



**Search *for*
Common
Ground**

SAFEGUARDING & CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Note: This document includes policy and procedures for Safeguarding, including Child Protection and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and is therefore an elaboration of related policy statements made in Search's Code of Conduct.

Approved by the Executive Team on: 10 Nov. 2020; rebranded 27 April 2026

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PART 1 – THE POLICY

1.1 Introduction

Search For Common Ground (“*Search*”) works to transform the way the world deals with conflict; away from adversarial approaches and towards collaborative solutions. Empowering children and youth as key leaders in building peace is at the heart of our work. Violence disproportionately affects young people: they are the majority population in many conflict-affected areas and violence is a leading cause of death for 15-29 year olds.¹ Young people also influence the way conflict unfolds and many actively work for peace. Children and young people have the right to live, to develop, to be protected, and to participate.²

Through our work, *Search* staff and affiliates may engage children and youth, as well as adults who may be unable to protect themselves for a variety of reasons (see definitions below). These groups face particular risks of discrimination, neglect, abuse, and exploitation by those in positions of trust and power over them. *Search* recognizes that we have a responsibility to ensure our staff, partners, operations, and programs do not expose these vulnerable groups to harm.

This Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy reflects *Search’s* commitment to keeping children, youth, and vulnerable adults safe from harm and abuse. It puts in place measures to build a safe environment for the children, young people, and vulnerable adults who come into contact with *Search*, as well as *Search* affiliates themselves.

The Policy clearly addresses all areas of the safeguarding continuum: prevention, identification, reporting and response. It is divided into two parts: Part 1: The Policy; Part 2: Annex of Tools and Guidelines.

This Policy is one of several to be read in conjunction with *Search’s* Code of Conduct, the overarching ‘parent’ policy, which lays out a global framework for ethical conduct across the organisation. As such, all policies and procedures applying to compliance with and investigations around violations of the Code of Conduct also apply to Safeguarding and Child Protection, including reporting and investigation guidelines. The policy builds on best practices and standards in the safeguarding field.

1.2 Purpose & Scope

Search’s Safeguarding Policy aims to protect children, young people, and vulnerable adults who come into contact with our organisation, and our partners from physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect and exploitation. This policy aims to prevent, identify, and respond to safeguarding concerns, ensuring accountability at all times. *Search* has a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual misconduct, harassment, exploitation, or abuse of any kind.

The Safeguarding Policy applies to **everyone associated with *Search***- including, but not limited to:

- All permanent and temporary members of staff
- Community-based staff or incentive workers (i.e. Community Observers, Community Case Workers)
- Volunteers, interns, and fellows

¹ Statistic from *Search* website <https://www.sfcg.org/the-need/>

² United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. (1989). Convention on the rights of the child - Article 6: Survival and development - Children have the right to live. Governments should ensure that children survive and develop healthily. New York, United States: United Nations General Assembly. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>

- Consultants
- Translators
- *Search*'s Board of Directors
- Invited visitors (including donors/ funders; media/ journalists)
- Partner organisations (i.e. local NGOs, Government Ministries, etc)
- Third-party contractors (i.e. suppliers, builders, etc)
- Members of research bodies, academic institutions, and associates.

The umbrella term '*Search affiliates*' will be used to refer to all people associated with *Search*. Safeguarding and Child Protection is everyone's responsibility at *Search*.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Safeguarding:³ The organizational responsibility to take all reasonable steps to prevent harm from occurring as a result of *Search* staff, operations and programs; to protect people, especially children, youth, and vulnerable adults, from the risk of harm that may be caused by coming into contact with *Search*; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

Child Protection:⁴ Actions that individuals, organisations including *Search*, countries and communities take to protect children from acts of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. This is an important part of safeguarding and includes programs implemented by *Search* or our partners to prevent, respond to, and resolve abuse experienced by children.

Child: Every human being below the age of 18. This policy applies equally to children regardless of their background, age, class, gender, geography, ethnicity, race, religion, ability, or sexual orientation.

Youth or Young People: "Youthhood" is a transitional period that overlaps with adolescence and adulthood and its precise definition varies between geographies and organizations. This policy primarily refers to individuals aged 15-25 years ("adolescence" through "early youth") recognizing that young people have distinct safeguarding needs for consideration, separate from the needs of younger children and vulnerable adults. (See *Search*'s memo on age categories for more information.)

Vulnerable adult: A person who by reason of disability, age, gender, social and economic status, illness, or the context they are in, may be unable to take care of or to protect him or herself against abuse, harm or exploitation.⁵

³ Definition adapted from "Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy," Voluntary Service Overseas, p.2.

⁴ The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child outlines in Article 19 children's rights for protection from "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual violence."

⁵ Definition adapted from "[Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#)," Voluntary Service Overseas; "[Safeguarding Policy Templates](#)," bond (UK network for organisations working in international development).

ABUSE: TYPES AND DEFINITIONS

Abuse is the violation of a person's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. It can take the form of physical, psychological, financial or sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in *actual or potential harm* to the health, survival, development or dignity of a person, and especially a child, young person or vulnerable adult. Abuse can be a single act or repeated acts and can be unintentional or deliberate.⁶ It may take place through physical, verbal, or digital interactions.

KEY RECOGNIZED TYPES OF HARM and ABUSE:⁷

- 1. Physical abuse:** Actual or potential physical harm perpetrated by another person, adult or child. This may involve hitting, slapping, shaking, poisoning, burning or other physical acts.
- 2. Emotional or psychological abuse:** Persistent emotional maltreatment that impacts negatively on a person's emotional and psychological development. This can occur in-person or online, including constant criticism, solitary confinement and isolation, degrading treatment, belittling, humiliation, bullying (including cyber bullying), threats, discrimination, ridicule or other non-physical forms of hostile or exclusionary treatment.
- 3. Sexual Harassment:** A continuum of unacceptable and unwelcome behaviors and practices of a sexual nature that may include, but are not limited to, sexual suggestions or demands, requests for sexual favors and sexual, verbal or physical conduct or gestures, that are or might reasonably be perceived as offensive or humiliating⁸.
- 4. Neglect:** Persistent failure to meet a vulnerable person's basic physical and/ or psychological needs - which is likely to result in serious impairment in his or her overall healthy development. This includes the failure to properly supervise and protect children, youth, and vulnerable adults from harm as well as provide adequate nutrition, shelter and safe living conditions.
- 5. Sexual abuse:** Forcing or enticing a vulnerable person to take part in sexual activities that he or she does not fully understand and has little choice but to consent to. This may include rape, oral sex, penetration, masturbation, kissing, rubbing and inappropriate touching. Sexual abuse also encompasses the involvement of children in the viewing or production of sexual images, witnessing sexual activities and the encouragement of children, youth, or vulnerable adults to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- 6. Exploitation:** This encompasses - but is not limited to - commercial and sexual exploitation: Commercial or other exploitation of a child refers to use of the child in work or other activities for the benefit of others. This includes, but is not limited to, child labor that violates international standards or local law or that is dangerous and might harm their health, development, or education, including recruitment of children in to armed groups. Sexual exploitation meanwhile, is a form of exploitation and sexual abuse that involves any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. It includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically

⁶ Adapted from "Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy," Voluntary Service Overseas, p. 2;

⁷ Adapted from Keeping Children Safe. (2014), "Understanding Child Safeguarding, a Facilitators Guide," page 25.

⁸ UK Department for International Development: Guidance against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment in the aid sector (2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-against-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-and-sexual-harassment-seah-in-the-aid-sector>

from sexual exploitation of another.⁹ It involves children, youth, or vulnerable adults being engaged in any sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, food, accommodation, school fees, exam marks, or any other material needs (e.g. child prostitution, the trafficking of children, youth or vulnerable adults and the exploitation of and creation and dissemination of sexually explicit videos and pictures).

THE FOLLOWING PRACTICES CAN ALSO CONSTITUTE ABUSE:

Traditional Harmful Practices: Practices based on cultural beliefs and values that have harmful consequences for children, youth, or vulnerable adults e.g. witchcraft, early or forced marriage, female genital mutilation.

Digital abuse: Information and communication technologies can expose children, youth, and vulnerable adults to harm through exposing them to harmful material, sharing their personal information, and facilitating risky behavior. Some of these risks include exposure to violent or unwelcome sexual content, misinformation, cyberbullying and online harassment, surveillance, harvesting of their personal information, violation of privacy, scams, etc.

1.3 Statement of Commitment

Search is committed to the equal protection of *all people* from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. We recognize that children, young people, and vulnerable adults have particular safeguarding needs and we are committed to protecting them from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff, operations, or programs. We are committed to the following core principles throughout safeguarding prevention, identification, reporting, and response:

1. **Equal Rights:** All children, youth, and vulnerable adults *without discrimination* have the right to be protected from exploitation, violence, abuse and neglect.¹⁰
2. **Everyone's responsibility:** All **Search affiliates** have a duty of care and responsibility to prioritize the safety and wellbeing of children, youth, and vulnerable adults when we come into direct or indirect contact with them.
3. **Mandatory, confidential reporting:** Any suspected violation or any violation of the Safeguarding Policy must be reported immediately to the HR Manager and/or Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Point. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the entire procedure, as much as is feasible.
4. **Zero tolerance:** Search will not tolerate any form of abuse and will take all necessary measures to meet our duty of care and take action where we believe there is risk of harm or actual harm.
5. **Best Interest of the Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult:** All decisions and actions that affect children, youth, or vulnerable adults will be in accordance with their best interests.¹¹
6. **Do No Harm:** Our responsibility to minimize harm or exposure to harm for children, youth, and vulnerable

⁹ UK Department for International Development: Guidance against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment in the aid sector (2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-against-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-and-sexual-harassment-seah-in-the-aid-sector>

¹⁰ As outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 2 and 19 ([see summary here](#)), [UN Security Council Resolution 2250 \(summary here\)](#) and [UN Security Council Resolution 2535](#), UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [Article 16](#), and the [UN Voluntary Compact on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#)

¹¹ As outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 3 ([see summary here](#))

adults that may inadvertently result from our programs or operations, including throughout the safeguarding reporting and response process.

7. **Risk Management:** Search ensures that risks are identified and minimized from the planning stage through to the implementation stage of activities.
8. **Transparency:** All children, youth, and vulnerable adults who come into contact with *Search* (as well as their caregivers and communities, as appropriate) should understand their rights to safety and protection, risks they face in participating, what behavior is not permitted by *Search* affiliates, and how to report and address concerns that may arise. Information must be disseminated in an appropriate manner respecting age, language, ability, literacy, and community.
9. **Participation:** *Search* recognizes that all children, youth, and vulnerable adults have the right to express and have their views taken seriously in all matters affecting them. *Search* also recognizes that meaningful participation enhances the wellbeing, development, and protection of children and youth. *Search* thus encourages children, youth, vulnerable adults and their communities to speak openly about their interactions with *Search* affiliates and each other, empowers them so they are in a position to better protect themselves, and helps them to take part in decisions which concern them according to their age and level of maturity.
10. **Honoring Dignity:** Search and its affiliates must always treat the people we come into contact with- including children, youth, and vulnerable adults- with dignity and respect for their inherent worth and value as human beings. By honoring others' dignity, we increase our own.¹²

1.4 Prevention

Search responsibilities

Search will:

- Ensure all staff have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy.
- Design and undertake all its programs, activities, and operations in a way that protects people from harm that may arise from coming into contact with *Search*. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programs is gathered and communicated.
- Implement safeguarding procedures when recruiting and managing staff and other affiliates
- Ensure **every country office** with programs or strategic priorities engaging children, youth, or vulnerable adults *assigns and trains an Ethics & safeguarding focal point, develops a country-specific process for safeguarding reporting and response based on applicable local legislation, procedures (including existing interagency protocols), and available services, and produces a summary in local languages and accessible formats for staff, affiliates, and program participants.*
- Ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organization.
- Monitor safeguarding trends and developments across the organization on a regular basis at the country, regional, and global levels
- Conduct a safeguarding self-audit every three years

For every project that comes into contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, *Search* will:

- Ensure project design and donor budget include safeguarding measures (outlined below)
- Assign and train a Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Point in each project office
- Assess safeguarding risks and capacities during project startup and identify mitigating measures, including

¹² Common Ground Approach Training Manual, p. 102. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tJRpwqHmtSH94An1HNKiQy2ZMGOy2V4/view_ Violations of dignity can lead people to choose violence. Understanding what honoring dignity means, as well as our temptations to violate it, can nourish relationships which are conscious of this powerful dynamic. When we honor dignity, we create trust and a sense of interdependence with others.

developing or updating a referral list of support needed (e.g. safety, medical, mental health and psychosocial, legal, basic needs)

- Require all partners to have their own appropriate safeguarding policy (which prohibits, prevents, and outlines appropriate reporting and response measures for the types of abuse above) or adapt Search's and include safeguarding training as necessary in partner capacity building plans.
- Ensure safeguarding reporting and response procedures align with donor and existing interagency protocols
- Create a confidential complaint mechanism for feedback from participants and their communities throughout the project, aligned with local safeguarding reporting and response procedures developed by the country office
- Train all staff and affiliates involved in the project on safeguarding as well as reporting and response procedures
- Inform all partners, vendors, participants & communities of safeguarding commitments and procedures in local language(s)
- Gather feedback from participants on safeguarding efficacy and staff conduct during M&E
- Ensure all internal or external project communications uphold the core principles of Best Interest, Do No Harm, Honoring Dignity, and Participation. This includes securing written, informed consent in advance of any portrayal of participants in communications and defining appropriate communications by and between staff and participants.

Note: These safeguarding measures should be included in project design and donor budgets. Refer to the Annex for additional guidelines.

Search Staff & Affiliates

All Search staff and affiliates who come into contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults, both in our professional and private lives **should always**:

- Be aware of indicators of abuse, violence, neglect or exploitation related to the categories of abuse above.
- Be aware that many of the children and youth, and some adults we work with may be particularly at risk, including unaccompanied and separated children, children and youth formerly associated with armed groups, persons with disabilities, and child-headed households.
- Treat all children, youth, and vulnerable adults with dignity and respect regardless of their race, gender, language, religion, opinions, nationality, ethnicity, origin, disability, sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other status.
- Be aware of possible risks Search affiliates, operations, or programs may pose to children, youth, and vulnerable adults, and the need to prevent these risks. *(See details on Safeguarding Risk Assessments below).*
- Ensure the best interest of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult is always prioritized above any other objectives.
- Avoid being placed in a position where they are alone with a child or children, youth, or vulnerable adult(s) with whom they come into contact as part of their work with Search without prior authorization of their manager, unless absolutely necessary and the child, youth, or vulnerable adult is in danger.
- Ensure all Search staff, affiliates and partners comply with the Search Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, which must be read in conjunction with all other Policies, including the Search Code of Conduct.
- Comply fully with host country and local welfare and protection laws for children, youth, and vulnerable adults, including those in relation to child labor or with international standards, whichever gives greater protection.
- Comply with the [International Convention on the Rights of a Child](#), [the Guiding Principles on Young People's Participation in Peacebuilding](#), [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), and the [UN Voluntary Compact on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#), as well as relevant donor

safeguarding standards.

- Disclose any convictions or investigations related to abuse (physical, sexual, emotional or psychological, neglect, or exploitation) to which they are subject.
- Report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations to the HR Manager / Ethics & Safeguarding focal point immediately and no later than 24 hours.

Search staff, affiliates or partners **must never**:

- Engage in any form of abuse, exploitation, or neglect, or put a child, youth, or vulnerable adult *at risk* of abuse or exploitation.
- Hit or physically assault or abuse children, youth, or vulnerable adults.
- Engage in sexual activity or have a sexual relationship with anyone under the age of 18 years, regardless of the age of consent or custom locally. (Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defense).
- Engage in any form of sexual activity with participants.
- Participate in trafficking of persons, procuring commercial sex acts or using forced labor in the performance of a project.
- Develop, encourage, or fail to take action on relationships with children, youth, or vulnerable adults which could in any way be considered exploitative, inappropriate, sexual, or abusive.
- Spend excessive time alone or stay alone overnight with children, youth, or vulnerable adults benefiting from *Search* programmes who are not part of their family, whether in their house, *Search* office, or elsewhere.
- Condone or participate in behavior of children, youth, or vulnerable adults which is unsafe, illegal, discriminatory, or abusive.
- Act in ways to belittle, degrade, humiliate, shame, or perpetrate any other form of emotional abuse - whether through verbal or digital contact.
- Discriminate against, or show preferential treatment towards particular participants.
- Expose children, youth, or vulnerable adults to inappropriate content including pornography, extreme violence, or otherwise inappropriate imagery.
- Agree with a child, youth, or vulnerable adult to keep a secret which has implications for their safety or the safety of other young people or vulnerable adults.
- Take or share photos or videos of children, youth, or vulnerable adult participants that are degrading, victimizing, or inappropriate, or do not have their informed consent, or are not strictly professional and approved accordingly.
- Place themselves in a position where they are vulnerable to allegations of misconduct.

Note: The above is not an exhaustive list. Search staff, representatives or partners should never exhibit any behavior or actions that may be experienced or perceived as abusive.

1.5 Reporting and Response

Identifying safeguarding concerns

As a staff, affiliate or partner of *Search*, you may encounter various safeguarding concerns in the course of your work. Such concerns may include:

- A child, youth, or vulnerable adult disclosing to you or someone else that he or she has been abused.
- A child, youth, or vulnerable adult exhibiting concerning behavior e.g. overly sexualized behavior, crying,

shaking.

- A child, youth, or vulnerable adult with an injury which is inconsistent with their explanation.
- Witnessing inappropriate behavior by a *Search* staff or affiliate towards a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
- Receiving an allegation that a *Search* staff, affiliate or partner is abusing a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
- Witnessing abuse within another organisation or within the wider community in which you work.

Note: All forms of abuse- emotional, physical, sexual, neglect and exploitation- are safeguarding concerns.

Receiving a disclosure from a child, youth, or vulnerable adult¹³

If a safeguarding concern is disclosed directly to you, observe the following good practices, using the acronym *LIVES*:

- **Listen** closely, with empathy, and without judging.
- **Inquire about needs and concerns** (emotional, physical, social, and practical, etc.).
- **Validate**, by showing that you understand and believe him/her. Assure them that it is not their fault. Ask only relevant questions required to gain a clear understanding of the complaint (*who, what, where, when, not why*).
- **Ensure the safety** of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult is not at risk from further harm and assess their needs for immediate assistance (e.g. medical assistance for serious injuries).
- **Support** the individual by discussing next steps and helping him/her connect to the Ethics & Safeguarding focal point or other immediate assistance as needed. You must:
 - Explain that all *Search* staff and people connected to the organization are required to make a report when they become aware of a complaint or concern. *Reassure them that all information will be kept private and only shared on a need-to-know basis.*
 - Report to the appropriate staff member (see below)

Reporting safeguarding concerns

Search will ensure that safe, appropriate, accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns are made available to staff and the communities with whom we work.

As outlined in the Code of Conduct, *Search* urges staff and affiliates to report any suspected safeguarding violations **without fear of retribution**. If an affiliate is uncomfortable reporting activity he/she believes to be improper through the reporting structure outlined below, or is not satisfied with the response received, such concerns may be reported on a confidential basis directly to Global HR, based in Washington DC, or submitted anonymously to EthicsPoint, the outside service retained by *Search* for this purpose, through an online form or by phone at: <https://sfcg.ethicspoint.com>.

Search will also accept complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners, and official bodies. *Search* will also ensure there is a confidential feedback mechanism (e.g. a comment/complaint box) available for children, youth, and vulnerable adults who may not be comfortable voicing their concerns aloud to *Search* affiliates.

How to report a safeguarding concern: *See Annex 2: Reporting Flow Chart.*

- Report all safeguarding and child protection concerns immediately, within no more than 24 hours, to the Ethics & Safeguarding focal point or to supervisor, senior management, or any member of the HR department.

¹³ Adapted from “Dealing with Safeguarding Reports,” bond, https://www.bond.org.uk/sites/default/files/bond_safeguarding_dealing_with_reports_procedure.pdf and the *Global PSEA Standard Operating Procedures and those on Inter-Agency Cooperation in Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms, endorsed by the IASC Principals in June 2016*

That person is instructed to report to HR who will move forward with all follow-on actions and communication, as dictated in Search's Investigation Guidelines. *If you are not comfortable reporting to these staff members (for example, if you feel your report won't be taken seriously or if that person is implicated in the concern) you may report to Global HR, or [Ethicspoint](#).*

- Ensure confidentiality is respected throughout, particularly that of the child, youth, or vulnerable adult and the alleged perpetrator, to ensure the vulnerable person is placed at no further risk of or actual harm. Information should only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
- *Search* staff, affiliates and partners also have a responsibility to report external cases of abuse of vulnerable people, either to the Ethics & Safeguarding focal point for advice or to the relevant authorities.
- Ensure the child, youth, or vulnerable person is safe and receives necessary medical attention if they are suffering from a serious injury.

Note: Training on what to do and what not to do if a child, youth, or vulnerable adult makes a disclosure, will be included in Safeguarding & Child Protection Training.

Response to Safeguarding Concerns

All incidents will be investigated and remain confidential, with information shared only on a need to know basis. This is essential to ensure both the child, youth, or vulnerable adult and alleged perpetrator are not placed at risk of harm, and to prevent the spread of misinformation or falsehoods.

Search must ensure appropriate psychological first aid to the child, youth, or vulnerable adult and persons involved, provided by the Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Point. *Search* will also ensure no further harm to the child, youth, or vulnerable person during the investigation, by interviewing them only once to minimize further traumatization and distress and by ensuring the interviewer is trained in age- and developmentally- appropriate interviewing techniques for survivors of abuse. *Search* will also ensure that the child, youth, or vulnerable adult and persons involved take part in decisions concerning them, according to their age and level of maturity.

If found to be in breach of the *Search* Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, *Search* will take any action deemed necessary, including:

- **Disciplinary actions**, which may include performance management processes, dismissal or criminal investigations conducted by appropriate authorities externally (if the allegation is of a criminal nature).
- **Providing assistance for the victim** and taking immediate steps to protect and support the child, youth, vulnerable adult or other persons involved, as appropriate.
- **Preventing that such incidents do not occur again**, for example, by implementing corrective actions and reviewing the safeguarding policy and guidelines to prevent future incidents.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality must be maintained during all stages of the disclosure and reporting process. The name of the child/ren, youth, or vulnerable adult associated with the allegation of abuse, in addition to details of the allegation itself, as well as the identity of the alleged perpetrator of abuse, will be kept confidential to the highest possible degree. Any breach in confidentiality could have serious repercussions for both the vulnerable person, and the alleged perpetrator and his/her organization including threats, reprisals and attacks, and reputational damage.

All reports/ records will be documented in a secure, locked and fireproof place with limited access. If sent via email, the Incident/ Concern Reporting Form should be sent in a password protected file, with the password sent via phone to ensure a greater level of security, to the HR Manager/ Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Point. Ethics & Safeguarding focal points will maintain incident logs in a secure database maintained by HR. Information will only be shared on a need to know basis to relevant parties.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Search's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy is based on international and national legislation. The guiding legal frameworks are the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), in addition to the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography (2000); the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2000); the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and the UN Voluntary Compact on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

1.6 Policy modifications and review

Modifications: *Search* is committed to continuously reviewing and updating our policies and procedures. Therefore, this Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines is subject to modification as required to respond and adapt to changing circumstances. Any amendment or waiver of any provision must be approved by the VP HR & Admin.

Self Audit: *Search* should conduct a self-audit (See tool in Annex) every three years, involving all relevant staff. The aim of an audit is to review and provide a snapshot of what *Search* are doing to keep children, youth, and vulnerable adults safe, how well we are doing it, the levels of awareness of safeguarding measures within *Search*, and what safeguarding improvements we need to focus on. Suggested updates to policy and procedures will be reviewed after every audit.

PART 2 – ANNEX OF TOOLS & GUIDELINES

ANNEX 1- SAFEGUARDING DECLARATION FORM

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Search For Common Ground's Safeguarding Policy is applicable to all *Search* staff and affiliates including community based staff or incentive workers, volunteers and interns, consultants, translators, Board of Directors, visitors including donors, media, journalists; partner organisations, third party contractors, and research bodies.

I have read and understood my responsibilities outlined in this Safeguarding Policy (Part 1). I agree with the terms included within and acknowledge the importance of complying with these standards while working with or representing *Search*. I understand any non-compliance will be subject to disciplinary action.

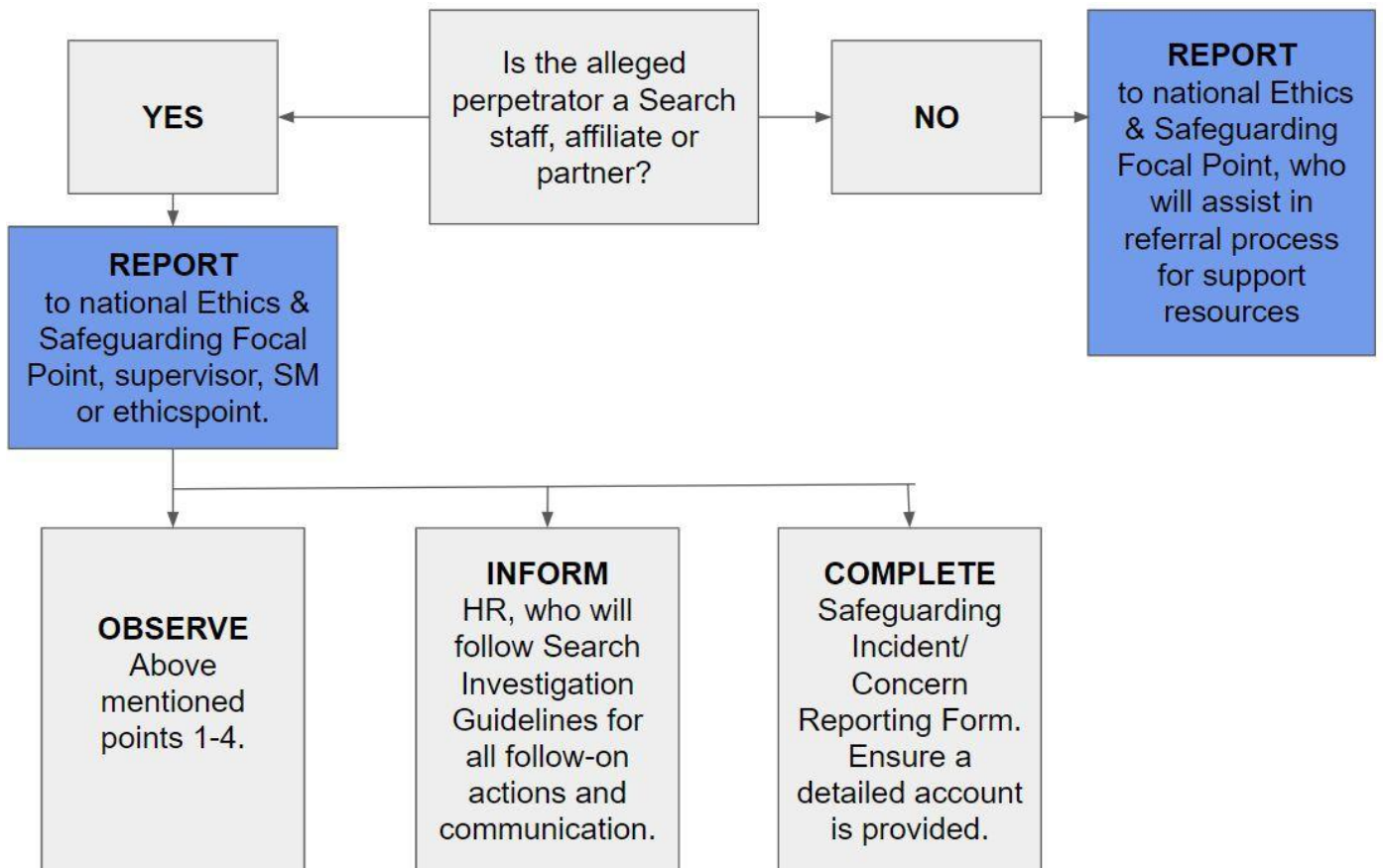
If there is a change to any of my personal circumstances that may impact my ability to carry out my duties and create possible risk to children, youth, or vulnerable adults, I confirm I will inform *Search* Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Points/ HR Manager immediately and seek their guidance.

Name:
Job title/ Role/ Position:
Affiliation/ Organisation:
Signature:
Date:

ANNEX 2- REPORTING FLOW CHART

HAVE YOU SEEN, HEARD OR SUSPECT A CASE WHERE SEARCH STAFF, PARTNERS OR ASSOCIATES HAVE ENDANGERED A CHILD, YOUTH or VULNERABLE ADULT OR POTENTIALLY ABUSED THEM?

1. Follow the LIVES acronym: Listen, Inquire about needs and concerns, Validate, Ensure safety, and connect the person to Support and treatment as needed. Be sure to explain your obligation to report, and confidentiality.
2. Report concerns immediately. Any delay may expose the person(s) affected to further risk of, or actual harm.
3. If you are not sure whether or not to report an incident, just report it.
4. Maintain confidentiality and do not discuss the incident with others, aside from the Safeguarding Focal Point/ HR Manager/ manager to whom you submitted the report. This could place the affected person, or the staff, at risk.



ANNEX 3- SAFEGUARDING INCIDENT/ CONCERN REPORTING FORM

If a Safeguarding Incident has been seen, heard or suspected, it must be reported per the timeframes outlined in the Reporting Flow Chart (immediately). These completed forms should be securely stored in a safe location with a lock, which is only accessible by designated persons including the Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Point/ HR Manager. If sent via email, the sender should ensure the file is password protected, and share the password via text message for greater security. Confidentiality and transparency must be respected throughout.

Reporter's Information		
Name:	Position:	Contact Details:
Date:	Relationship to the child, youth, or vulnerable adult :	Signature:
Report taken by (if different from above named person):		
Name:	Position:	Contact Details:
Date:	Relationship to Reporter:	Signature:
Report Details		
Reporting Date:	Date of Incident:	Location of Incident:
Child, Youth, or Vulnerable Adult Information		
Name:	Age and Date of Birth:	Gender:
Any disability:	Contact number:	Language spoken:
Caregiver's Information (if appropriate, required for children under 18 years)		
Name of parents/ caregivers:	Relationship to the child:	Address:
Phone Number:	Language spoken:	Any disability:
Type of event (tick one):		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child, youth, or adult discloses physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect or exploitation of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. ● Staff member suspects physical, sexual, emotional abuse, neglect or exploitation of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult. ● Other safeguarding concern ● Death of participant 		
Details of incident/ concern (who, where, what, why, when). Include child's words where possible:		

Steps taken to ensure safety and health of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult:		
Current situation and safety of child, youth, or vulnerable adult:		
Other witnesses/ who else knows (family, individuals, community, staff):		
Actions taken to date (e.g. report to police, social welfare, other):		
Alleged perpetrators details (if known and relevant):		
Name:	Age:	Position:
Address:	Current location:	Employment:
Relationship to the child, youth, or vulnerable adult:		
This section to be completed by Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Point/ HR Manager following receipt of the report:		
Action to be taken:		
Name:	Position:	
Location:	Date and time report received:	

ANNEX 4 - RECOMMENDED SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES FOR SEARCH OFFICES

This Annex includes recommended safeguarding guidelines for Search offices related to country contexts, the programming cycle, communications, and partners and vendors.

4.1 Country contexts and safeguarding

Each *Search* Country Office with strategic priorities and programs engaging children, youth, or vulnerable adults is encouraged to:

- Adhere to the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, regardless of age of consent or custom locally
- Develop a country-specific process for safeguarding reporting and responding, based on applicable legislation governing welfare/safeguarding/protection/rights of children, youth, and vulnerable people, appropriate behavior, age of consent, official reporting and responding procedures (including existing interagency protocols), and so forth.
- Designate a Ethics & Safeguarding focal point in each office (*See Terms of Reference in Annex*)
- Create a referral list of relevant authorities and services for children, youth, and vulnerable adults (e.g. safety, medical care, psychosocial support, legal services, and basic material assistance - *See Template in Annex*) including identifying and joining any interagency networks and protocols, as appropriate
- Create a summary of *Search's* Safeguarding Policy acknowledging country-specific legal frameworks, translated into local languages, adapted to child-friendly formats, and displayed in pictorial or otherwise accessible formats. [Here is a good example of communicating safeguarding accessibly.](#)
- Include safeguarding and child protection as a standing item in Senior Management Team meetings or equivalent in each country of operation with projects involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults. During these meetings the relevant Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Point/ HR Manager should share an update on Safeguarding trends and developments, as appropriate.
- Provide a country-specific briefing related to Safeguarding and Child Protection as part of Safety & Security briefings for all visitors to *Search* Country Offices, including Regional and Head Quarter representatives, if their visits are likely to put them in contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults.

4.2 Human resources, recruitment and safeguarding

Recruitment: Take measures to prevent the likelihood of abuse at all stages of recruitment, such as advertising our Safeguarding & Child Protection standards on our website¹⁴ and within our job descriptions¹⁵, integrating specific safeguarding and child protection questions in interviews for positions that require contact with children, youth, or vulnerable adults (see Annex 4), reference checks, criminal record checks as appropriate, and informal background checks using social media channels such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram where publicly available information can be accessed. All information should be recorded safely and confidentially for future reference if required.

¹⁴ For example, on our recruitment page, "Search is committed to safeguarding the interests, rights, and well-being of children, youth and vulnerable adults with whom it is in contact and to conducting its programs and operations in a manner that is safe for children, youth, and vulnerable adults."

¹⁵ For example, including a line under "Duties/Responsibilities" along the lines of: "Remain alert and responsive to any safeguarding risks, acquire relevant knowledge and skills which will enable you to promote strong safeguarding practices, understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, and conduct yourself in a manner consistent with the Safeguarding Policy."

All people who join *Search* are required to read, understand and sign the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy through the Declaration Form (Annex 1) and to receive a summary of the policy for quick reference. The signed declaration form should be stored safely in each individual person's file, or relevant filing system as established by HR. A candidate cannot be appointed to a role without signing the Safeguarding Policy, and other mandatory Policies including Code of Conduct. This certification may be combined with the certification of having read the Code of Conduct.

Staff Training and Support: Ongoing capacity building through skills acquisition and training is required to ensure all safeguarding standards are integrated and maintained in all areas of our work.

- **Induction:** During the first weeks of employment, the *Search* staff will receive a briefing on the Safeguarding Policy as part of the HR Induction.
- **Specific training packages** will be developed for different roles, recognizing the Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Points will need additional training specific to their responsibilities. Staff members or consultants responsible for investigating allegations will also need specific training on interviewing techniques that are age-appropriate and sensitive to trauma.
- **Performance Management:** DEPs for staff managing projects involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults should cover the extent to which safeguarding concerns had been mainstreamed throughout the project.

4.3 Programming cycle and safeguarding

Throughout the project cycle, any program involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults will need to make preparations and take actions to ensure the Safeguarding policy is implemented.

Project Design & Implementation

Each new project working directly with children, youth, or vulnerable adults should include appropriate budget, staffing, and time for:

- **Assigning** an Ethics & Safeguarding focal point (see ToR in Annex 5) and train / refresh their training on psychological first aid etc.
- **Conducting a project-specific safeguarding assessment of risks and capacities** (*see template in Annex*) before carrying out activities with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, analyzing potential safeguarding risks they may be exposed to through programming and operations, as well as safeguarding knowledge and capacity across staff and partners and donor safeguarding requirements. This may be integrated into overall risk assessments conducted at start-up. Risk assessments should include: identifying *Search's* contact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults, the potential risks (including sociocultural, mental health, physical, legal, political, financial, digital risks) that may arise through that contact, evaluating the likelihood and impact of each risk occurring, outlining strategies to mitigate and prevent risk, and regularly reviewing these measures throughout the project duration, including with children, youth, and vulnerable adults participating in the program. Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Points/ HR Manager should be made aware of higher risk projects, and advise accordingly.
- **Mitigating safeguarding risks** including HR/ Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Point capacity, adequate adult/technical support (particularly for child- or youth-led activities), and legal and mental health /

psychosocial support as needs arise and based on services available. In projects where children and youth may have experienced trauma or will be engaging their peers who may have experienced trauma - which is likely in conflict-affected areas- part of the risk mitigation measures should include trauma awareness and equipping participants with tools to respond and cope.

- **Augmenting the referral list** with types of *local* support available to child, youth, or vulnerable adult participants based on risks identified (consider mental health and psychosocial, political, legal, physical, financial, and digital protection support needs) to supplement the national referral list created by the Country Office (*See template in Annex*).
- **Informing all project staff/ partner** organisations of the Policy, Reporting Process, and designated Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Point.
- **Training of new staff and partners**, and new capacities for safeguarding or developmentally-appropriate techniques for existing staff and partners within the first three months of project implementation.
- **Awareness-raising activities** for participating children and their caregivers, youth, and vulnerable adults on the Safeguarding policy and reporting mechanisms, including translating and producing materials on safeguarding in accessible formats for participants including pictorial, role plays, videos, and other appropriate mediums. These activities may be integrated into other community-based sensitization when *Search* begins working in a target location. Awareness sessions must be context specific and sensitive to age, gender and culture. As part of these sessions, it is also important to discuss with participants the risks they may face by participating, what makes them feel safe and unsafe, and how they feel comfortable raising concerns, and incorporate this into the complaint procedures and mechanisms. [Here is a good example of communicating safeguarding accessibly](#).
- **Supporting children, youth, and vulnerable adults participants to take part in decisions** which concern them throughout the project cycle, according to their age and level of maturity, including at project design (See [Youth-Inclusive Design webinar](#) for more).
- **In the M&E plan**, incorporating methods for feedback from vulnerable participants and their families and communities and indicators on the quality of participation (see below).

*Additional safeguarding practices for projects involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults are listed below:*¹⁶

- Require all visitors and affiliates who will come in contact with children through the project to sign the Safeguarding declaration form. A visitor should never visit a project with children, youth, or vulnerable adults unannounced and without prior approval from a *Search* representative. Children, youth, and vulnerable persons must never be left alone with visitors, at least one member of staff should always be present.
- Two adult rule: Ensure that there are two adults with children at all times and they are never left alone with a staff or affiliate. The appropriate ratio of adults to youth and vulnerable adults should also be discussed, with safety being the top priority.
- Encourage the involvement of parents/carers/ community where appropriate, for example, involvement in project activities, without diminishing children or youth autonomy and agency, freedom of expression, etc..
- Ensure you know who has responsibility for the care of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult in any programme or project and have a record of their contact details.
- Make sure that staff are easily identifiable when at work, for example by wearing a T-shirt or badge.
- Obtain parental or primary caregiver consent for children’s participation in activities whenever possible.

¹⁶ Adapted from Keeping Children Safe. (2014), “The International Child Safeguarding Standards,” page 19.

- Involve children and their parents, youth, and vulnerable adults in developing codes of good behavior for staff and for participants. For instance in drawing up anti-bullying guidelines.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation

- Create a confidential complaints procedure or mechanism (e.g. comment / complaint boxes) with child, youth, and vulnerable adult participants and their families and communities, to allow them to share feedback safely throughout the project. Make sure all participants and their families and communities know about the complaints procedure. *Note: Anonymous safeguarding complaints will be hard to follow up without details and may put people at risk,¹⁷ so emphasis should be placed on ensuring participants feel safe and comfortable reporting confidentially for safeguarding concerns.*
- As part of the project's M&E plan, ensure that child, youth, and vulnerable adult participants, as well as their caregivers/families and communities, have ways to provide their feedback on the project, in addition to efficacy of safeguarding standards and conduct of project staff/ affiliates. E.g. focus group discussions or key informant interviews using developmentally-appropriate tools and techniques. Consider including indicators on the quality of participation in the program, such as "% of participants who felt their opinions were heard and valued by project staff" and also "% of participants who felt safe and aware of risks during the project."

Reporting

- Document safeguarding related progress in existing Quarterly Management Reporting. This can include lessons learned that will inform future projects, practices and processes.
- Summarize Code of Conduct concerns reported generically in these Quarterly Management Reports without identifying individuals involved/ other identifiable information. This should include follow up actions taken and pending, and be made available to relevant personnel (including Board of Directors and Management).
- Safeguarding incident logs should be sent to the Sr. Manager, Policy & Internal Compliance by national or regional Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Points as part of existing Quarterly Management Reporting. This will strengthen *Search's* ability to identify child safeguarding trends, and therefore consider additional mitigation measures to put in place.

4.4 Communications and safeguarding

Communications about children, youth, or vulnerable adults as well as the use of information and communications technologies (ICT - i.e. mobile devices, computers, internet, social media, etc) in programs may expose them to a number of risks including reprisals, discrimination or exploitation, cyber bullying, and more. It is imperative we take necessary precautions to mitigate these risks and to follow best practice in safeguarding when *Search* seeks to portray children, youth, and vulnerable adults in both internal and external communications,¹⁸ as well as in our usage of ICT.

¹⁷ Keeping Children Safe. (2014), "The International Child Safeguarding Standards," page 36.

¹⁸ External communications include sharing any information about a child, youth, or vulnerable adult we support including written, audio, visual, or video- that will be shared with an external audience including press (print media and online), TV and broadcast (this can include news and documentaries), social media (including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Linked In, and any other social media platform), reports and publications (including policy reports, annual reports, evaluations, thematic reports) as well as advertising (billboards, newspapers, public transport, visibility in implementing locations).

This includes children, youth, and vulnerable adults' participation and use of communications and technology as part of programming (in media or social media programs for example).

Information and Communication Technologies: *Search* uses ICT for programming and for communications purposes, including mobile devices (smartphones, tablets, and laptops), computers, information systems as well as internet/ social media. Regardless of the technology used, ICT can expose children, youth, and vulnerable adults to additional risks (commercial, aggressive, sexual, and values risks), through the material they can be exposed to, the information they share about themselves, and how it may facilitate risky behavior. Some of these risks include exposure to violent or unwelcome sexual content, misinformation, cyberbullying, harvesting of their personal information, scams, etc. Risks and indicators of misconduct through technology and social media should be included in the risk assessment, mitigation plan, staff training, awareness raising and discussions on appropriate conduct with participants. Appropriate staff conduct regarding phone, social media, or any other type of communication outside of the project activities with children, youth, and vulnerable adults should also be agreed with the Ethics & Safeguarding focal point, project team, and participants.

Ethical communications about children, youth, vulnerable adults: We have a responsibility to tell stories in an ethical and dignified way, ensuring that the core principles in Section 1.3, including Best Interest, Do No Harm, Honoring Dignity, and Participation are upheld throughout. Reporting on children, youth, or vulnerable adults may expose them to a number of risks including reprisals, discrimination or exploitation, so it is imperative we take necessary precautions to mitigate these risks.

Consent and Assent: All children under the age of 18 require informed consent (from a relevant caregiver) and informed assent (from the child), and youth and vulnerable adults require informed consent, to be gathered in advance of any portrayal in internal or external communications- written, audio or visual. This includes participation in media or social media activities as part of programming. Participants must be sensitized to risks they may face when using media or social media for the program, or when being portrayed in internal or external communications.

Consent must be captured in writing on a Consent Form, which should then be stored safely. No consent needs to be sought for children, youth, or vulnerable adults who feature in the background of a photo outside a *Search* project, and who *cannot be identified*.

Privacy: It may be necessary to change a person's name to protect their identity, particularly for Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups, survivors of sexual abuse, if a vulnerable person is undergoing a legal process including justice, refugee or asylum applications, and so forth. This can be communicated with the child, youth, or adult concerned, and it is advisable to ask what name they would like to be referred to as. If the child, youth, or adult does not share an example, a culturally appropriate name can be selected with the support of *Search* team members, which respects their sex, ethnicity, religion and background. In contrast, in some instances, it may be in the person's best interests for their identity to be shared in the story. This may be when a child, youth, or vulnerable adult wishes to exercise their freedom of expression to share their opinion or experience (as long as it does not place them at risk of harm).

Interviewing children, youth, or vulnerable adults: A child, youth, or vulnerable adult should be aware that they are communicating with a reporter, videographer, photographer, or journalist, which should be explained by

Search staff in a developmentally-appropriate manner. It may be appropriate for an interviewer to communicate using a range of techniques- verbal, visual, or theatrical, depending on the age and language comprehension of the person.

Search must ensure any interviewer's questions, attitudes or comments do no harm to the participant. Rather, any interview must be respectful of cultural norms and experiences, and not place a participant in any further danger. If a participant has been involved in a particularly traumatic event, it would be unethical to ask the participant to relay intimate details for the purpose of a story, as this may result in further distress. In addition, if in doubt as to whether a particular person may be at risk, report on the general situation rather than their specific case, so as not to expose them. Child or youth reporters within *Search*'s programs should also be aware of these guidelines.

Translation and editing: It is important to ensure a participant's quotes are captured accurately, free from manipulation or erroneous reporting. Confirm the accuracy of what the child, youth, or vulnerable adult has said, both with the child and their caregiver/ responsible adult where appropriate.

Photography and Videography: The tone of visuals and videos should be around empowerment, rather than portraying children, youth, or vulnerable adults as helpless victims or beneficiaries. Photography or videography may also expose certain participants or participants in certain situations to harm, such as Children Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups, survivors of sexual violence, a person charged or convicted of a crime, a person with an infectious disease or virus, children and youth at protests or at sensitive or political activities or events.

- Consider whether it is necessary to show a face in the photo, or whether this may expose them to potential harm. Consider innovative and compelling ways to capture the participant instead, for example, the back of their head, and silhouette, from above, their hands, etc.
- Consider whether the visual or audio background may implicate a vulnerable person and place them in any danger (for example, a particular camp, road signs, name of school), and ensure these risks are mitigated.
- Ensure the caption that accompanies the photo is credited correctly, and contains accurate, respectful and dignified descriptors.
- *Search* should ensure children, youth, and vulnerable adults are adequately covered in photos. No genitals should ever be photographed. Strict discretion should be used regarding shirtless children to ensure any photos published are not used as material for paedophiles.
- *Search* staff, affiliates or partners should not take photos of children, youth, or vulnerable adults with a mobile phone or camera unless they have been trained on Safeguarding practices and tasked by their Manager if relevant for the Project/ task at hand.
- Children, youth, and adults who are in particularly vulnerable situations e.g. visibly malnourished, with wounds, in extreme distress, alone, or crying should not be captured in general, as may have the potential to compromise their dignity.

Payments: No payments or other forms of compensation are to be provided to children, youth, vulnerable adults or caregivers in exchange for consent, photos, videos, interviews, and other communication materials. Any refreshments provided if deemed appropriate will need to be approved by the relevant Project Manager.

Reporting back to children: To ensure a communications and feedback loop with children and caregivers, youth, and vulnerable adults, it is advisable for *Search* staff to share the relevant communication content they feature in, and ensure time is taken to disseminate this information, for example if the material is published in a language

different to that in which it was communicated, or if literacy levels require the material to be explained in an alternative means than reading.

Social Media and Safeguarding: Participants' use of social media as part of programming, as well as all images and stories shared on social media, follow the same standards outlined through this Safeguarding Policy and accompanying Guidelines, noting:

- All social media posts involving children or vulnerable persons should be approved by the relevant Project Manager before being posted by the relevant Communications staff.
- When publishing posts on social media, *Search* staff and program participants should ensure that a do no harm approach is prioritised at all times. This may mean that the participant's identity is concealed, along with identifiable features such as location, community, ethnicity, religion. *Search* staff and program participants should also be aware that some social media platforms automatically tag locations, which may need to be turned off, depending on the nature of the post.
- All *Search* staff, affiliates and partners should refrain from posting images of children, youth, or vulnerable adults associated with project activities through their personal social media accounts, rather they can reshare information made available through *Search* social media posts across our Country offices.
- A significant number of social media sites require children to be over the age of 13 and *Search* staff should ensure the program respects these terms and conditions for social media activities.

4.5 Partners and vendors

Implementing Partners: Assessment of Partners' Safeguarding Policies and Standards should be included in partnership assessments conducted by *Search*. All partner organisations are required to either a) have their own Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in place, which includes appropriate prevention, reporting and response of a similar standard to those in *Search's* policy, or b) adapt and sign the *Search* Country Office's Safeguarding Policy, or c) support the partner to develop a policy. This will be decided by Country Office management, including the Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Point, and the partner agency.

Training on Safeguarding, and support to develop and implement Safeguarding policies, practices and procedures, must also be part of all partner capacity building plans. Terms and conditions must be applied to non-compliance with safeguarding standards including withdrawal of funding or support, as concluded by the investigation and Country Office management. Should an incident be reported involving a partner, *Search* may be requested to assist in the investigation.

Vendors: *Search* should ensure all vendors understand our Safeguarding Policy. Children should not be hired for labor which is inappropriate with their age or developmental stage, and which may interfere with their education or time for recreational activities, or which may place them at significant risk of injury. *Search* Offices around the world should comply with all relevant national and international labor laws in relation to child labour (whichever provides greater protection). Similarly, while some *Search* programs may be aimed at providing employment training, mentoring and income-generating activities to children and youth, the same criteria will be followed. Any violations or non-compliance should be reported in accordance with appropriate procedures in this Policy.

ANNEX 5 - ETHICS & SAFEGUARDING FOCAL POINT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Role Description

Title: Safeguarding & Child Protection Focal Point	
Department/ Program: All departments/ programs	Location: 1 Safeguarding Focal Point in each <i>Search</i> office.
Level: Mid- Senior	Term: 1 year (with possibility of extension dependent on review).
THE “WHY”- Purpose of the Role	
<p>Safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. To ensure the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy is implemented and socialised across <i>Search</i>, Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Points (SFP) will be identified to support this process, and promote a culture of safeguarding.</p> <p>There is a need for one SFP in each <i>Search</i> Office who all staff, affiliates, partners and participating children, youth, vulnerable adults, and their families can approach about safeguarding matters, whether for prevention measures, identification, or reporting concerns about safeguarding or abuse. Their contact details should be clearly communicated, so that everyone, particularly participating children, youth, and vulnerable adults, are aware they have access to a trusted adult if they wish to file a report.</p> <p>The designated SFP in each <i>Search</i> office holds responsibility for receiving and documenting concerns about safeguarding incidents or concerns. They will then advise on action to be taken for each case in discussion with the relevant Management & HR representative, if necessary to escalate.</p>	
Scope of Role	
<p>Reports to: Program or Operations</p> <p>Direct Reports: N/A</p> <p>Working Relations: The appointment of an Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Point can be based on personal interest, however in order to be appointed they must receive approval from their respective Line Manager, and will need to have additional tasks reflected in their annual workplans. It is estimated that this role will require an average of 10% of their time [<i>Note: this may vary depending on the size and type of projects engaging children, youth, and vulnerable adults</i>].</p>	
The “WHAT”- Essential Duties and Responsibilities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support the implementation of <i>Search’s</i> Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Guidelines at the national/local level, with support from the senior management team (including Country Director and Regional Director). ● Actively promote the safety and wellbeing of <i>Search</i> children, youth, and vulnerable adults participating across activities, communications and programmes. ● Deliver Safeguarding & Child Protection training to <i>Search</i> staff, affiliates and partners. 	

- Maintain a training record, and ensure all Search staff, affiliates and partners receive refresher safeguarding training as part of project start-up.
- In conjunction with the National HR Manager, ensure all Search staff, associates and partners read and understand the Search Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, as evidenced by a signed Safeguarding Declaration Form.
- Maintain a database of incidents reported which is managed by HR
- Raise awareness on safeguarding amongst project participants, to ensure children, youth, vulnerable adults, and communities we work with are aware of acceptable behaviours they can expect from Search representatives, and how to report any violations.
- Liaise with Search Communications Teams to ensure that all Search program sites, country and field offices have age-appropriate and developmentally-friendly safeguarding materials displayed e.g. posters, flyers, etc.
- Ensure National and Regional Human Resources departments are informed of allegations of abuse or concerns in a timely manner, within 24 hours of the allegation or concern being reported.
- Work with Search Project Managers to ensure risk assessments are completed prior to project implementation. Consider the risks of child abuse (emotional, sexual, neglect, physical and exploitation) and risks associated with unsafe programming.
- Provide regular feedback to National, Regional and Global HR on compliance with the Safeguarding Policy.
- Gather information on service mapping and referral pathways for safeguarding responses in the relevant location. Make referrals if required.
- Participate on any available inter-agency safeguarding or PSEA networks
- Uphold key principles throughout including Best Interest of the Child, Do No Harm, Honoring Dignity, Equal Rights Approach, Confidentiality, Participation, and Transparency.
- Serve as an in-house resource on all Ethics-related initiatives, including all those relating to Search's Code of Conduct and its other subsidiary policies and procedures.

The "WHO" - Technical Expertise, Skills and Knowledge

Essential:

- In depth awareness of safeguarding, child protection, equal rights, and abuse, and ability to develop knowledge in these areas.
- Experience working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults e.g. through current role within Search.
- Demonstrable experience in advocating for change within an organization.
- Capacity building experience and an ability to mentor and support staff.
- Some experience delivering and facilitating training to staff and/or communities.
- Strong information management skills, particularly maintaining a database and confidential information.
- Knowledge of risk assessment to ensure safeguarding concerns captured and adequately mitigated against.
- Strong analytical skills and solution focused thinking.
- Strong coordination and proactive leadership skills. Leads by example to motivate high performance of others.
- Ability to operate with tact and discretion, managing sensitive information.

- Excellent interpersonal skills and ability to form effective partnerships with *Search* staff, affiliates and partners.
- Respect for local culture and customs.
- High degree of professionalism/integrity.
- Sound judgement and decision-making in complex situations.
- Strong emotional intelligence including self-awareness.
- Strong commitment to continuous learning.

Professional Goals

- **Accountability:** Being accountable and passing on accountability for one's own actions and those of colleagues and the organisation.
- **Attention to detail:** The ability to process detailed information effectively and consistently
- **Collaboration:** The ability to work effectively with others in order to achieve a shared goal – even when the object at stake is of no direct personal interest possibilities.
- **Creativity:** The ability to come up with original and innovative ideas and solutions, to adopt points of view outside the usual parameters.
- **Focus on Quality:** Setting high quality standards and striving for continuous improvement and quality assurance.
- **Learning Ability:** The ability to absorb new information readily and to put it into practice effectively
- **Adaptability:** The ability to remain fully functional by adapting to changing circumstances (environment, procedures and people).
- **Professionalism:** Maintaining proper objectivity especially as it relates to any incident or investigation and respecting privacy and confidentiality of all sensitive information.

Prepared by: Former Child Protection Manager Katie Rice

Approved by:

Supervisor:

Cleared by HR:

Signed by the Employee:

Date:

ANNEX 5- SAFEGUARDING INTERVIEW QUESTION EXAMPLES

During the recruitment process, *Search* HR staff should ensure that interview questions integrate safeguarding aspects for positions on projects directly working with children, youth, or vulnerable adults, for example by asking questions that elicit a candidate's experience with safeguarding in previous positions. *Search* are looking for qualified candidates in their relevant fields who also understand the importance of safeguarding, what it takes to promote an organizational culture free from abuse, and how to manage and respond to incidents of safeguarding violations that may arise.

Below is a bank of questions which HR may wish to include in interviews, particularly for Management and HR positions, in conjunction with specific position related questions exploring technical competence, skills and experience.

Safeguarding Question Bank

- What is safeguarding and why is it important?
- Can you share examples with *Search* of safeguarding practices that have succeeded or not, in previous roles? Why were some successful, while others failed?
- What are the essential components of a working culture free from abuse?
- How would you promote an organisational culture free from abuse?
- What are skills required within a manager in respect of safeguarding? How can these be applied?
- How would you build trust amongst a team to enable safeguarding issues to be responded to?
- What safeguarding practices or guidelines would you expect to see in an organisation like *Search*?
- How can you learn from experiences in safeguarding? How would you apply this learning to ensure change in practice across an organisation?

ANNEX 6 - SAFEGUARDING RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE¹⁹

Area	Risks identified (based on questions)	Possible Management strategy(ies) (Examples)
Profile of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>What is the demographic profile of the population in the target areas (e.g. sex, age, education level, income level, household size, percentage of female- and child-headed households, marriage age, religion, race/ethnicity, migration status, etc.)?</i> ● <i>What are some of their characteristics of the population that may render individuals more susceptible to abuse or harm? Which groups are particularly vulnerable? (e.g. children formerly associated with armed groups)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ <i>Ensure safeguarding reporting and response process reflects needs and realities of target participants, including identifying services for specific anticipated needs</i> ➔ <i>Adapt awareness-raising activities on safeguarding policy and procedures to meet specific needs of participants</i>
Profile of staff, partners, and affiliates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Is there an adequate balance of staff involved in programming (across conflict divides, gender, religion, ethnicities, etc.), particularly of personnel directly engaging with participants and local communities or responsible for recruitment?</i> ● <i>Have staff, partners, and affiliates been sufficiently vetted and trained in regards to safeguarding and child protection? Do they have adequate knowledge and capacity to effectively implement safeguarding requirements?</i> ● <i>Is there a high turnover of staff?</i> ● <i>Do you have many temporary or volunteer staff?</i> ● <i>What risks do partners and affiliates pose to children, youth, and vulnerable adults?</i> ● <i>Do partners and affiliates have their own safeguarding and child protection policy?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ <i>Recruit additional staff to ensure gender balance etc. involved in programming as needed</i> ➔ <i>Conduct (refresher) training(s) on safeguarding every year (if multi-year project), specifically focused on possible risks associated with the specific programme</i> ➔ <i>Review HR files of staff to ensure vetting completed and conduct additional screening as needed.</i>

¹⁹ Adapted from “Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA): A Practical Guide and Toolkit for UNICEF and Partners,” UNICEF. 1 April 2020; and Keeping Children Safe. (2014), “The International Child Safeguarding Standards,” page 25.

<p>Program activities and approaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Does the project create or exacerbate existing imbalances between staff and members of the community? Between participants and other members of the community?</i> ● <i>What levels and types of interactions do staff, partners, and other affiliates have with children, youth, and vulnerable adults in the program?</i> ● <i>What activities or services do you provide that target children, youth, vulnerable adults and their families?</i> ● <i>How have those activities and services been designed?</i> ● <i>What considerations have been taken for children, youth, and vulnerable adults to access those services and for how they are delivered? (i.e. times and locations of activities, staff working in pairs/alone, gender-mixed staff, etc.)?</i> ● <i>Have you considered the needs of different children, youth, or vulnerable adults? (i.e. sex, gender, age, etc with specific attention to traditionally marginalized and/or minority groups and identities)</i> ● <i>Will project activities expose different participants to different risks? Consider risks according to the following common categories faced by young people²⁰:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Sociocultural (e.g. stereotyping, pressure, stigma)</i> ○ <i>Legal (e.g. (loopholes in or barriers posed by legislation or policies, in access to justice)</i> ○ <i>Political (political leadership’s denial of youth human rights and their right to defend them, labelling youth defenders as politically motivated activists, retaliation);</i> ○ <i>Physical (violence, torture, harassment, imprisonment, GBV, forced displacement, threats to family members);</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ <i>Hold a session on safeguarding and expected behavior (between staff and participants and among participants) with participants in the first month of activities</i> ➔ <i>Arrange periodic monitoring visits by someone in a management or program oversight role</i> ➔ <i>Ensure that staff wear visible forms of identification (e.g. caps, vests, T-Shirts) when conducting programme activities and provide such forms of identification where needed</i> ➔ <i>Ensure that program participants are regularly informed of their rights, of expected behavior of staff, and how to report concerns</i>
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²⁰ These risks and examples are drawn from work by the Protection Working Group of the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security, of which Search’s Children & Youth division is a co-founding co-chair

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Financial (lack of accessible funds for activism, lack of resources for bail-outs, general financial dependence on adults);</i> ○ <i>Digital (online harassment, surveillance, violation of privacy).</i> ● <i>Are project staff clearly identified when conducting project activities?</i> ● <i>Will there be any external visitors during project activities? Who will approve and accompany their visits?</i> 	
Program context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Where do program activities take place (camp, informal settlement, host community, rural/urban setting, etc.)? What are specific risks associated with this location (e.g. lack of availability of complaints mechanisms or service providers, insecurity, arbitrary arrests of youth)?</i> ● <i>What is the attitude of participants and their communities towards different types of abuse and concerns?</i> ● <i>How comfortable would participants be reporting safeguarding concerns?</i> ● <i>Is there an inter-agency mechanism for community feedback/complaints in this location?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <i>Create a more secure environment at program location (e.g. install lights, hire night guards)</i> → <i>Work with communities to adapt complaints mechanisms to meet their needs</i> → <i>Ensure that participants are aware of and can access inter-agency mechanisms for complaints in the program location(s)</i>
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>What information or depictions of children, youth, or vulnerable adults does your organization use or does it plan to use in this program?</i> ● <i>How is this information stored and presented, and to whom?</i> ● <i>What ICT does your organization employ, and for whom?</i> ● <i>How is the use of that ICT governed?</i> ● <i>Are any participants or groups particularly vulnerable to risks associated with communications?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → <i>Ensure identities of high-risk identities or groups are protected by removing names and identifying details from all files</i> → <i>Designate where all informed consent (and assent) documentation will be stored</i>

ANNEX 7 - SAFEGUARDING REFERRAL LIST TEMPLATE ²¹

²¹ "Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA): A Practical Guide and Toolkit for UNICEF and Partners," UNICEF. 1 April 2020.

Type of service	Description
Safety - digital and physical	<i>Immediate safety or protection measures for children, youth, or vulnerable adults to address the risk of retaliation or violence that may arise from or during programming, such as safe shelter (i.e. space that offers temporary safety to individuals fleeing harm), relocation support, digital safeguard support, etc.</i>
Medical care	<i>Medical care, including treatment for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), pregnancy care, emergency contraception</i>
Mental Health and Psychosocial support	<i>Mental health care (including trauma resources), emotional and practical support, either individually or community-based, including informal / community-based safeguarding mechanisms and how they function, community resources such as local advocacy groups, community and faith groups, or organized activities for children, youth, or vulnerable adults which could support participants' psychosocial wellbeing.</i>
Legal services and resources	<p><i>-Details of any government bodies or organisations with statutory authority for the safeguarding of children, youth, or vulnerable adults</i></p> <p><i>-Summary of legislation governing welfare/ safeguarding/protection of children, youth, and vulnerable adults, including international conventions to which the country is a signatory or has ratified (for instance: UN Convention on Rights of the Child) and local police position on investigation of criminal assault against children, youth, and vulnerable adults and likelihood of prosecution of such offences</i></p> <p><i>-Legal assistance services, including free legal counselling, legal representation and other support (Note: If possible, such legal representation and support should be provided independently from the alleged perpetrator's employer.)</i></p>
Basic material assistance	<i>Services or organizations providing food, clothing, shelter, school reintegration, livelihood support etc.</i>
Safeguarding learning and practice	<i>Establish contact with any academic institutions working on children's rights Identify and establish contact with locally-based NGOs/ INGOs / academic institutions and other organizations working on protection/ rights/safeguarding</i>

ANNEX 8- SAFEGUARDING SELF-AUDIT TOOL²²

The aim of the audit is to review and provide a snapshot of what *Search* are doing to keep children, youth, and vulnerable adults safe, how well we are doing it, awareness of safeguarding measures within *Search*, and what safeguarding improvements we need to focus on.

Please consider the risk and mitigation strategies we take across *Search*, what each individual *Search* staff or affiliate does that positively safeguards children, youth, and vulnerable adults, and what *Search* need to do better. We would like you to consider each statement related to 4 Standards: 1) Policy, 2) People, 3) Procedures, and 4) Accountability.

You will need to decide if each statement is: **A: in place; B: partially in place; C: not in place.**

Standard 1: Policy	A B C
Search has a written Safeguarding Policy, approved by the relevant management body, to which all staff and associates (including partners) are required to adhere.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other Conventions and Guidelines pertaining to children, youth, and vulnerable adults inform the Safeguarding Policy of <i>Search</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
The Safeguarding Policy is written in a way that is clear and easily understandable and is publicised, promoted and distributed widely to all relevant stakeholders, including children, youth, and vulnerable adults.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
The Safeguarding Policy is clear that all people have equal rights to protection and that some children, youth, and vulnerable adults face particular risks and difficulties in getting help, because of their ethnicity, gender, age, religion, disability, or sexual orientation.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
The Safeguarding Policy addresses safeguarding children, youth, and vulnerable adults from harm through misconduct by staff, associates, and others, from poor practice, and from its operational activities where these may harm children or put them at risk due to poor design and/ or delivery, for example.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Search</i> makes clear that ultimate responsibility for ensuring the safety of children, youth, and vulnerable adults in contact with <i>Search</i> staff, operations, or programs rests with senior executives (CEO, President), and Managers.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Standard 2: People	A B C
There are written guidelines for behavior (Code of Conduct) that provide guidance on appropriate/ expected standards of behaviour towards and among children, youth, and vulnerable adults.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
All <i>Search</i> staff and associates have training on safeguarding which includes an introduction to <i>Search's</i> Safeguarding Policy and procedures, and learning on how to recognize and respond to concerns about abuse and child protection.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

²²This has been taken directly from the Keeping Children Safe Website, accessed here: <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk/how-we-keep-children-safe/accountability/self-audit-tool>

<p><i>Search</i> is open and aware when it comes to safeguarding matters so that issues can be easily identified, raised and discussed. <i>Search</i> staff, associates and partners need to have access to advice and support where concerns or incidents arise (e.g. an Ethics & Safeguarding Focal Point). These staff will also need to be able to identify sources of support for children, youth, vulnerable adults, and their families (e.g. referral list for support).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Children, youth, and vulnerable adults (and their caregivers, where appropriate) are made aware of their right to be safe from abuse and provided with advice and support on keeping themselves safe including the risks of participating in <i>Search</i> programming and information about where to go to for help.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><i>Search</i> designates key people at different levels (including CEO, President and Director level) as “focal points” with clearly defined responsibilities to champion, support and communicate on safeguarding and for effective operation of the Safeguarding Policy.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>The designated “focal points” are trained in specific competencies to fulfill their role, including interviewing techniques that are age- and developmentally-appropriate and sensitive to trauma.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Partner organisations are required and supported to develop minimum safeguarding measures appropriate to their organization.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Standard 3: Procedures	A B C
<p><i>Search</i> requires local mapping exercises to be carried out that analyze the legal, social welfare and protection arrangements for children, youth, and vulnerable adults in the context in which it works.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>There is an appropriate process for reporting and responding to safeguarding and child protection incidents and concerns that fits with the local systems for dealing with incidents of abuse (as identified in the mapping exercise).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>The identification and mitigation of safeguarding risk is incorporated into risk assessment processes at all levels, i.e. from identification of corporate risks through to planning an activity involving or impacting on children, youth, or vulnerable adults.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>A referral list of support is created and updated regularly according to safeguarding risks identified.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Adequate human and financial resources are made available to support development and implementation of safeguarding measures.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>There are clear procedures in place that provide step-by-step guidance on how to report safely which are linked to <i>Search’s</i> disciplinary policy and procedures.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Safeguards are integrated with and actively managed into existing organizational processes and systems (strategic planning, budgeting, recruitment, programme cycle management, performance management, procurement, etc.) to ensure safeguarding children, youth, and vulnerable adults is a feature of all key aspects of <i>Search</i> operations.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Standard 4: Accountability	A B C
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Arrangements are in place to monitor compliance with and implementation of safeguarding policies and procedures through specific measures and/or integration into existing systems for quality assurance, risk management, audit, monitoring and review.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Mechanisms are in place for children, youth, and vulnerable adults to provide confidential feedback throughout the project and to participate in monitoring and evaluation of the project as well as the efficacy of safeguarding standards and conduct of project staff/affiliates.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
There is a system of regular reporting to key management forums, including CEO, President, and Director levels, to track progress and performance on safeguarding, including information on safeguarding issues and cases.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
External or independent bodies such as Board of Directors, oversight committees are used to monitor performance in this area and hold Senior staff to account in relation to safeguarding.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities exist for learning from practical safeguarding experience to be fed back into organizational development.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Policies and practices are reviewed at regular intervals and formally evaluated every three years.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Progress, performance and lessons learnt are reported to key stakeholders (management forums and external or independent bodies where relevant) and included in <i>Search</i> annual reports.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>