Transcript for Safeguarding in International Contexts Webinar

[Welcome]

Hello and welcome to our Safeguarding in International Contexts webinar. Before we jump into the training, let's start by getting a feel for which of these four at risk groups are most relevant to the projects that you're involved in. Which of these four ‘at risk’ groups is most relevant to your projects? You can choose either children, women and girls, people with disabilities, or refugees and asylum seekers. This webinar is made up of two sessions, each session is two and a half hours long and we'll have two five-minute breaks within that time. You should have received a link to the PDF of the slides and the handbook for this course, you will need these throughout the webinar so please have them to hand. There are accessible formats available, so please let the host or the co-host know if you would like those. Ideally, we would like your webcams enabled, but we ask that you keep microphones muted unless you are participating in a discussion or asking a question. We do this because we want to minimise the distractions that background noise could create for people, but we also want to be able to see that everyone is here and engaged. We understand there might be occasions when

you would prefer to have the webcam off. For example, if you're having problems with your internet speed, or you've got children who need your attention.

Please note that information shared during this webinar can be of a sensitive nature, and some of the content is not appropriate for children, so if children are in the room, please consider using headphones and angling your screen away from them. Also, if you're happy to share any of your own experiences, please bear in mind confidentiality. We ask that you anonymise any examples, experiences or stories that you share.

It is important to keep yourselves emotionally safe during the training and if you need to take a breather from the webinar, that's okay and you can rejoin whenever you feel able to. It might be good to think about someone you could reach out to if uncomfortable feelings or memories come to the surface. You might need to find support for yourself, or it might be that you're concerned about someone else or another situation after the session. If that's the case, please do contact our help-centre as soon as you can because the trainer is not equipped to give specific advice on the webinar platform.

The chat facility can be used throughout for questions and for participation in activities. The co-host might answer the question, signpost you to further sources, or hold on to that question for the next break and then share it with the

host. If a question is not answered, or a question is about a very specific issue, please do contact our safeguarding helpline by email or phone.

Thank you for choosing Thirtyone:eight for your training today. Our motivation is to equip, empower and encourage you in your safeguarding responsibilities. As we start, we just want to recognise the time, care and commitment you're investing in your church, charity or organisation by attending this training and in everything that you do, thank you. I hope that the message you get today is that you never have to do safeguarding alone. As I mentioned already, we have a safeguarding helpline; you may want to pop their contact details into your phone now if you don't already have them to hand – 0303 003 1111, option 2 / helpline@thirtyoneeight.org. The safeguarding helpline is there to support you with any questions regarding safeguarding. It might be queries about policies, or you might have a live situation which you would value talking over with us and getting advice. The safeguarding helpline operates from 7am until midnight, seven days a week, 365 days a year, or 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday for those non-urgent questions about policies, guidance and processes, and the out of hours service for any more immediate concerns.

Everyone here today will have a different motivation for engaging with safeguarding. For us at Thirtyone:eight, it comes from our passionate belief that safeguarding is close to God's heart. Our name comes from a verse in the Bible,

Proverbs 31:8 that says, “Speak out on behalf of the voiceless and for the rights of all who are vulnerable.” When we take care of the vulnerable, we are fulfilling God's call. If you're part of another faith group, you may well recognise this call from your own sacred scripts. Or you might be part of a charity that has care and dignity for the vulnerable at its heart. Whatever your motivation, we want to equip you.

[Introduction]

Let’s turn to the topic of Safeguarding in International Contexts. When you consider the many thousands of locations, cultures and other variables we might be working in, it’s impossible to simply tell you the ‘right’ approach for your situation. Instead, we’ve aimed for a principle based course that will give you the tools you need to create the safeguarding processes that work in your context. If you're working across multiple places, it may be that your approaches across those places need to look different as well, and we hope that you go away from this training feeling equipped to do that.

In session one we're going to be looking at the shared principle in international safeguarding, and the UK standards in preventative safeguarding. In session two, we're going to be talking about local specifics and contextualised safeguarding, and finally intercultural safeguarding and how we bring all of those

concepts together. In session one, you get to relax a little and take in the taught content. But in session two we encourage you to come ready to share and to do a lot of the work. There will be a lot more engagement and interaction and we will be asking you, ‘what does this look like in your context?’, ‘How are you going to apply this?’ and ‘What are your challenges?’.

You might have noticed the little images decorating the module titles and wondered what they are for. If you are a visual thinker, then these images might be a helpful way to understand our learning journey. In module one, on international safeguarding we're going to be talking about what shared safeguarding principles might exist internationally and a good way to visualise this is the idea of hot nutritious food. Shared principles are the things that most cultures would broadly agree with, even if our specifics on how they are reached differ. Most people would agree that, where possible, access to hot nutritious food is something that everyone should have access to. So we begin with identifying some shared principles in the world of safeguarding internationally.

We are then going to look at preventative safeguarding. We are a UK organisation. Most of the people that train with us have some connection with the UK. That might be a very close connection in that they're predominantly based in the UK with very little work overseas, or it might be the opposite, that the overseas project is simply receiving partial amounts of funding from the UK. But

the way the UK system works means that you are required to understand and adhere to the UK principles around safeguarding even if your connection with the UK is quite informal and loose. Since it's the systems that are 'built in' for UK charities, we can imagine that as a three pin plug.

In session 2, we're going to be talking about the context that we're working in, being honest about the challenges, the realities and the opportunities in each of those cultures. Many people from Asian society are baffled by the fact that Westerners often try to cook rice in a pan on a hob, and they wonder why we would try to do something so difficult when rice cookers exist, are so efficient and they cook rice perfectly every time. So we want to use that analogy for discovering what's already out there that works better than what we have. We're not here to impose our UK ideas around safeguarding to places where they don't work – we need to look at what's already there and consider how we can utilise and benefit from those ideas. Finally, we're going to look at how can we fit the UK system and the local context together to produce this shared principle of a hot, nutritious meal. We need our travel adapter, or a way to produce an intercultural safeguarding approach.

Why is it important for us to be aware of harm and abuse internationally? If you haven't already had first-hand experience of Safeguarding in International Contexts, then you will discover throughout this training that is a complicated and

often very time-consuming project, but it is a critically important one. One writer who was discussing safeguarding across nations describes it as a ‘tragic and hopeful story’. This is a powerful statement, isn't it? Some cultures and communities believe that abuse doesn't occur or is less prevalent in their locations than in the West. But the sad reality is, where people exist, harm and abuse also exists. We need to be really clear that non-recognition or non-reaction to harm and abuse is not the same as non-existence of harm and abuse. This means that we have a duty of care, to offset and prevent that harm and abuse wherever possible.

So how prevalent is it? If we consider children, we know that in some areas of India, over half of all children experience sexual abuse before their 18th birthday. Worldwide, a billion children experience violence every year. The consequences of that are catastrophic, profound and often they're deadly.

People with a disability are three to four times a greater risk internationally of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect than their non-disabled peers. Of the 70 million people living with autism worldwide, over half are too afraid to leave their homes for fear that they would be taken advantage of

For women and girls, one in three experience physical or sexual abuse in their lifetimes. And almost 50,000 women and girls worldwide are killed by their

intimate partners or family members. To put that into context, that means every hour, five women or girls are killed by someone in their own family. Through the course of this training, 25 women will have been murdered by a family member,

If we consider those without a state, refugees and asylum seekers, 108million people are forcibly displaced. Those individuals are at higher risk of human trafficking and other forms of exploitation than any other single group. Sometimes they're detained by authorities when they arrive in a new country, and even if they are granted asylum, they often face racism, xenophobia, violence and discrimination, often daily.

We know that this story is a tragic one, but it can also be a hopeful one. Those big numbers represent thousands and millions of individual experiences – people who are working their way through harm and abuse, and often they have contact or interactions with organisations like ours who can make a difference in their lives. One young woman says this; “I have knocked on many doors asking for help, but no one has heard my voice. Where is the support? Don't I deserve freedom as a woman?” Her story is heartbreaking, but there is hope. There was a study that showed that when staff were trained in safeguarding, their confidence and their capability in handling safeguarding concerns increased. The unexpected knock-on effect was that those people then became a safe place, and the number of disclosures increased. Individuals felt comfortable sharing

their experiences with those who had been trained. In this often tragic space of safeguarding internationally, we know that training can be an incredible catalyst for change. We can make a difference, and that's where the hopeful aspect of this story comes in.

Another victim-survivor said this: “I used to love being a kid, but everything changed when the secret began. I didn't understand what was happening to me, and I felt scared and confused. It felt like a dark cloud was always hanging over me, and I didn't know how to make it go away. I wished I could tell someone, but I was too afraid and ashamed. No child should have to carry such a heavy burden. Please, if you see something wrong happening to a child, be their voice, be their protector and help them find the light again.” This was a victim of child sexual abuse by one of her cousins who is now the head of HR in a multinational company, and by sharing her story is encouraging us to be equipped and comfortable in intervening in these situations. We need to make sure that we hold these two opposites fairly. We must recognise that our organisations will almost certainly face the realities of harm and abuse in our international work. But we also need to acknowledge that we can prevent some abuse, and to lessen the impact of it. When we hold those two truths of the reality of harm and our ability to make a difference, we can see that safeguarding in International Contexts is genuinely a tragic and a hopeful story.

Leeds university put together a series of short exercises on international safeguarding called Changing the Story that are included in your handbook. We encourage you to work through these short exercises with your teams. But let's start this training by choosing to be people committed to changing the story.

[Module 1 – International Safeguarding]

We’re moving on to look at international safeguarding. What are the shared principles? How are we going to work towards building something that is unified even when we're talking about so many different cultures, places, languages, and situations? Safeguarding is a social construct. It's something that is created by each of our societies. So, the idea that it’s transferrable to another society is problematic because the world is this beautifully diverse place. We see it in how we eat, how we dress, how we apologise and even in how we disagree. Safeguarding is the same. Across different national contexts, there is more difference than there is shared space.

Different countries view safeguarding in one of three different ways – all of these hold some truth and are useful.

Some countries approach safeguarding through a punishment-based lens. The belief is that abuse stems from broken individuals who need to be fixed by a legal system. If there are enough laws and punishments, we can fix the issue of

abuse, which leads us to a punishment approach to safeguarding. Interestingly, that's where the English system originated from, it’s what the American system still has as well as many other countries.

Other countries view safeguarding through the lens of family-based support. This view is that if we can make the family safe and resilient, abuse will be resolved. The legal system is used less in this approach - many Nordic countries and China would have this family support based approach to safeguarding.

Other countries, including Scotland, New Zealand and Sweden take a child rights focused approach. The belief is that if we can keep children safe in childhood, make them resilient, and then send them out as adults, we fix the whole safeguarding sphere.

So people will come from these three very different perspectives, but there is a shared space between them all.

What is that shared space, what can we all agree on? Because even the phrase safeguarding isn't recognised in most countries. One study on International Child Protection made the point that whilst there are so many differences in how we all approach safeguarding, no single country has anything that's unique to just their country. There are so many shared principles and ideas, even amongst all the diversity, and we want to start from that place. Let's look at what we can agree as

a definition. And this has been adapted from UNICEF: “Safeguarding is the prevention and responses to exploitation and abuse of at risk people in all contexts.” I love this definition because it's clear about what we're working towards, but it's broad enough to apply to all the different nations and situations that we might be interacting in.

We're going to unpack the prevention and responses as we work through modules two and three. But for now, let's have a look at those other two areas. What do we mean by ‘exploitation and abuse’?

For those of you who are familiar with UK safeguarding for children, this ‘PENS’ acronym might look quite familiar. You'll notice the addition of ‘exploitation’ in the international sphere, because these are the main areas of harm and abuse that most international organisations come across.

The signs and indicators of harm and abuse will differ based on your cultural contexts, but these forms of harm and abuse will still exist. Your handbook includes a section on this so please do take the time to read through it. And if you don't have a foundational knowledge of safeguarding, then we recommend that you familiarise yourself with these basic ideas. I'm going to give a whistle stop tour now.

Physical abuse is causing any physical harm, pain or injury through any means, such as hitting, rough, handling, burning, shaking or the illegal use of restraint. Emotional, which can also be referred to as psychological abuse, is causing mental distress, frightening, threatening, humiliating or isolating. Neglect can also be known as acts of omission. Allowing for the context, the resources and the circumstances, neglect refers to the persistent failure to meet a person's basic needs, which is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's physical, healthy, spiritual, moral and mental development. The 'allowing for context' is incredibly important because we know that if you're in an area, for example, affected by conflict or famine, the parents are being not abusive and neglectful by not feeding you enough. Other social issues will exist in our context that we want to respond to, but that won't fall under the umbrella of safeguarding. Sexual abuse for children is any physical contact, whether touching, whether or not the child is aware of what's happening, and it includes rape, attempted rape and sexual assault. For adults, it is the non-consensual touching or sexual involvement of any kind, including sexual photography, indecent exposure, or any sexual activity that somebody lacks the ability to consent to. That's really important when we're talking about the international sphere. So if we're thinking about those with disabilities, we need to consider whether or not they have the ability to give consent. Even adults who physically and cognitively can consent

might feel unable to withhold consent if they are reliant on the resources that your organisation brings. The implications for saying ‘no’ could be so massive that they feel they had no choice. Specific sexual acts that are illegal will change between countries. Finally, exploitation is prevalent in the international sphere. For children, it’s when an individual in a position of trust or power takes, or attempts to take, advantage of a child for their own personal benefit or gratification. And it can take different forms. It could be physical, sexual, financial, material, social or political. Think for example, of child soldiers or the criminal exploitation of drug movement. Sexual Exploitation refers to any abuse of a position of power, a power differential or trust for sexual purposes. It could be for money. It could be solicitation, or it could be forcing people to cross county or national boundaries for exploitation of sexual purposes. This could be of children or adults. These are the categories of harms and abuse that have broad international recognition.

So over to you guys, who are you safeguarding? What forms of exploitation and abuse are you responding to? [space for delegates to share here]

We’re now moving on to consider the ‘at risk’ groups that we're particularly paying attention to. Now, delegates on this course typically represent a huge range of projects, and some of the projects they've shared have been amazingly interesting. So it might be that you work with at risk groups that are not covered

specifically in this training, but the principles will still apply. So why have we focused on these four groups?

The reality is, at different times of our lives, all of us are ‘at risk’ of harm and abuse because of our physical situation, our social situation, our age, our emotional situation, or even our political alliances.

We will all be in and out of these at risk groups. We were all children. Most of us will live to be elderly, and many of us will experience disabilities and other vulnerabilities as we go through life. But particular attention is given to these four groups in international work, because of both the prevalence of these vulnerabilities being abused, and because the chance of severe or long-term impact is far higher. The statistics we started with highlighted that. We need to put more protections and support around these people. In your handbook you’ll find a section on the ‘at risk’ groups with more details and some signposting to key organisations.

Aside from ‘at risk’ groups, our safeguarding processes needs to consider other areas. We also have a duty of care to protect staff, volunteers, and their families. As organisations, we have a responsibility to protect everyone who works with us, whether they’re in a paid or unpaid role, whether they are local or foreign

nationals. Importantly, this extends to their families as well, which we'll explore later in the training.

We also need to make sure that we protect or safeguard the wider work. Now I really want to be clear that this is never at the expense of, or on an equal footing with safeguarding people. We are not saying that protecting our own reputation or our financial support ever takes precedence over protecting people. It never does. But under UK guidance, we have a duty of care to make sure that the work that we are doing that should be benefiting multiple people can continue. That means we put those preventative processes in place to lessen the possibility of false allegations of abuse, or unintentional harm. Okay, so that's the end of the first part of our training. We've completed module one, and we're going to go into our first break now, so take five minutes and I'll see you again soon.

[Break 1]

Welcome back, I hope you've had a good break. You will be happy to hear that you get a rest from my voice. We're going to have a look at those four groups through some case scenarios. The co-host will try to allocate you where possible to a room based on the group you selected in the poll at the beginning.

[Note for transcript users – all the scenarios are included here, during the

webinar fewer of the given examples will be addressed and the focus will be on delegates' own contexts].

Choose one of the four scenarios and consider the following questions:

Who is at risk of exploitation and/or abuse?

How could the organisation have prevented this, and/or how should they respond?

What are the shared safeguarding principles here?

What is specific to the culture/national context it's located in?

Our first scenario is about Katy. Your church sends groups to help out at a regional retreat for on-field workers based in places where being a Christian or sharing faith is illegal, or persecution is high. A few weeks after the retreat, Katy, one of the young adults nervously asks if she can share with you something she was told on the retreat – she didn't share it before to honour the safety requirements of the region but is feeling increasingly uncomfortable about it. Katy explains that one of the kids told her an adult long-term worker regularly gets into 'tickling matches' with the young teens and that she doesn't like it. She said that he's touched her breasts several times, but she can't be sure he's done it on purpose. She just wanted someone to listen to her – with communication in-country monitored, she feels isolated at doesn't know where to turn.

So, who is at risk of exploitation and/or abuse here?

Firstly, the young teen who confided in Katy and other missionary kids who may have contact with this adult. Also, the wider team if future communication with head office isn't done carefully and sensitively.

Now let's consider how the organisation could have prevented this, and/or how they should respond. We would want to establish whether there is an on-field Safeguarding Lead and a system for them to communicate with head office. Also, is there a clear code of conduct for all workers that includes boundaries and appropriate use of physical touch? The organisation should have clear safer recruitment processes – are these in place and did this long-term worker comply with them?

In terms of response, we would ask Katy to make a record of her concern, what was said, when it happened and any other details as far as she's able to remember. We would also make sure that there are clear, safe channels for anyone to report new safeguarding concerns.

Moving forward, we would ensure that the project clearly communicates expected behaviours to everyone. Activities should not go beyond the boundaries of a particular role, code of conduct, or level of criminal record check etc. The level of criminal record check is determined by the nature of the work, for

example, handling money and personal care might not be appropriate for some roles as the level of criminal record check is not sufficient to cover these activities.

What are the shared safeguarding principles here? What is specific to the culture/national context it's located in? In terms of shared principles, it's clear that even though the child was in an unusual situation, she has the right to be protected from physical and sexual abuse, including unwanted touching of her breasts.

The legal complexities of the geographical location mean that the team is operating (at least in respect to their faith) 'under the radar'. This can lead to a sense of living in an unregulated way, and that the 'rules don't apply', which is clearly untrue. Key to the response that is unique to this situation is that all communication with groups outside of their location – including clarifying the codes of conduct, safeguarding policy, reporting forms, etc. has to be done in an incredibly sensitive way. Will any communication with a 'group', even if all organisational names are removed, be problematic? Are the team there students or on business visas? If so, you may need to send someone in-person to communicate what needs to be addressed.

Our second scenario is about Mawar. Your projects in Malaysia have several long-term staff, both local Malays and foreign nationals. Like many working families in the country, the staff all have cleaners who come several times a week. Your charity recently decided to include this as a staff bonus – it's low cost, contributes to the local economy and is simpler for the foreign nationals who aren't always sure how to find reliable cleaners. Recently, you noticed the cleaner's daughter, Mawar, is helping a lot. She looks very young. You find out later that she's not related to the cleaner at all.

Returning to our questions, who is at risk of exploitation and/or abuse? Firstly, Mawar, and also other children in the community. The adult cleaner may also be at risk.

So, how could the organisation have prevented this, and/or how should they respond? As the person who has noticed Mawar, your responsibility is to make a record of your concern and pass it on, and keep referring any new concerns to your Safeguarding Lead. The organisation needs to establish how the cleaner was recruited, what the conditions of her contract are and how these were communicated. There is also the wider question of whether all project staff know how and when to pass on concerns – this is an essential safeguarding responsibility.

What are the shared safeguarding principles here? What is specific to the culture/national context it's located in? In terms of shared principles, the Rights of the Child are internationally recognised. We would have concerns for Mawar, for example, whose child is she, how does she come to be working, what's her relationship to adult cleaner?

In terms of local context, the situation could be impacted by factors such as whether Mawar and the adult cleaner are Malay nationals. What are their rights and statuses? Is Mawar of school age? Finding out the answers to these questions could determine what happens next.

Our third scenario concerns Sergio. Your charity is based across Latin America and works to support care leavers as they leave foster care/children's homes and try to find jobs. One of the young men living in the project accommodation in Bolivia is Sergio. He has a learning disability, but you're pleased to hear that he's been working on the local coffee farm with some of the other care leavers. Sergio seems to have lost weight. He tells you the boss gets angry when he's slow and won't let him eat if he 'doesn't do enough work'.

Who is at risk of exploitation and/or abuse here? Most clearly, we have Sergio. We would also have concern for other workers at the coffee farm and other members of your project.

How could the organisation have prevented this, and/or how should they respond? As Sergio is living in your project accommodation and the work placement is part of the project, you have a duty of care to ensure that he's protected from neglect.

What are the shared safeguarding principles here? What is specific to the culture/national context it's located in? As a person with a disability, Sergio has rights that should be protected. Disability is still massively stigmatised across Latin America, and only 50% of the disabled population is employed. When they are, it's typically for around 10% less than non-disabled people are paid for the same job.

Our fourth scenario is about Naima. Your charity works with asylum seekers across Europe, mostly helping them with paperwork and language study. Naima is one of the women who comes to your classes here in the UK. She is originally from Somalia and has 4 children. As the weather has got warmer and her clothing a bit looser, you've noticed she often has bruises on her arms. You suspect domestic abuse, but aren't sure if she'd understand if you ask her.

Who is at risk of exploitation and/or abuse? Naima and her children are all at risk of harm and abuse. Not being a native speaker increases Naima's vulnerability and may be a barrier to accessing support.

How could the organisation have prevented this, and/or how should they respond? As part of general safe practice, there should be safeguarding training for all staff and volunteers so they can recognise and respond to signs and indicators of harm. Safeguarding information should also be available in translation and visually, particularly when we are working with people who aren't native speakers.

As the person who notices the bruises on Naima's arms, we need to report to our Safeguarding Lead. UK law requires organisations to refer domestic abuse to statutory services when there are children in the household. We can discuss with our Safeguarding Lead how to make any interaction with services safe and possible for Naima e.g. interpretation and translation, reassurance with how safeguarding law interacts with immigration law (sometimes people with uncertain residency status are particularly worried about involvement with statutory agencies in case this affects their right to stay in the UK, in domestic abuse cases, this can be used as a threat by the perpetrator if partners have different statuses).

What are the shared safeguarding principles here? What is specific to the culture/national context it's located in? In terms of shared principles, Naima and her children have the right to live free from harm and abuse. The European

Convention on Human Rights is relevant as well as UK safeguarding laws regarding domestic abuse.

The Somali context is also an important one. Gender inequality is a significant issue in Somalia and rates of domestic abuse are high. Are you aware of any existing statutory involvement e.g. community nurse / social work if the children were born in the UK? Are any of the children school age? Are any female? Somalia is one of the countries where FGM is still most widely practiced. While we must never make assumptions about a particular individual or family based on where they are from, we balance this with an awareness of the safeguarding concerns that affect some social identities more than others and have a caring curiosity towards those we are working with.

We also want to make sure that our teams are familiar with what bruising/scarring looks like on different skin tones. We have a resource that we're sharing in the links that may help with this. It's equally important to know what it doesn't look like. For example, many Asians, particularly babies and young children have a birthmark sometimes known as a 'Mongolian spot' (although some are uncomfortable with this term) which looks like a black/purple bruise on the buttocks and back, but that typically fades as the child gets older. Educating ourselves about physical indicators of abuse and harm for the people with whom

we are working is an important safeguarding responsibility so we can ensure equity of response.

We’re now going to move on to considering some of the shared laws, agreements and conventions. These hold some of the main principles that should inform all of our safeguarding, irrelevant of where you're working. The conventions and agreements these are based on are expanded more in your handbook. The first one is for organisations to ‘do no harm’. In all our projects, our aim is to bring good in some form. It might be to share your faith, to share educational opportunities, to facilitate community development schemes. Whatever it looks like, we are there to do good and do no harm. This refers to the idea that organisations must minimise the harm they do inadvertently through their organisation activities. We don't want those unintended negative consequences to hurt those we're there to serve. In a broader sense, we need to have policies in place that keep us intentional about this. What harm could we cause? How can we minimise this? What are our reporting structures like? How do we enforce our codes of conduct? Do we have them where people can see them so that we can inform people about what to expect?

The second principle that's broadly shared is the ‘right to live free from harm’. This concept appears in a few international conventions, but it can be summarised as; nobody should experience degrading, abusive or exploitative

treatment or punishment. For children, this comes from the almost universally ratified Convention of the Rights of the Child that states that every child has the right to live free from violence, exploitation and abuse. In a very similar vein, the European Convention on Human Rights, Article Three, protects people from torture, mental or physical and inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment. And similarly, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article Five states that no one should be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment.

The final principle is the right to participate, we explore the safeguarding implications of this in the last module. Everyone should be able to have a voice in the things that affect them. A great summary is this: When people are prevented from participating in shaping decisions that affect them, the consequences for those individuals can be severe. So we need to make sure that our work with people is a dialogue, a conversation, and that people are given permission to share their views. We want to empower them to share what they need, what's harming them and where we could be going wrong.

The one final thing to say on these shared conventions, principles and laws is that it might be worth using these in your safeguarding policy as a way to state shared aims.

[Module 2 – Preventative Safeguarding]

That brings us on to module two where we consider preventative safeguarding and the UK systems we must operate within. Some questions we want to answer here are:

What do we mean by UK minimum standards?

How can we identify the essential policy documents we need to have, and

What are the people focused practices that we need to have in place?

Before we do that, let's pause and consider where does your UK work overlap with your international context? What is the UK part and what is the international part? [space for delegates to share here]

There are lots of different areas where that overlap might happen. It could be our staff, our funding, it could be that we're planting a church in an overseas location, so our leadership is shared, but the autonomy on the ground is very different. It could be that you have a charity registered in the UK, and then you register the same charity with a different nation's charity regulator as well, so it's a local arm of that charity. But if there is any connection between the overseas location and a UK registered charity, whether that's registered with the Charity Commission, with OSCR (which is the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator), or with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, then we need to comply with charity law, even if the work isn't happening in the UK.

A common misconception that we come across is the idea that UK registered charities don't have responsibilities when situations or harm happen outside of the UK, but unfortunately, the opposite is true.

Trustees who hold the legal responsibility within the UK have to put in more effort to meet what the UK Governments describe as ‘minimum standards’. It states that in international contexts, further safeguarding work is required to deliver transformative change. Typically, where there are greater risks, trustees will need to invest more effort in order to discharge their legal duties. A lot of churches and charities, particularly the smaller ones, find this quite hard to do. We need to be honest about capacity. Are there the finances to do this well? Are there enough people with the right skills to do this well?

The three different charity regulators have all spoken on international considerations, and this can be summarised as: The good practice that you have for safeguarding here needs to be in place no matter where you're working.

If you're doing it here, that's the minimum you need to be doing for everywhere else. The second principle is, when you're working across a national boundary, it means there are additional considerations that must be in place to make it work.

A good way to understand this is when two people from different passport countries get married. For the marriage to be legally recognised in both locations, they will likely have to follow two sets of laws and procedures, not just one. The

same is true for safeguarding – we will need to bring both our UK and in-country considerations together.

Specifically, what do the charity regulators say? The Charity Commission for England and Wales say that you should apply the same principles as in England and Wales and make sure that you comply with any extra requirements of the other countries. So, what are the laws? What are the policies? and What are the requirements for foreigners? In Northern Ireland, the chief executive of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland stated ‘Safeguarding is a vital issue for all charities, not just those working abroad. Charity trustees are responsible for ensuring those benefiting from or working with their charity are not harmed in any way through contact with it, and this is particularly important where beneficiaries from vulnerable locations are involved, or there are children in that community. The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator commented, ‘The legal duty of all charity trustees is to act in the best interest of the charity, and in particular, to act with due care and diligence for all charities. This means making sure that where they're working with vulnerable children and adults, they have appropriate policies and procedures in place to make sure everyone's kept safe. These elements of good governance and good practice are not specific to international charities, but they are essential there’. The key takeaway is that what is required

in the UK is the minimum we need to do overseas, although we will likely have other additional requirements to mee

What about capacity? We need to bring a bit of a healthy balance to this, because it's important to know that when we're told that we have to do both, that there's an element of realism that comes from the charity regulators as well. Unhelpfully, the guidance on working internationally from the UK is quite scattered, but we have signposted you to some of the the various different pieces of guidance in your handbook. In spite of this lack of information, one report on managing overseas partnerships, where we're primarily working with independent, down-stream partners says this: Where a charity supports or has overseas partners it works closely with, the Commission's regulatory remit is over holding the registered charity to account, over the prudence and management of their relationship, including management of the risks. Charities should ensure that they have reasonable assurance that the partner is capable of delivering the proposed activities or services and also has appropriate systems of control in place.

It might be, for example, that your UK charity has a Safer Recruitment Policy, and that it includes a requirement for a criminal record check. The assumption could be that you now ask your partnering organisations to obtain criminal records checks for their workers, but in reality, many nations will not issue these

or the workers may not have the identity documents they need to get one. In this and many other examples, you can find that it’s not possible to operate in the same ways. Fortunately, the UK charity regulators are aware of this, so they use the quantifiers of ‘make all possible checks’, because it's not always possible, and charities should make sure they have ‘reasonable assurance’. The message here is to follow the guidance as much as you can while recognising that there’s a realistic expectation that goes along with that. In situations where you can't meet the UK standards, documenting what you tried to do and what measures you did try to put in place to offset those risks is usually enough.

With that in mind, what policy documents should you have in place? First and foremost is our Safeguarding Policy. This is an absolutely essential document. It should reflect or name the laws, policies or conventions that's informing it, including the international ones we’ve already discussed. But you'll also need to include the location’s laws and the relevant UK laws. It must clearly outline your activities. If the details of the projects change and evolve, your policy documents should evolve as well. Now, technically, we review these every year, but I would say if you're working internationally, things may move more quickly, so if you need to update your policy document sooner, then do so. This is not a document that's meant to be dusty on a shelf somewhere that no one ever reads. That is a waste of everybody's time. This needs to be something actionable and that

relates to the context that you're working in. It must explicitly say how anyone associated with your project can report their concerns. I want to encourage you to think practically about the details in this document and how it can be useful for your international work. Who are they to report concerns to? Are there any language barriers? Is there a time zone issue? If so, how are you going to overcome that? Is it clear which people will hold what responsibilities? Is it locals in the areas you're in, or is it UK individuals here with the charity, ideally, it should be a mix of both. It should also say what support the victim or survivor can expect if they've reported something to you; how and when you will keep them updated and once a decision has been reached. Consider, will you pay for counselling? Will you provide pastoral support? If you will, put that in your document, because it's so much better to have these discussions as trustees before times of crisis. It also means that people will have more certainty of what to expect if and when they do report to you. This needs to be a living document that makes a difference to those you're working with.

There are additional resources in your handbook to help you develop an appropriate safeguarding policy for international work.

The next key policy document is the Code of Conduct. This makes sure there’s a shared understanding of the organisation’s expectations, so everyone has clarity. People should know what you expect of them, so it shouldn't be a shock that an

adult shouldn't be touching children in unwanted ways. Your code of conduct should already have set the parameters of behaviours, and that gives you the platform to say, ‘This is inappropriate. You knew this ahead of time, we don't consider this to be okay.’ However, working across national borders will probably mean that one size doesn't fit all. So if you've got somebody going out for a week, I would suggest that their code of conduct would look very different to somebody who's been working there for eight years. One example is, if somebody was working overseas for a week, the code of conduct would say that they wouldn’t have unsupervised access to any vulnerable individuals during that week. But for long-term workers to not have unsupervised access with anyone over many years is going to be very difficult. So we need to be practical about what's in those code of conducts. We also need to think about how we make sure the project participants, those who are benefiting from the work that we do, are made aware of those expectations and are empowered to tell us if that code of conduct isn't being upheld.

Finally, you should have a whistle blowing document. We're seeing these more and more in the UK. Scotland mandated it last year as part of their updated Child Protection guidance. But in the international sphere, these are incredibly important. Put simply, the consequences for whistleblowers can be far more impactful in international spheres than in the UK, because the protections for

things like employment, for access to food or sustenance, are far lower in different locations than they can be here. If we think for example of the workers on tea plantations who were sexually abused by managers, reporting can mean the loss of their jobs and access to income, and therefore the ability to feed their children. We need to make sure that our whistle blowing policy clearly states that people will be protected if they raise a concern about our projects, how to report concerns, who to go to if they're not listened to and it stresses that the person making the report won't face unfair consequences as a result.

With all these documents, we don't have to reinvent the wheel. There are so many groups working internationally that have had to wrestle with these questions. See what's available online. There are templates that we've signposted you to in the handbook, but there will also be others working in the same locations as you. That might be international clinics, orphanages, international educational groups or others who will need similar policies suitable for that context. If they don't have these documents in place yet, it may be that you can co-produce them and share the translation costs, or wrestle with these cultural questions together.

We need to remember that these documents are not unnecessary paperwork. They matter because they can prevent or offset harm, or tell us how to respond when things go wrong. So before we move on to consider the safeguarding

processes that sit alongside our policies, we want to take a moment to ask ourselves ‘are we listening?’ The video I'm about to show comes with a trigger warning because sexual exploitation is discussed openly. If that is not safe for you emotionally, please mute your audio or step away. The video is three minutes long, please come back at that time if you’re able.

Video transcript: Are you listening?

You people should have taken care of me. Instead, you abandoned me.

In this community, no one can have access to corn soy blend without having sex first.

The girls are orphans. They don't have a mother or father. If they think the abuse can help them, they will go and try to do these things to get food.

I leave my child with my little sister, who is 10 years old, and I dress good, and I go where the NGO workers live or drink, and one of them will ask me for sex. Sometimes they will give me things like food, oil, soap, and I will sell them and get money.

Aid workers have so much power that people treat them as really important, and the community cannot challenge them.

If something happens, you should report it. But in addition to this, there must be action taken. The organisation should dismiss the person so that other men will

learn that you cannot go around abusing children in this way. Often no action is taken, and that is the problem.

When ma asked me to go to the stream to wash plates, a peacekeeper asked me to take my clothes off so he can take a picture, when I asked him to give me money, he told me no money for children, only biscuit.

I told them what the soldier did to me, but they never told me what happened to him until I know what happened to him, I will never have peace.

I've had a man try to lock me in his office and rape me so I could get a UN job.

One of the guys pulled down my T shirt to reveal my breasts. I was so shocked I didn't know what to say, so I made a joke saying this was something I should report to HR. He was HR.

Investigation teams are made up of police and lawyers who are more interested in legal definitions than in the survivor. Women are not believed, and that goes to the heart of it all.

Sexual harassment and assault were supposedly forbidden in their code of conduct. When the incident was reported, their only concern was their reputation, and they wanted to make sure that I wouldn't speak out.

Are you listening?

Policies are only as useful to the degree to which they can be understood, shared and followed. So, while UK charities have responsibilities (legally, but also morally) to have these essential documents in place, we also need to make sure that they serve the function they're intended for. They also require us – like the video says – to be listening when people do rely on them to flag instances of abuse and exploitation to us.

One of my favourite resources for Safeguarding in International Contexts is InterAction's Community Based Safeguarding Visual Toolkit, because they intentionally seek to overcome some of the barriers that exist in our international safeguarding efforts. They stress that these visual posters aren't for use on their own but have to be a part of a bigger Safeguarding process.

UK policies and practices should be beneficial to all project participants.

What barriers do your policies need to help overcome? You might have thought of: illiteracy, a lack of awareness about what is abusive or unacceptable behaviour, a false belief that only a victim-survivor can make the report, an uncertainty around how to report, and culture differences whereby it can be harder for people to report to those who have a different mother-tongue or cultural/ethnic background.

It's now time for our break.

[Break 2]

Okay, I hope you had a good break. We're now going to continue learning about preventative safeguarding but with a focus on our people-focused practices.

In addition to our policies, we need to make sure that certain practices are also in place. Firstly, the safer recruitment practice. This is about making sure that we bring safer people into the work as far as possible. You need to adapt these and find alternatives but the principles apply to most situations.

The basics of safer recruitment processes include:

An expression of interest. This is a chance to find out what people are interested in and why. This can be written or verbal.

A role profile. This is a clear, written description of what people will and won't be doing. This also helps to set realistic expectations, particularly for short term teams.

An interview. Again, the formality of this would vary, but it's a chance to connect with the individual and get a sense of who they are and what they're hoping to gain.

Checks. These usually take the form of criminal record checks and references, which in some way is ideal as it gives an insight into past behaviour. But again, you may need to look for an appropriate alternative in your areas of work.

The co-host will share some links for checks from other countries. These aren't in the handbook, so please do open these now to look at later, if they're of use to you; ongoing support and supervision. We'll discuss this later. But people focus policies don't finish once we've onboarded people. It's ongoing.

A second type of people focused practice that we need is risk assessment and a risk register. This sounds more complicated than it is. It's really an exercise in worst case scenario thinking so that we can limit the safeguarding risks facing those we're working with. The UK government recommends that those working overseas follow this risk assessment model, and we've included some templates in the handbook. The model they suggest is to:
Identify risk through assessing and prioritising risks.
Understand how the risks might present themselves.
Design systems and procedures to mitigate against and manage the risks.
Identify, train staff and implement systems and procedures, and finally,
Monitor and review performance and take note of the lessons learned.

The third people focused practice that makes a difference to our safeguarding is training, both in safeguarding and cultural competence. We shared a quote in the introduction that illustrated the positive impact training can have on safeguarding situations, and we know that training is one of the most effective things you can do to prevent harm occurring. Consider, does everyone in your organisation know what safeguarding is, what harm and abuse is, what the signs and indicators are? It's important that they do. Do those that hold specific roles have training relevant for those roles. For example, your safeguarding leads and trustees. Has everyone involved in your project had sufficient cultural training to not risk misreading a safeguarding concern as a cultural one, or vice versa. One example is of the larger birthmarks that can be on the back and buttocks of Asian children, which to non-Asian people can be misunderstood as bruising or potentially physical abuse. There are a lot of training and resources available that you can share with your teams. You can find these in your handbook. Our preventative safeguarding processes should be people focused, but we also need to remember that it's people we are expecting to bring these processes to life.

Think about the following questions:

Who is the safeguarding lead and what is their responsibility in terms of the work you do in international context?

Has the safeguarding lead had enough practical and cultural exposure and/or have the knowledge to be able to do the on-field part of their role?

With those people-focused practices in mind, take a moment and think about how safer recruitment, risk registers or training might have made a difference in the scenarios we looked at earlier. Think about the girl who spoke to Katy during the retreat, feeling isolated and not knowing where to turn, and Katy feeling concerned but unsure how to safely report. Think about Mawar, who is young, working and not related to the adult she is with; and also the adult cleaner whom your organisation has employed. Think about Sergio, who is losing weight and not getting food when his boss feels he works too slowly. Think about Naima, your concerns about her and her children but not being sure if she'll understand if you raise this. Safeguarding practices and processes aren't a 'cure-all', but often they can give us the clarity we need to know how to step in without making things more complicated, or worse, not acting for fear of making things worse.

In general, the need for online safeguarding processes differs widely between UK churches, charities and community groups – depending on the kind of work they do and the formats they use.

However, for those of us working across national borders, it's almost an essential part of life in a few ways: Firstly, fundraising – I once heard a missionary say "we'd be great at fundraising for projects if we didn't respect our friends too much

to commercialise their lives". He was being deliberately provocative in the sense that we all recognise that fundraising is what keeps our projects running, but it does speak to the potential of harming individuals through what we communicate with them online. Remember, once someone's information has been shared online, we lose control of their images and personal information. Secondly, communication – which of our workers (short or long term, local or foreign nationals) should be given permission to communicate with project participants online, whether that's in a social media group of via email? Are there clear parameters around that communication in either an online safeguarding document, your codes of conduct or safeguarding policy? A worker (i.e. someone who holds power) should never be communicating privately with a project participant (i.e. someone who has greater vulnerabilities). The same is true for any foreign nations with local workers. When we recognise the power imbalances that exist, the potential for abuse it obviously significant. Sadly, the sexual abuse of local workers by foreign nationals administrating projects has a well-documented history and has caused great harm to many people. Thirdly, we need to consider informed consent. This can be a strange one for those of us who work in cultures where what's publicly visible is seen to be 'fair game'. Many westerners overseas will have experienced people taking pictures of us/our children without thinking to ask permission. For organisations seeking to create

safer places, however, we need to operate with more transparency. If we're using any kind of personal data – a person's face, their story, their location – then we need to make sure we're not placing them at risk and get their consent. Informed consent means they know what the photo/info will be used for, where and for how long. Ideally, this should also be time limited, and they should have a way to withdraw consent earlier if they wish. Finally, we should be aware of confidentiality. The normal rules of confidentiality that we apply to safeguarding remain in place, even in our online communication which may or may not be secure. Unless you're the safeguarding lead and need specific personal information (and even then, the information should be password protected), any safeguarding concerns shared more widely within the organisation should be anonymised. Online abuse is the fastest growing form of abuse, and one we can't afford to be uninformed about. In the video 'A very frequent issue. Children's perspectives on self-generated sexual material', children from three different continents were asked about their perspectives on online abuse. One child said "There is a fear for many children that they would be sent away if they told the guardians that they had done this. There would be a lot of shame brought to the child if they report." But another made the point that when money was offered, they will want to say yes. Online safety is an important consideration in today's international work.

Let’s finish session one with an example of good practice. How should we operate online? The two images show very different depictions of children in the same location. One follows recommended practice and the other doesn’t, according to the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages. The principles in this code are useful for us as well. We should choose images and messages based on the principles of: Respect for the dignity of the people concerned; Belief in the equality of all people; Acceptance of the need to promote fairness, solidarity and justice. We also want our communications to reflect the true reality of issues, and we try to: Choose images and related messages based on values of respect equality, solidarity and justice; Truthfully represent any image or depicted situation both in its immediate and in its wider context so as to improve public understanding of the realities and complexities of development; Avoid images and messages that potentially stereotype, sensationalise or discriminate against people, situations or places; Use images, messages and case studies with the full understanding, participation and permission of the subjects (or the subjects’ parents/guardian); Ensure those whose situation is being represented have the opportunity to communicate their stories themselves; Establish and record whether the subjects wish to be named or identifiable and always act accordingly; Conform to the highest standards in relation to human rights and the protection of vulnerable people.

That brings us to the end of session one and we look forward to joining you again for session 2.

[Session 2]

Hello everyone, and welcome back to Safeguarding in International Contexts. This second session is designed to share basic principles and then invite you to apply that information to your contexts. We will be asking a lot of questions and encouraging you to answer to consider safeguarding processes that work across the nations your projects are in. Please do contribute and interact as much as you are able to or are comfortable doing. You can use the chat function, or you can unmute and speak out.

Before we move onto modules three and four, let's reflect on session one. What was helpful? It might be something that you already knew, but it was a helpful reminder, or it might be something that you weren't aware of before. Perhaps it was something that you need to action as an organisation or charity.

[space for delegates to share here]

Moving onto the next two questions: Was there anything that was unclear? and what are you hoping to gain from session two?

[space for delegates to share here]

[Module 3 – Contextualised Safeguarding]

Module Three will be looking at contextualised safeguarding, or what things are like in our projects, and our locations. The imagery for this is a rice cooker, which communicates the idea that there already exists within different cultures wonderful resources and mechanisms for doing what we want to do. It might be that you're simply not familiar with those mechanisms at this point. So we're going to have a look at the safeguarding contexts in the project locations that we're working in, and some of the challenges and opportunities that exist there. In this module we'll introduce a concept and then ask you to apply that to your situations.

Let's start by pausing and considering, as well as crossing national boundaries, many international projects will also cross other types of boundaries. Can you think of any boundaries that are not national boundaries that you will be crossing in your work? You might have thought of; language and cultural boundaries, social status boundaries, geographical boundaries, or political boundaries.

It's almost impossible for us to apply these shared principles that we talked about yesterday to any location unless we understand some of the aspects of that location and the boundaries we'll be crossing in our work as well.

What is culture? Local systems will always be impacted by culture. At its simplest, culture is what we believe. It's how we express ourselves, how we behave towards one another. It's our normal. One of my favourite books on culture is actually a book about English culture, and it's quite old now. It's called Watching the English by Kate Fox, who's an anthropologist. After researching other cultures, she decided to come back to England and take a bit of a tongue in cheek view of our own culture. One of the things she comments on is that in British culture you can almost always tell what kind of economic background people come from by the type of tea they drink and the way they drink it. I'd love to ask you guys; how do you drink your tea and what is the right tea bag to buy in your house? What your tea culture?

So, culture is how we express ourselves, how we see our world, what's our normal, how we judge other people based on their normal as well. But culture is a complicated thing to understand as well. There was a resource that was developed for the Peace Corps, and they described cultures as 'systems of understandings and meanings that even their own creators contest'. We see that between generations where one generation will rebel against their parent's norms, but their children will often rebel against theirs. Culture is often contested and challenged. Culture is meanings and symbols that are always moving. They're constantly in flux, and they interact and compete with each other. That

means that whilst we're talking about culture as being important to grasp, we'll never grasp it. We can never say that any single location has one culture, but we do want to learn though about some of the main aspects of the cultures that we're working in, whilst recognising that those things are going to be contested as well.

Building on this idea of culture is something called cultural spheres. This map does hide as much as it reveals, but it is a helpful tool for recognising that where we come from impacts how we see life and how we interact with each other. If your project location involves people from two or more cultural spheres, then you'll almost certainly come across differences in what you believe, how you express yourself, and how you treat one another. So, take a look at that map. Think of the teams and the projects that you're working with, and then I'd love you to share how many cultural spheres are represented by those who have a voice in your projects. Who makes up your team? What cultural spheres are they from? This is simply to highlight that the more cultural spheres you work across, the more we recognise the cultural differences that occur even within the same apparently homogenous cultural sphere and the more we need to invest into understanding the voices and opinions of people. We need to assume that the way we see the world isn't going to be the same as the way others do, even when we have shared experiences or even cultural spheres.

There are other things that influence the locations that you're working in as well. Think about the local economy, the religion, the politics, history and even geography, and how those things might influence our safeguarding. Can anyone think of examples where those things might influence our safeguarding processes?

[space for delegates to share here]

Think, for example, of project areas where they don't necessarily have access to the phone or internet. This would mean we need to be practical in how we design our reporting mechanisms and communicate that well in your policies. So, politics and social policies are going to massively influence what we can do in terms of our policies. We'll talk later about when views or beliefs conflict with the social policies that we might be working within.

Local social systems will also have a significant influence on how we need to frame our safeguarding. These are systems that might not be written in law, in fact, they rarely are, but they can be understood as the ‘rules’ of the culture. We just grow up being immersed in them, and of course, we have these social systems in the UK as well. Every culture will have particular views around, for example, children and elders; male and female; rich and poor; interplay between dominant and minority language groups; interplay between dominant and

minority ethnic groups; whether you're in a job that's manual labour or mental labour; urban or rural. These social systems have a significant impact on how we create our safeguarding processes. What social status do those groups you serve have in the context that you work? Do any groups you serve stand out as being socially excluded where you work, or perhaps you work with people with favoured social status? Now, think about your Safeguarding policies and your reporting processes. Are any groups unintentionally excluded from them because of the social system you're operating within?

Let's move on to consider how the topics of safeguarding and abuse is perceived in your project locations. But before we do that, take a moment to think back to when you were growing up. Did your family talk openly about big financial situations such as salary and house price? If no, did you grow up in the UK? If yes, and you did grow up in the UK, did this extend to family friends? Strangers? This is often a helpful exercise for us to build empathy with communities that find it uncomfortable to recognise or acknowledge harm and abuse within their own communities. Often, Western and Eastern cultures differ in what is perceived as public/private, factual/shameful. In the West, many of us grew up not knowing what their parents' salaries were, whereas in much of Asia, it's fairly common to know what even casual acquaintances make on a monthly basis. The same reluctance Westerners may have to discuss financial matters can be seen in

differing responses to safeguarding concerns and abuse. This is helpful to recognise as in some places, before we can decide how our safeguarding could look, we first need to gently establish what harm and abuse looks like there, even if it's not a topic that's commonly or openly discussed. We want to be respectful and gentle, but also very clear. Non-recognition of, and non-reaction to abuse isn't the same as non-existence.

Building our understanding of local safeguarding systems will also help us to frame our intercultural safeguarding processes. We need to make sure we understand how safeguarding – on any level – is managed within a local area. What laws and policies protecting 'at risk' people from harm are in place where you're working? If you don't know, how can you find out? Secondly, what reporting systems are in place? What about systems for protecting people or for prosecuting offenders, where necessary. Thirdly, are there any cases of harm and abuse in the media? Often the stories that evoke a large emotional response help places to redefine and respond to issues of harm and abuse. One example is the publicised stories of children on Nauru – Australia's offshore detention centre. A whistleblower leaked thousands of documents, and the subsequent public outcry led to the eventual transferring of all detainees. Nauru no longer functions as a detention centre: "[The leaked incident reports show] Hundreds upon hundreds of incident reports that were detailing suicide attempts, suicides,

sexual violence, child abuse, intimidation, harassment, discrimination, self-harm, hunger strikes," In China, in March 2024 there was huge public outcry over vulnerability of 'left behind children' after the murder of a 13-year-old, by his classmates. In England, the murders of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman led to the eventual implementation of criminal record checks for all those working with children. In Iran in Sept 2022 – then death in custody of Jina Mahsa Amini led to the freedom movement. What are the stories that evoke a mass emotional response where you are? They can give you some insight into what safeguarding awareness is already in the community, even if they don't label it as 'safeguarding'. A quote from 'Errors and Mistakes in Child Protection. International Discourses, Approaches and Strategies' says: "…these tragic cases were turning points, which had a significant effect on [safeguarding]."

As well as the broader systems, there are 4 additional areas that you should seek to understand.

Firstly, does your location have mandatory/mandated reporting laws, and if so who do these apply to? In some places, it applies to everyone, in others, it's all registered professions and in some places it's only specific professions such as medical practitioners. These laws essentially mean that it's illegal not to pass on knowledge of/concerns about abuse, but the specifics differ between nations.

This applies to the majority of countries in Europe and some parts of the US, Canada and Australia.

Secondly, is it a federal country/form of government? e.g. USA and Switzerland, and if so, what regional/province laws do you need to be aware of?

Thirdly, what is the legal age of consent/marriage and are there any position of trust laws you need to be aware of?

Fourthly, are there different laws (also known as multi-ethnic policies) for different ethnicities e.g. in Malaysia.

That's the end of the first part of our training and we're going to go into our first break now, so take five minutes and I'll see you again soon.

[**Break 1**]

Welcome back. Like many things between Cultures, we see what our own cultures have taught us to see. What reaction does seeing someone make the V-sign backwards with two fingers elicit in you? Perhaps you're offended by it. Many people in the UK are. Unlike most nations in the world, the backwards V-sign in the UK is often understood as being similarly offensive as the middle finger – while to most of the world it's a trendy sign for peace, and millions of children and young people adopt this pose…much to the frustration of Western

fundraisers looking for a suitable image to share with supporters! The reality is that we see the things our culture has conditioned us to see. Not only is this true when it comes to *seeing* harm and abuse when it occurs, but our local context also influences what types of abuse we're likely to be shocked at.

When it comes to intra-familial and extra-familial abuse, most countries are more able to recognise and respond to one type of abuse than the other. The quote says, "For Italian society, this [late discovery that abuse can happen within a family, not just outside of it] was a shocking discovery.", and for many of the communities we're working within, the realisation that the other form is possible can truly be a jolt to the system – perhaps even like seeing the backwards V-sign was to you.

It might be that in the context you're working in, people find it possible to identify intra-familial abuse, or harm that occurs within the family, but consider organisations and institutions to be 'safe places', or vice versa. This is often even represented in law. When talking to those in your context about safeguarding issues, do they tend to think more of one than the other? Does there need to be some culturally appropriate safeguarding training to help them to be able to 'see' other types?

In the first session, we discussed how safeguarding systems such as a safeguarding policy, clear reporting mechanisms, etc. are essential for any organisation with UK roots. But our locations might find these things challenging to implement for the reasons of literacy, geography and technology. This isn't an exhaustive list.

Literacy – are our project participants able to read to the same level our documents are prepared at? If no, can they be simplified, or have a low-literacy version available? If you're work is primarily with children, can the essence of the policies be taught in fun ways once a year?

Geography – does the physical location make the implementation of our policies challenging/impossible to implement? Can women leave unaccompanied to share information? If it's a physical box for reports, can people access it?

Technology – if any of the reporting, speaking with the safeguarding lead or other areas of our safeguarding processes are dependent on access to technology, internet, electricity or credit then this could be a challenge to helpfully putting safeguarding processes in places.

It's worth noting that it's not the locations that are problematic, but that our UK processes that may not be fit for purpose in those place. What other challenges

are there to implementing the safeguarding processes in your project locations? How can these be overcome?

We're about to watch a short video listing to the voices of children. This video is one minute long.

Video transcript

Voices of survivors of child exploitation and abuse online: Barriers to reporting. Young people are unaware of formal reporting mechanisms. They can blame themselves for what happened. "I thought I did everything with my own hands, because I sent the photos." Be worried that the media will publish their personal information. "What kept me from going to the police was that a case become public, the media, publisher, name of the school, the city, faces of family members and lots of details. I remember being distressed and I was afraid that my case could be in the news as well. As a matter of fact, this fear came true, because the same thing happened to me when I reported it."

The other significant challenge to how safeguarding is implemented in our project locations is based on the perception towards the UK-side of our work. In the same way 'safeguarding' isn't a neutral concept in any culture, the presence of British people/ideas/money/other isn't neutral and will be affected by history, geography, economics and so much more. Britian once claimed to 'own' a

quarter of the world, and that's left a legacy. In some cultures, people respond to the western ideas and projects with full acceptance, either through blind trust or because they're dependant on the provisions and opportunities the project brings, sometimes it can be a mix of both. In other cultures, there's a strong rejection of western ideals and 'white saviourism'. If keeping people safe[r] from harm is our objective, we need to take an honest view of our nation's history and the abuses that were perpetrated, be transparent with others and ourselves about our motives, and as far as possible not repeat the mistakes of the past. One very humbling example of this was learning about the effects of the British opium trade on India and China, the resulting addictions and the ongoing legacy of very limited access to any strong painkillers even in hospital settings. Our projects should empower and centre local people, cultures and solutions. Our aim should always be to do ourselves out of a job. As development website Bond reminds us; "Local partners are the experts in safeguarding where they work – they should be shaping the agenda."

We're going to finish this module with looking at what – like our rice cooker – exists in the project locations that presents helpful and appropriate ways to promote safeguarding.

Firstly, find out about grass roots initiatives. Sometimes we don't have to be overly creative and clever about this. Simply asking 'how do you keep people

safe in your culture?' 'how do you make decisions?' and, 'how can that help our project?' can lead to incredible safeguarding solutions.

Secondly, community cultures. If your project location is one that values community over the individual, then safeguarding is often better received as a community responsibility than promoted as essential for an individual's protection. Think about the wording – 'we', rather than 'I' or 'you' (singular if the language makes a distinction). Making sure it doesn't appear that reporting is just for the victim/survivor (think back to InterAction's Community Based Safeguarding Visual Toolkit). Even the simple practice of 'holding space' for different views and understandings, gives them permission to contribute. In Australia, in local government meetings, regardless of how small they begin by honouring the traditional custodians of the land.

Thirdly, find out what the dominant/comfortable forms of communication are i.e. WeChat. Find out how people communicate important messages and utilise this. Maybe it's community events, a particular form of social media or perhaps people like the formality of a classroom with a certificate of completion.

Fourthly, consider appointing Safeguarding Champions – often, it's easier to be open with people who look like us, who speak the same mother-tongue and who understand the subtext of what we're saying. Because of this, we should have

local safeguarding champions on the ground of our project locations who are visible, trusted and known. This is a model a lot of people working internationally have adopted and have found it incredibly beneficial.

That brings us to the end of our third module.

[Module 4 – Intercultural Safeguarding]

In this final module, we're going to attempt to bring ideas from the first three modules together.

Be warned that at the end of almost every slide, you're going to be asked what this might look like in your setting! Having identified aspects of the UK safeguarding culture, as well as that of the locations our projects operate in, the step that then allows us to create a safer environment is the fusion or negotiation of those cultures: Inter-cultural Safeguarding.

If I were to give you the task now of planning a dinner party that features food that everyone here in this training would happily eat, how would you practically do that? You might think of the need for conversation, to ask questions and find out about allergies or food prohibited because of cultural or religious beliefs, you might consider the need to negotiate, make suggestions and compromise. This module will strongly encourage you to do just that – although with safeguarding processes rather than a dinner party.

The first step of our dinner party analogy is to communicate with one another, and this is the area of international safeguarding that defines its success or failure. Before we look at some practical examples of that, let's explore some examples of what partnerships might look like – and these can vary massively across the range of projects you represent. It might be that the project is working in a non-UK location under the charity's name (whether that's in a locally registered charity or not), with non-local staff who you're able to recruit from English-speaking locations yourselves. While this seems the simplest set up, you are still working with project participants and local legal/social structures that are different to your own. Consider, in this kind of situation, who should the dialogue take place with and how?

You may have a head office or trustees in the UK, but much of the work happens in another national context, with a mix of local and non-local workers. You may have input into the structure of the project and perhaps key decisions are even made at the UK-trustee level. There's a greater mix of cultures and languages but you retain a level of decision-making autonomy –perhaps you have one UK family in the location, broadly working with local staff. If this type of partnership more closely matches yours, who should the dialogue take place with and how?

The final type of partnership that we're looking at here is when it's predominantly a local project. It may be that they're a 'downstream partner', or in other words,

you have no obvious influence over their decision-making processes, but you contribute either financially or by sending short term teams. In this kind of situation, who should the dialogue take place with and how?

Regardless of where your partnerships fall on this scale, it's important that you and your partners invest the time into creating a shared approach to safeguarding. The charity regulators in the UK view anything that goes wrong on-field as indirect harm if you've in any way contributed to the existence of the project. As a starting point, find out what policies or processes your partners have in place so you know where the dialogue is starting from. Where these policies and processes do exist, they might even give you insight into whether the partnering organisation's aims match up with yours.

When coming together with other safeguarding leads from various nations to talk about how they wanted safeguarding to look in their locations, and how to achieve it, an on-field partnership noted; "I learned that there is great innovative examples being developed. And we shared challenges which we can learn from one another. We need to be open and speak up about our challenges."

As well as speaking to those in the project locations who hold decision making power, we also need to hear and apply the voices of the project participants – those whose lives are directly impacted by whether we're working in ways that

are safe for them. This is one of the Internationally shared principles, but it's also the area that many people miss. One broad study on errors and mistakes across nations found that every case they looked at, failed to do this in a meaningful way. But there are some great examples of this being done well – where it's not just a tick box exercise, but the learning captured through dialogue is applied and reviewed. One Himalayan community development forum did this 'visual listening' with kids, and ten years later, invited the now young adults back to review the original pictures in light of the work done. This shows not only an intentionality in storing the pictures and remaining in contact with participants, but a really healthy level of accountability. Describing being able to share what they wanted to achieve through pictures, one child said: "…people can just pick them up and we can show them what we wanna say."

Take a moment to pause and consider: How can you engage in helpful dialogue with your partners and project participants? Who facilitates the discussion (which will influence how much people feel they can honestly say), what language are you communicating in? Are you operating in a culture that wants guided questions or free conversation? Visual or literacy based? Online or remote? How will you capture the voice of participants? In one sense, your discussion does have an end goal, that of agreeing a workable safeguarding process that meets requirements on both sides. But it's important that the details aren't pre-decided

and that non-UK stakeholders aren't just parroting back the answer they think you want to hear.

The next part of our dinner party analogy was to see what would be 'off the table' (i.e. allergies), and this analogy continues to work well for us. It's helpful and important to be honest about what isn't negotiable from the beginning – for many that work across international contexts, there's more that's open to discussion than we'd have here in the UK. Think for example about the overlap between corruption and honouring gift-giving cultures in many places. But there are some actions and behaviours we wouldn't ever approve, and we should expect our partners to also have non-negotiables, even if those things seem unimportant for you. For many creative access countries, a non-negotiable may be publicly sharing faith when it puts local workers and other non-local team members at risk. Others feel this is negotiable when prompted by God to do so. I'd suggest that allowing known sexual offenders to have access to the 'at risk' groups we work with should be absolutely non-negotiable. This may be an uncomfortable conversation, but it's an important one.

Dialogue should also bring us to the point of suggestions and compromises. Are there high levels of illiteracy? If so, how can you invest in non-literacy resources? Is there clear gender division? If so, it might be beneficial to appoint a female on-field safeguarding lead to champion female participants needs and appoint a

female UK representative for the on-field lead to feed back to if that's what's comfortable.

Once those conversations have happened, we want to capture the agreed outcomes either in our Safeguarding policy, or if our partnership is more to the right-hand side of the sliding scale, we can use a Memorandum of Understanding. This is a formal document that isn't legally binding but that outlines the understanding between agreeing parties. It's fairly common to use these internationally. It's now time for our break.

[Break 2]

Okay, I hope you had a good break. We're now going to continue learning about intercultural safeguarding but turn our attention to the issues of power, inequalities and accountability.

Many people value humility, and in British culture people tend to be modest/ critical of themselves, so the following conversation can be an uncomfortable thing to acknowledge. But power is a very real part of our social interactions, often more so when we cross national/cultural boundaries. Let's pause for a moment and consider what kind of power people might hold. You may think of age, gender, physical strength, financial, languages (number and which ones we speak), and there are many others we could list. Where we hold more power, we

unfortunately hold more possibility to abuse that power and therefore, more visible and tangible accountability structures must be in place.

Heartbreakingly, the additional complexity that working internationally brings to safeguarding can be one of the things that also attracts people who intend to perpetrate harm. Unfortunately, it's so common for expats to act in sexually abusive ways to locals that the urban dictionary added the term 'sexpat' (although this term isn't exclusively for those working with faith and community groups). Not only does their power often prevent people from reporting, but the complexities of who the report should be made to make it all the more difficult. Speaking to people on-field, you hear that these stories are all too familiar, but the sense of helplessness is also high. One fairly typical example which fortunately was brought to justice was that of Gregory Dow, a US missionary jailed for sex crimes in an Kenyan orphanage.

Abuse ultimately is a perversion of power. Accountability can be one of the ways to 'even out the scales'. What can accountability look like in your projects? Does it cover everyone in appropriate ways?

Reporting: One of the questions we're often asked about is where and when organisations should report a concern or disclosure of abuse. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office [FCDO] have some comprehensive

information, including some country-specific guidance and British perpetrators overseas. The FCDO can help us to understand the local police customs and basic legal systems and find an English-speaking lawyer or translator or interpreter.

We may need to make a report to the in-country police and local police:
In most countries, you must report the crime to the police before you leave the country if you want it to be investigated. Interpol give also have the following advice: “Even if the crime you wish to report is international in nature, you should still approach your local police. Investigations and arrests are always carried out by national and local police forces. Our role is to help your national police to communicate with police in other countries to solve international crimes. So, we deal mostly with information provided by police, not the public.” For our organisations, this often means reporting to both the UK police and police in the location we’re working.

The misconduct disclosure scheme and criminal record locations of the passport country of the perpetrator. The misconduct disclosure scheme is still in its infancy but seems to be a useful tool. It’s been used to complete 137,000 checks with 385 applications being rejected at the recruitment stage because of a known history of offending. It’s also worth reporting in passport country and location

country if these schemes are in place, e.g., the Barring Service, Disclosure Scotland, etc.

You may also need to report to your UK charity regulator. Across the 4 UK nations, there's different terminology around what should be passed on. This is in addition to reporting crimes to the police. England and Wales describe this as Reporting Serious Incidents, in Northern Ireland it's Serious Incident Reporting and in Scotland it's known as Raise a Concern. This replaced the Notifiable Events process and terminology in April 2024.

Generally, we will need to report the follow categories of instances.

Firstly, crimes, harms and abuses, essentially, anything that happens in connection with your charity that causes harm to people, your reputation or your finances/property. The charity regulators are almost always willing to advise you if you're not sure whether something is serious enough to report or not. It's worth noting that nations are increasingly willing to prosecute crimes that happen across national boundaries. A recent, heart-breaking example is that of NI based Alexander McCartney who was sentenced to a minimum of 20 years for online abuse of victims in other nations.

Another element we must consider as we pull these elements together to create our intercultural safeguarding processes is that of supervision and care. This can

and should be done proportionally to your involvement in the project, and where possible, organically. The impact of supporting those who've experienced harm and abuse in complex situations takes a toll on our workers. Supervision gives them the chance to process, get support and extra training when needed, and share concerns if they're unsure whether specific situations are a safeguarding risk, think back again to Katy's situation. Supervision has so many benefits for our organisations.

It can also help us to identify where there's a need for cultural training on either side of the partnership and when we need to support people experiencing culture shock. We want to build in some scheduled, but not results based reporting, points of connection. These can create the space and the potential for conversation and dialogue to happen without the pressure of feeling like we're checking up on people or are focused on productivity. What are the practical ways in which we can do this? Consider building in time on short term trips, or finding ways for the Safeguarding Champion to regularly meet with the UK based Safeguarding Lead. Make sure everyone has a person appointed to oversee and support them. Think about how you could extend this to workers' children as well.

We mentioned Katy's experience supporting a missionary kid in the first session, and this is an important issue in international contexts. A recent survey of 1,904 adults who were raised in cross-cultural contexts found that more than a third

had suffered three or more adverse childhood experiences, such as abuse, violence, or neglect. Almost 30 percent reported some kind of sexual harm. Take a moment to consider what supervision and care can look like in your projects. Trust is such a foundational part of safeguarding, so investment into supervision and care means that our other safeguarding processes are likely to be effective because there's a more open and honest dialogue.

We're almost at the end of our training time, so let's take a moment to bring everything together.

Creating an inter-cultural action plan is the assigning of tasks for our fictional dinner party. Who's writing the shopping list? Who's going out to buy it? Who's paying? When will they do those things? This is where we move the ideals to actions.

Step one is identifying the shared international principles that resonate with all stakeholders in the project, you may want to point towards specific group protections where relevant, for example those that exist for children.

The second step is to identify the systems and structures that constrain us both in the UK and in our project location. These will include laws, work requirements and informal governance structures, for example a village chief or elder.

On the third step, we move to that dialogue, create safeguarding processes that work for everyone, even if they take a form that you've not seen before.

The fourth step is to communicate the safeguarding processes to everyone in a way that works for everyone.

On the fifth step, we reinforce, review and refine our processes, using the tools of accountability and supervision to make sure that these are working like they should and if not, change them! This stage might require us to move back to step one, or three, which is absolutely ok.

Safeguarding processes aren't something that's a 'one and done' effort. It's a culture in and of itself and has to be integrated into all we do. This action plan – or even by seeing which step you're already on, can help you diffuse a safer, healthier culture throughout your project.

That brings us to the end of our training on Safeguarding in International Contexts, and we want to end where we started, on a shared understanding of why safeguarding matters. We defined safeguarding as: The prevention and responses to exploitation and abuse of all 'at risk' groups in all contexts. Another way of phrasing that is that we believe that all humans have the right to live free from exploitation and abuse, a principle enshrined in article 3 of the Human Rights Act. Safeguarding matters because people matter.

So, let’s end by reviewing all of this through the lens of those we’re seeking to protect. If the individuals in the case studies were part of your project, do you believe your current safeguarding processes would keep them at the centre? Do your processes offer support to those who have lived through horrendous experiences? Do they have provision for keeping victims informed as things progress? If not, we need to ensure that our responses when things go wrong keep people at the centre.

[Thank you and feedback]

As we finish now, let me encourage you to look through our learning journey once more and consider what area needs the most attention. What do you need to do urgently and what do you need to do well, carefully, slowly and considerately? It might be helpful to you to use our International Audit tool to decide what comes next. It’s free to use and the training is written to compliment it, but they don’t have to be used together. A link for accessing it can be found in your handbook.

Thank you for your participation in this Safeguarding in International Contexts training. We would really value your honest feedback, please complete the form and help us equip, empower and encourage more delegates in the future. Thank you.