by Gabrielle Berman, Sara de La Rosa and Tanya Accone for [Innocenti](#). DOI: [10.18356/688ca64a-en](#)

MHPSS

[Psychological First Aid](#) – Facilitator's manual for orienting field workers. World Health Organization.

[Psychological First Aid for children, adolescents and families experiencing trauma](#), developed specifically to use with children by UNICEF.

Facilitation tools for trust building

Watch the videos set in an Action Research programme in Kenya to hear about facilitator and community perspectives on [Being a Facilitator](#) and being [Humble and Respectful](#).

There are many resources available on running activities with children, young people, and adults. Section d (page 28) of the [Toolkit of Participatory Approaches Using Creative Methods to Strengthen Community Engagement and Ownership](#) has many links and ideas for energisers, icebreakers and games.

Other skills and tools in this series

1. [Working in a child- and people-centred way](#)

Key skill: *Communications skills*

2. [Mapping systems and taking action](#)

Key skill: *Asking good questions*

3. [Using evidence and learning to adapt programmes in real time](#)

Key skill: *Being a reflexive team*

4. [After Action Reviews](#)

Key skill: *Being a reflective practitioner (individual)*

5. [Working with partners](#)

Key skill: *Being inclusive and aware of power dynamics*

6. [Safeguarding for Systemic Action Research](#)

Key skill: *Building trust and rapport*

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Children undertaking a collage activity in Kathmandu, Nepal.

CREDIT: CLARISSA



5 TIPS ON PLANNING AND BUDGETING FOR SAFEGUARDING

Funders: While most funders agree with the need to ensure strong safeguarding, many organisations are concerned that funders will not be prepared to accommodate the safeguarding needs of a programme using Systemic Action Research, namely, one that requires a longer, slower timeframe and an open-ended, adaptive approach. While this can be a real challenge, funders are now starting to move towards new models of funding. The tips and resources below can help teams strengthen their programmes and proposals in relation to safeguarding within a deeply participatory, learning- and action-oriented, whole systems process.

- Do include a safeguarding budget line and explain the safeguarding approach and rationale in the proposal, which includes extra capacity to ensure adequate safeguarding for a deeply participatory approach. Don't skimp on this consideration to make a budget seem more attractive to a donor.
- Plan adequate time (not rushing) and budget (e.g. staff and activity costs) at the beginning of programme to build strong relationships and trust.
- Assume that safeguarding will require additional resources at points during the course of the programme because it has to respond to participants' input by adapting. Budget for adapting the safeguarding plan as the programme progresses. For instance, CLARISSA had to change the way children did the GIS mapping to accommodate safeguarding issues, which involved additional costs.
- If working with children, budget for adequate local staff to accompany children when researching in public.
- Consider a budget for compensating participants for their time spent participating in the programme.
- Consider a budget for emergency assistance where participants might be especially vulnerable or at risk. For instance, for providing emergency food supplies, small cash amounts, or small medical costs. These will inevitably arise in any setting, and especially if an emergency happens, such as COVID.

RESOURCES FOR FUNDING SAFEGUARDING

Community-driven systems change: The power of grassroots-led change for long term impact and how funders can nurture it. Firelight Foundation. There is a useful table on page 15-17: *How can funders support community-based organizations to catalyze community-driven systems change?* The column on 'organisational capacity and effectiveness' provides some useful rationale.

Tools and Templates for donors. Firelight Foundation.

Weaving a collective tapestry: a funder's toolkit for child and youth participation. Elevate Children Funders Group.

- On page 32 the useful table of research-driven principles highlights "3. Safe and consistent - Do no harm and mitigate any potential risks to children and young people; 6. Non-extractive and Compensated – Value people's time, expertise and contribution, be clear about your intentions, and build in feedback and recognition throughout".
- On page 40-42 there is guidance aimed at donors around compensation.
- On page 43-44 there is section for donors called 'Getting started: safeguarding, care and wellbeing'.

Funder safeguarding collaborative A website of the Global Fund for Children. There are a lot of resources on this site targeted at funders but also useful for organisations developing programmes or preparing proposals and considering safeguarding.

Maximising benefits: a recommended framework for volunteerism and compensation for young people. CIVICUS Youth and Restless Development.

Safeguarding for Systemic Action Research	
DO	DON'T
Allocating time and capacity	
<p>Do allocate reasonable time for safeguarding planning to be a central concern and activity from the very beginning of a project.</p> <p>Do take time to build and maintain strong relationships and trust with participants and the wider community.</p> <p>Do ensure teams feel empowered and adequately skilled to undertake participatory processes of decision-making as well as real time safeguarding decisions.</p> <p>Do reflect on if and how to compensate participants for workdays lost. Participant's time should be valued.</p> <p>Do train participants and anyone involved in the programme on the importance of anonymity and confidentiality.</p> <p>Assume that participants will be triggered at some point and discuss with them the strategies they use to cope with triggering. Do ensure good PSS and other services.</p>	<p>Don't develop a safeguarding plan as an 'add on' to a programme, or just to satisfy organisational or donor requirements.</p> <p>Don't rush the process of developing a safeguarding plan. Without trust, people may not be open about potential risks or harms, nor feel confident to report issues.</p> <p>Don't assume that a safeguarding risk means it isn't possible to undertake an activity – look for alternative strategies. However, child- and people-centred working and safeguarding is not an 'anything goes' process.</p> <p>Don't offer compensation which will pressurise or is designed to incentivise children/adults to take part in an activity or programme they may not otherwise want to participate in.</p> <p>Don't do a participatory activity which will reveal identities and private information about participants. Don't assume people will automatically understand why this is important.</p> <p>Don't assume that participants will not be triggered by some discussions, even if they choose not tell you how they are feeling. Don't ask staff to provide PSS without adequate training.</p>
Using a child- or people-centred, ethical approach	
<p>Do approach risk and vulnerability as a relative concept. Often there will be dilemmas. Decisions about when and how to respond to risk and vulnerability should be jointly guided by an organisation's safeguarding policy; participants' own perspectives and suggestions; local and external staff input; safeguarding lead/expert; the context. Ensure inclusivity and broad representation of different needs and perspectives.</p>	
<p>Use the 'Do No Harm' principle and an ethical approach. Ensure voluntary participation, informed consent, and that they can change their mind at any point in the process.</p> <p>Do use an approach where participants 'own' the data and use it to inform their own actions.</p> <p>Do be clear about what the programme and its staff can and can't provide or do for participants, including what the programme is focusing on.</p> <p>Be aware that a deeply participatory action might not always be appropriate in every context. Work with those with a strong knowledge of the local context to help decide.</p> <p>Do make sure that transparent conversations take place around the ethics of research and evidence collection and sharing. Keep raw data confidential.</p>	<p>Participation should never feel or be obligatory. If there are any safeguarding doubts, work with participants to jointly understand the context and risks involved and find a less risky way.</p> <p>Don't be 'extractive' and collect data which won't be fed back.</p> <p>Even through Systemic Action Research is open-ended, don't raise expectations among participants which the programme can't deliver on.</p> <p>Don't start a participatory activity without trust, consultation and agreement by locally knowledgeable stakeholders, leaders and authorities.</p> <p>Don't share raw data with external stakeholders. Store it in a way that keeps it confidential. Raw data could be used by different actors to stigmatise, intimidate, or target individuals and groups.</p>
Safeguarding is a process	
<p>Do develop an overall safeguarding plan for the whole programme alongside additional plans for specific activities for instance, a neighbourhood mapping with children, a photography project, a video.</p> <p>Do prioritise participatory risk assessments and any mitigation strategies with those you are working with.</p> <p>Set up participant feedback mechanisms and check-ins to test out safeguarding plans. Make adjustments as needed.</p>	<p>Don't apply the same generic safeguarding plan for every activity. Separate activities require additional safeguarding planning.</p> <p>Don't develop a safeguarding plan which has been decided by programme or organisational staff only.</p> <p>Don't develop a rigid or fixed safeguarding plan which is never tested, revisited or revised.</p>

6 TEAM REFLECTION

This reflection session is designed to be undertaken as a team. Answer the questions together. Allow about two, or two and a quarter hours. Use your notebooks to record your answers and main points. You'll need to refer back to this later.

Skills building (35 mins)

This worksheet focuses on building rapport and trust with participants, their families and the wider community. Use this team reflection session to test out or practice a particular tool or methods which can help build rapport and trust between facilitators and participants and/or between participants themselves. You might want to practice an activity which is already popular within your own team organisation or perhaps try out a new activity from the resources provided in this brief. Take turns to facilitate an activity with the rest of the team acting as the participants. Reflect together after each activity and provide constructive feedback to the facilitator.

Alternatively, use this time to discuss some ethical dilemmas with your team.

For instance *Navigating Ethical Dilemmas in Education in Emergencies (EiE): A Compendium of Vignettes for Research & Practice* presents different ethical dilemmas for discussion. For instance, 'To pay or not to pay' on page 30, and 'Securing Informed Consent in Humanitarian Settings' on page 23, or 'Risks of Retraumatizing Study Participants for Research Gains' on page 33.

Team discussion (25 mins)

You may find it helpful to watch the video again together. Discuss any the points which you identified from watching the video and reading the brief – what seems similar to your programme's approach, what seems different?

Team safeguarding mini-assessment (30 mins)

Discuss as a team.

Questions 1 and 2: Rank from 1–5. 5 = very strongly, 1 = not at all. Don't spend a lot of time trying to reach consensus, rather, prioritise presenting your different perspectives, and note down the different rankings.

- 1 Rank the extent to which you think your team's safeguarding approach is similar to the participatory, people-centred one described in this brief.
- 2 Rank your team's capacity to ensure participant-centred, ongoing safeguarding. Where do you think the team is particularly strong, and where do you think the team is less strong?
- 3 Do you have any examples of how safeguarding may have conflicted with programme plans? How was this conflict addressed? Is there anything similar or different to the approach used by CLARISSA?

Actions brainstorm (30 mins)

Suggest and discuss any concrete actions you could take as a team that could shift your current safeguarding approach towards one which is closer to the approach described here. While remaining realistic, try not to limit your ideas for now, as you will have the opportunity to come back to them once you have completed all the learning and reflection briefs.



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Credits

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