SAFEGUARDING IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

Report on Phase 2 International Consultation

MARCH 2020

Front cover: A visual representation of the consultation responses (2019/20 interviews and surveys) on alternative phrases and terms used in international development research to describe what we refer to as 'safeguarding'

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Special thanks are extended to all key informants, survey respondents, event participants, our LSTM Partners and to the following contributors:

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council		**LMICs**	Low- and middle-income countries
ARMA	Association of Research Managers and Administrators		**LSTM**	Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine
CBO	Community-based organisation		**NGO**	Non-governmental organisation
CHL	Consultation Hub Lead		**SA**	South Asia
DFID	Department for International Development		**SEAH**	Sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment
GCRF	Global Challenges Research Fund		**SGCI**	Science Granting Councils Initiative
HEI	Higher education institution		**UKCDR**	United Kingdom Collaborative on Development Research
INGO	International non-governmental organisation		**UKRI**	UK Research and Innovation
IRDFF	International Research for Development Funders Forum		**UoL**	University of Liverpool
KI	Key informant		**UUK**	Universities UK
KII	Key informant interview		**WA**	West Africa
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean			

Executive summary

Background

Many universities and research institutes have a long history of engagement in research linked to development. However, new funding opportunities (such as the Global Challenges Research Fund and others) have recently encouraged the entry of a range of new actors, bringing some of them into unfamiliar territory regarding safeguarding policy, practice and partnerships in an international context. At the same time, in response to widely publicised cases of sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment (SEAH) in the wider development sector, there has been an urgent focus on – and an evolving understanding of – concepts of vulnerability, risk, harm and power relations that are also relevant to those carrying out or participating in international development research.

Five leading UK research funders who are members of the UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR), namely the Department for International Development (DFID), Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Department of Health and Social Care, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the Wellcome Trust, have committed publicly to tackle incidents of harm and abuse in international development research and to raise standards. To gauge the particular challenges that arise in development research, identify existing guidance and review its implementation, UKCDR commissioned an independent evidence review led by Dr David Orr of the University of Sussex, the outcome of which was published in June 2019 along with a briefing paper outlining draft principles and good practice guidance.

In line with the "spirit of inclusiveness and mutual learning, with attention to risk of unintended harms that could arise from dictating standards" (draft principle 5), UKCDR wished to go beyond the focus on UK context and stakeholders in Phase 1 to consult more widely on the proposed principles and guidance. In October 2019, therefore, it commissioned a team led by the University of Liverpool (UoL) in partnership with the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) to conduct a consultation with researchers and research partners, including those in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), on their understanding and application of safeguarding concepts and principles.

Methodology

In order to make the process more inclusive of LMIC perspectives and the views of potential victims/survivors of exploitative practices in research, the UoL and LSTM team members made use of their extensive international networks, reaching out to counterparts working on issues such as contemporary forms of enslavement, Neglected Tropical Diseases, HIV and informal urban spaces. Consultation Hub Leads (CHLs) joined the team from Latin America and the Caribbean, West Africa and South Asia, bringing knowledge and experience in working for and with a mix of international donor and local research communities. These three regions were prioritised following consultation with UKCDR and in order to address possible gaps, complementing other networks and sources of feedback to provide, as far as possible, a more global picture.

Methods included an online survey (555 respondents in total, with a wide geographical spread), 15 in-depth key informant interviews conducted by the CHLs in their respective regions, and group discussions at events in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and the UK. The consultation covered topics such as the understanding, use and coverage of 'safeguarding' or alternative terms used by respondents; their experience of specific measures to address safeguarding in international development research; priorities for good safeguarding practice; perceived level of preparedness they personally or their employers have to respond to a safeguarding incident; most significant current barriers to implementing good practice for safeguarding in international development research; and what would most help them to overcome those barriers.

Findings

Together, the sources of data provided extensive, detailed and insightful feedback on the definition, terminology and practical application of safeguarding principles, and how these ideas translated into different languages and contexts. These included comments that the prioritisation of sexual and physical harms may downplay structural violence and root causes; and that a focus on vulnerabilities and the protection of individuals may discourage a preventative approach to construct and ensure a safe environment. Other practical points that were raised included patchy coverage of local ethics committees in some countries, and power dynamics between researchers, study participants and international partners. A number of key informants highlighted the problem that too often there is an extractive approach in international development research with the focus on collection of data potentially straining the relationship between the research, the researcher and the community being researched, even putting fieldworkers at risk. There was strong and consistent support for the aim of providing guidance on safeguarding, using a rights-based approach to safeguarding that is integrated, equitable, co-designed and sensitive to different roles and contexts.

Thematic analysis of the data identified key commonalities in respect of the comprehension and application of the safeguarding concepts contained within the original 9 draft principles. The findings confirmed the essence of the Phase 1 draft principles and extended them in the following ways:

- **Rights of victims/survivors and whistle-blowers**
  Responses were framed around the rights of those who have been harmed by research, may be harmed by research or who may be harmed by reporting or 'whistle-blowing' on harms which result from research. This approach went beyond the original conceptualisation of a 'victim/survivor' approach to addressing harm, to conceiving of all the possible victims of harm in the design, delivery and dissemination of research.

- **Equity and fairness**
  The research findings illuminated the various levels at which equity and fairness, or the lack thereof, not only provided opportunity for abuse and exploitation but also embedded a culture of partnerships (Global North/Global South) which were inherently unfair, especially in relation to finances/funding.

- **Transparency**
  The responses from participants identified the need not only for the processes for addressing safeguarding harms to be transparent, in relation to both policy and practice, but for the process of identifying potential harms in all stages of research design, delivery and dissemination also to be transparent and collaboratively developed/co-created.

- **Accountability and governance**
  There were two aspects to accountability which the findings supported – the formal accountability processes and procedures for governance, and the informal accountability processes within developing partnerships and apportioning fair levels of responsibility for safeguarding.

Next steps

The aim throughout Phase 2 was not only to validate and refine guiding principles, but also to consider how such principles can translate into practical actions for all stakeholders who are shaping practice in the various, and often challenging, social, legal, cultural and economic contexts of international development research. **Guidance** has accordingly been developed as a companion piece to this report to address this need and contribute to further dialogue and alignment across the international development research sector.

Introduction and background

Since the UK government published its new aid strategy in 2015 and increased the level of Official Development Assistance funding for research, a range of funders, universities and institutes have found themselves increasingly engaged in research linked to development. This has brought some of them into unfamiliar territory regarding policy and practice in an international context. At the same time, in response to widely publicised cases of sexual abuse and exploitation in the wider development sector, there has been an urgent focus on – and an evolving understanding of – concepts of vulnerability, risk and harm and connections with power-relations that are also relevant to those carrying out or participating in international development research.

In October 2018, five leading UK research funders who are members of the UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR), namely the Department for International Development (DFID), Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Department of Health and Social Care, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the Wellcome Trust, committed publicly to tackle incidents of harm and abuse in international development research and to raise standards.[1] Their aim was to build on existing frameworks, in recognition of the strength of good practices across the international development sector, including the valuable work of and progress made by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private sector actors in this area. However, the nature of research presents specific situations in which abuses of power may occur and requires a tailored framework and approach. Therefore it was imperative to draw as well on the wealth of knowledge the research sector holds in the areas of research ethics and research integrity, in order to develop principles and best practice guidance specific to the context of international development research.

An important first step was to agree on the **definition and scope of safeguarding in the research context**. UKCDR define safeguarding in international development research as preventing and addressing "any sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment of research participants, communities and research staff, plus any broader forms of violence, exploitation and abuse... such as bullying, psychological abuse and physical violence." For the purposes of this work, international development research is defined as any research undertaken with the stated aim of delivering social or economic benefit to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Phase 1: Evidence review and draft principles

To gauge the particular challenges that arise in development research, identify existing guidance and review its implementation, UKCDR commissioned an independent evidence review[2] led by Dr David Orr of the University of Sussex, the outcome of which was published in June 2019 along with a briefing paper[3] outlining draft principles and good practice guidance. Orr and his team found that there were differing understandings of safeguarding, particularly for those new to development research and for participants and colleagues in LMICs. Some research, such as that focusing on gender-based violence, prioritises safeguarding risks by its nature, but researchers in other areas (e.g. laboratory-based

1   UKCDR (2018) International Development Research Funders Statement on Safeguarding. Available at: https://www.ukcdr. org.uk/resource/international-development-research-funders-statement-on-safeguarding/

2   Orr, D. et al. (2019) Safeguarding in International Development Research: Evidence Review. Available at: https://www.ukcdr. org.uk/resource/safeguarding-in-international-development-evidence-review/

3   Orr, D. et al. (2019) Safeguarding in International Development Research: Briefing Paper. Available at: https://www.ukcdr. org.uk/resource/safeguarding-in-international-development-research-briefing-paper/

biomedical research) may be less used to considering safeguarding, and may not realise it is an issue. A corresponding need to develop training and skills on safeguarding was identified.

The evidence review also found that some researchers and research participants face greater risks than others. Women, junior researchers and local fieldworkers, for example, are more likely to experience violence and harassment by fellow researchers, along with risks posed by particular research contexts. The introduction of safeguarding due diligence can increase demands and workload on partners in low- and middle-income countries, with the potential to create or exacerbate power imbalances if not approached in a spirit of partnership and dialogue. While there is international agreement over shared definitions, in-country partners, along with the local communities or populations who are the focus of research, are often best placed both to define and identify specific safeguarding vulnerabilities, risks and harms and to identify or develop contextually appropriate measures for prevention, mitigation and redress.

On the basis of the evidence review, Orr et al. developed 9 draft principles (see Annex 1) and associated good practice guidance based on a victim/survivor-centred approach.[4]

Phase 2: International consultation

In line with the "spirit of inclusiveness and mutual learning, with attention to risk of unintended harms that could arise from dictating standards" (Draft principle 5 – see Annex 1), UKCDR wished to go beyond the focus on UK context and stakeholders in Phase 1 to consult more widely on the proposed principles and guidance. In October 2019, therefore, it commissioned a team led by the University of Liverpool (UoL) in partnership with the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) to conduct an international consultation with researchers and research partners (including international and national NGOs and community-based organisations as well as academic institutions, government ministries and national research councils) on their understanding and application of safeguarding concepts and principles. The team's strong existing relationships with LMIC partner organisations and networks, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean, South Asia and West Africa, were complementary to UKCDR's own links e.g. in East and Southern Africa, offering the potential for the consultation to have a broad geographical reach.

UKCDR placed particular importance on the process and outputs of Phase 2 being transparent, open, accessible, inclusive, thorough and implementable; also complementing rather than duplicating other relevant initiatives. This report has therefore sought to build on and enrich the Phase 1 work on defining principles for safeguarding in international research, as well as taking account of the emerging frameworks which outline the various levels of responsibility for safeguarding within UK Higher Education Institutions and other research organisations delivering research in international contexts. These include in particular DFID's Enhanced Due Diligence: Safeguarding for External Partners,[5] containing specific standards for DFID-funded UK charities and NGOs on safeguarding, whistle-blowing, human resources, risk management, codes of conduct and governance; and The Concordat to Support Research Integrity produced by Universities UK,[6] which seeks to provide a national framework for good research conduct and its governance.

Our aim throughout was not only to validate and refine guiding principles, but also to consider how such principles can translate into practical actions for all stakeholders who are shaping practice in the various, and often challenging, social, legal, cultural and economic contexts of international development research.

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4   Note on terminology: for consistency, we have adopted the use of 'victim(s)/survivor(s)' in this report. We recognise that those potentially or actually affected by harm may use one, both or neither of these terms to refer to themselves, and respect the right of people to decide for themselves how they wish to be identified.

5   DFID (2018) *Enhanced Due Diligence: Safeguarding for External Partners*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/767037/safeguarding-external-partners.pdf

6   Universities UK (2019) *The Concordat to Support Research Integrity*. Available at: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf

Consultation methodology

The methodology for this consultation exercise was designed by the UoL Consultation Delivery Team with our LSTM partners and approved by UKCDR. The team also discussed the Phase 1 work with the lead author Dr David Orr, to determine the scope of the consultation in Phase 2.

From the outset, the team recognised that the value and utility of any practical guidance on safeguarding is dependent upon the way it can speak to different actors, organisations and institutions involved in all aspects of international development research. It was therefore essential for us to consult relevant and diverse sources of expertise and experience, including a wide geographical spread, and to ensure that the different methods we used were both complementary and appropriate. We also needed to explore as deeply as possible the ways that safeguarding issues affect a diverse range of actors in different contexts operating under different conditions. A collaborative and co-designed methodology involving partners in LMIC countries was therefore essential.
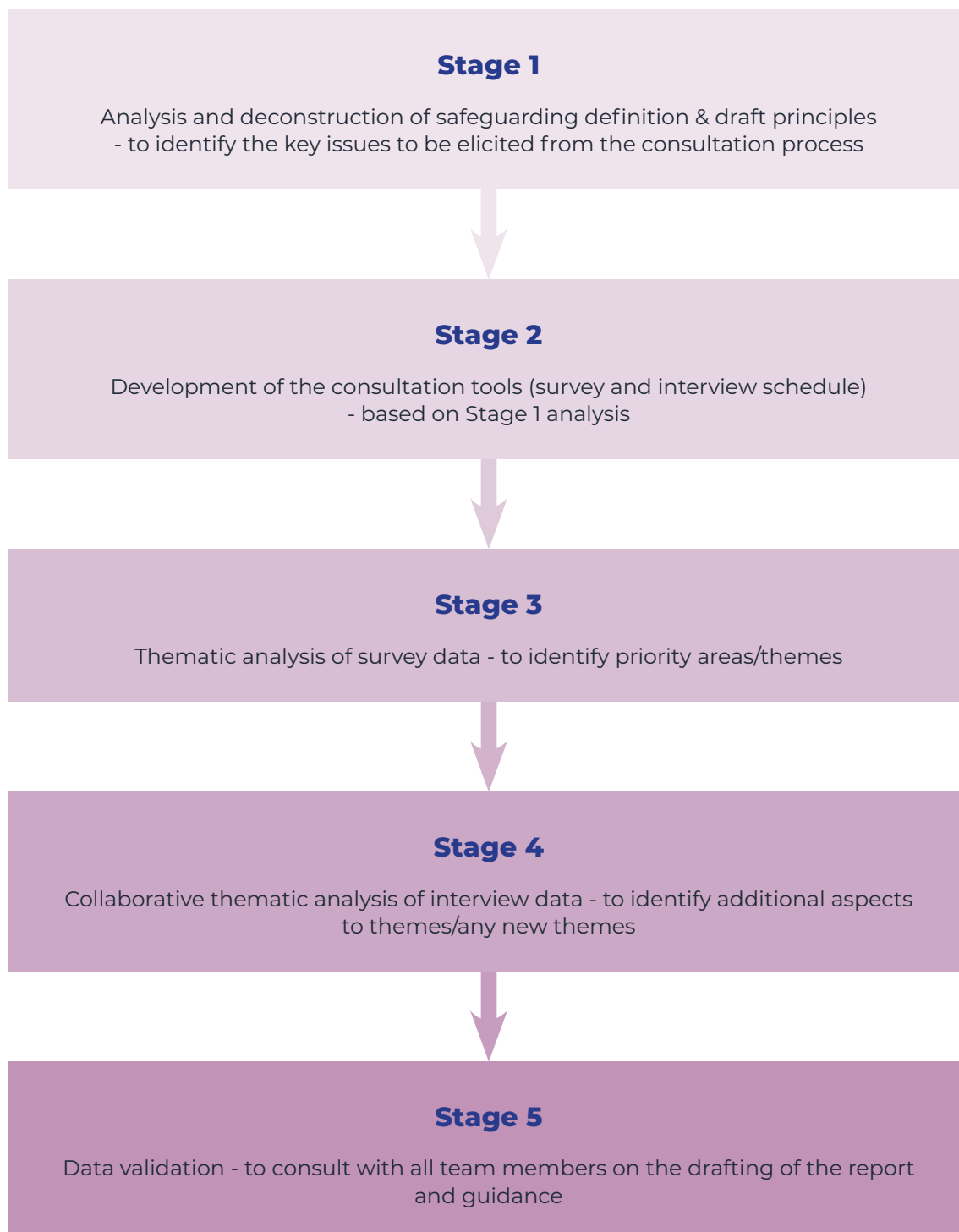
In order to make the process more inclusive of LMIC perspectives and the views of potential victims/survivors of exploitative practices in research, the UoL and LSTM team members made use of their extensive international networks. This included Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) funded work addressing contemporary forms of enslavement as a development issue; the UKRI GCRF-funded ARISE Hub with partners in Bangladesh, India, Kenya and Sierra Leone; Neglected Tropical Diseases and other public health projects; networks of people living with or affected by HIV; and research with marginalised people living and working in informal urban spaces.

As part of efforts to target a diverse range of researchers/partners – both academics and non-academics – for feedback, the research team had also included in their tender a proposal to work through three regional consultation hubs, as described in the next section. Ethical approval (reference number 5930) was granted by the UoL School of Histories, Languages and Cultures Research Ethics Committee on 15 November 2019.

Three in-region Consultation Hub Leads (CHLs) for Latin America and the Caribbean, West Africa and South Asia joined the team in the work's inception phase, bringing knowledge and experience in working for and with a mix of international donor and local research communities. These three regions were prioritised following consultation with UKCDR and in order to address possible gaps, complementing other networks and sources of feedback to provide, as far as possible, a more global picture.

Co-designing the approach

The whole team, including the CHLs, worked collaboratively to develop the delivery plan and consultation tools. The consultation tools (methods) were developed in the following way (see detail of methodological considerations in Annex 2):

Stage 1

Analysis and deconstruction of safeguarding definition & draft principles
- to identify the key issues to be elicited from the consultation process

Stage 2

Development of the consultation tools (survey and interview schedule)
- based on Stage 1 analysis

Stage 3

Thematic analysis of survey data - to identify priority areas/themes

Stage 4

Collaborative thematic analysis of interview data - to identify additional aspects to themes/any new themes

Stage 5

Data validation - to consult with all team members on the drafting of the report and guidance

Consultation methods

We co-designed our methodological approach to combine a mixture of direct and devolved data-gathering in order not only to maximise the quality of feedback on the draft principles, but also to mitigate risks that the consultation process would create a kind of echo-chamber. One risk was that an online survey combined with face-to-face engagement with stakeholders made up of funders, donor communities, and research managers would not, on its own, deliver sufficient input from international partners and researchers from the regions where the development research work actually takes place. The challenge was to hear the views of those 'in the field,' rather than reflecting only the views of a group of academics and practitioners based in the UK, who tend to occupy a certain set of roles in relation to the practice of developing, running and implementing research projects. The following sections explain the methods in detail.

Online survey

Early feedback on the 9 draft principles developed during Phase 1 (see Annex 1), for example at the International Research for Development Funders Forum (IRDFF) and Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI) meetings in Tanzania in November 2019, indicated that there was considerable overlap and repetition between principles, or in some cases different key ideas combined into a single principle. There was also concern expressed by some participants at these meetings that any validation of the principles had to go beyond 'Agree/Disagree' into a consideration of 'And then what? What does this mean for me in my day-to-day work?'. Therefore the decision was taken, with the agreement of UKCDR, to 'deconstruct' the principles for the purposes of developing a meaningful survey-based consultation based on their underlying concepts, and the practical actions that would demonstrate those concepts, rather than asking for direct feedback on the principles per se as written in Phase 1.

Through an iterative process, a survey consisting of 16 questions on concepts, practices and priorities (plus an initial consent question giving access to the survey) was designed by UoL in partnership with LSTM, incorporating feedback from UKCDR. The survey was set up by UKCDR using SurveyMonkey and embedded on the UKCDR website; it was then publicised through a wide range of professional networks and was open from 5 December 2019 to 12 January 2020. The research team felt that it was important for inclusivity, especially in relation to francophone Africa and Latin America, to make the survey available in French and Spanish. Versions in these two languages were added on 13 December. (Please see Annex 3 for the English-language version of the survey.)

In acknowledgement of the potential lack of familiarity by international researchers and research partners with safeguarding as a term or concept, and/or their first languages not providing for a direct or accurate translation of meaning, we adopted the phrase 'preventing and addressing harm in international research' in the survey as a shorthand to convey what was covered by safeguarding.

Key informant interviews

The CHLs each developed a plan to consult on the draft principles through a series of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The CHLs, based in Guatemala, Sierra Leone and India, sought a range of different actors and organisations in their countries and regions including, where appropriate, participants from universities, international NGOs, national NGOs, and community-based organisations that carry out field research or data collection. The CHLs carried out their fieldwork between December 2019 and January 2020. They conducted a total of 15 in-depth semi-structured interviews, each lasting approximately one hour, which were then transcribed and translated into English if necessary. (Please see Annex 4 for the interview schedule.) The CHLs also developed their own reports synthesising findings and summarising their reflections on the process and the results of their interviews, along with commentary on the draft safeguarding principles.

Consultation events

The consultation process also took advantage of pre-arranged events before, during and after the online survey consultation, in order to consult various stakeholder groups for their views and feedback on the evidence review and key principles produced in Phase 1, and/or publicise the Safeguarding in International Development Research initiative.

These events included the following:

- **IRDFF and SGCI meetings, Dar es Salaam, 11 to 15 November 2019.** The International Research for Development Funders Forum is a network of global funders that aims to improve research funding practices through collaboration. The Science Granting Councils Initiative is a multi-funder initiative that aims to strengthen the capacities of 15 science granting councils in sub-Saharan Africa in order to support research and evidence-based policies that will contribute to economic and social development.

- **Meeting of GCRF Interdisciplinary Research hubs, Newcastle, UK, 19-20 November 2019.** The 12 global interdisciplinary research hubs have been funded by UKRI to develop innovative and sustainable solutions to a broad range of development challenges. The hubs represent 400 partner organisations from 85 countries, involving 550 researchers from a wide range of disciplines.

- **Bond Safeguarding Conference, London, 2 December 2019.** Bond is the UK network for organisations working in international development. The event was held to discuss progress on safeguarding in the sector to date, along with remaining challenges and potential solutions.

- **Association of Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA) Policy Forum, London, 10 January 2020.** ARMA (UK) is the professional membership association for research managers and administrators in the UK, with individual members drawn from a range of organisations, including universities, independent research institutions, funding bodies and the National Health Service.

Post-consultation events were utilised for additional discussion and validation of the findings and draft guidance. These took place at UoL safeguarding workshops held in Ghana and Kenya with West and East African research partners – higher education institutions (HEIs), CBOs, INGOs and NGOs – between 29th January and 5th February 2020 as part of UoL's Antislavery Knowledge Network project, funded through the Arts and Humanities Research Council and Global Challenges Research Fund.

Data analysis

Thematic analysis was applied to the data generated by the interviews, surveys and consultation events, reviewed independently and then collaboratively by three Team members. The aim was to identify key commonalities that emerged in respect of the comprehension and application of the safeguarding concepts contained within the original 9 draft principles. This process of analysis included identification of themes and sub-themes which can also be related back to those initial draft principles. The findings are expanded upon in the Results section.

Data limitations

The combination of the sources outlined above provided a rich source of data, but it is important to recognise that the consultation process had limitations.

- This was a very short piece of research; within the time constraints (data collection December 2019-January 2020, analysis and report writing January-February 2020), it could not be as in-depth or extensive as to claim full inclusion of all stakeholders.

- In particular, the timeframe allowed only very limited direct involvement of victims/survivors or collection of case studies. However, we did gather examples from our Consultation Hub Leads: in Central America, one key informant represented a victims' self-help organisation for families of the politically 'disappeared'. We were also able to draw on the case studies collected as part of the Evidence Review (Orr et al. 2019)

- Delays in the translation process meant that the French and Spanish versions of the survey came out over a week later than the English version, allowing less time for participation particularly given the proximity to Christmas and New Year holidays.

- Respondents were able to skip questions even when they had been set as 'required,' which meant a variable response rate across the survey.

- The research team received aggregated survey data, so responses have not been analysed by gender, region, role etc. Disaggregated analysis would doubtless reveal nuances not captured in this report.

- It is acknowledged that whilst sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) is a very real challenge in the HEI research sector[7] and for the international development community (DFID, 2018; Orr et al, 2019; UKCDR, 2018), it did not feature strongly in the responses from participants. It may be due to the highly sensitive nature of the issue and the current media scrutiny that this topic did not feature heavily in the survey or KIIs. Given that the UKCDR definition of safeguarding goes beyond SEAH, participants may have taken the opportunity to focus on other aspects such as financial exploitation that have received less attention to date.

- Political unrest in India affected the availability of both interviewers and interviewees there. While all planned interviews were carried out by the deadline, this illustrates the impact of safeguarding concerns even during the conduct of this piece of research.

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7   Universities UK (2019) *The Concordat to Support Research Integrity*. Available at: https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf

Wellcome Trust (2020) *What Researchers Think About the Culture They Work In*. Available at: https://wellcome.ac.uk/reports/what-researchers-think-about-research-culture

Croxford, R (2020) *Sexual assault claims 'gagged' by UK universities.* 12th February 2020 available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51447615

Phipps, A (2018) *Reckoning up: sexual harassment and violence in the neoliberal university. Gender and Education.* ISSN 0954-0253

The Citizen (06 May 2019) 'SA's universities facing sexual assault crisis: Bread-and-butter issues, such as student accommodation and fees, have pushed gender-based violence aside'. Available at: https://citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/society/2126634/sas-universities-facing-sexual-assault-crisis/

BBC Africa (07 Oct 2019) '"Sex for grades": Undercover in two top West African universities'. Available at: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w172wpkg44by0bs

University World News (09 Oct 2019) 'Lecturers in BBC sex-for-grades documentary face probe'. Available at: https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=2019100907500956

GhanaWeb (03 Dec 2019) 'Amnesty International fights sexual harassment in Universities'. Available at: https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Amnesty-International-fights-sexual-harassment-in-Universities-804610.

Oni, H, Tshitangano, T & Akinsola, H (2019) 'Sexual harassment and victimization of students: a case study of a higher education institution in South Africa', *African Health Sciences*, 19(1): 1478–1485. Available at: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6531969/

Participation

Online survey

There were 555 survey respondents in total (527 for the English language version, 20 for Spanish, 8 for French). N.B. Percentages referred to below are calculated based on all those who answered a given question, i.e. not including any respondents who skipped the question or chose not to answer. The number of respondents is therefore given alongside the percentage in each case. Figures given are cumulative across the three different language versions unless otherwise noted.

The relatively low number of respondents to the French and Spanish versions of the survey perhaps reflects both their later publication and the more limited links of the UK agencies or institutions who distributed the survey with those language communities. However, the alternative versions did boost participation in Central and West Africa, and in Central and South America. The free-text comments also revealed that at least one of the respondents to the Spanish-language version was a Portuguese speaker, who could read Spanish but chose to write in Portuguese.

Please see Annex 5 for a full profile of survey respondents, in terms of gender, age, geographical location, current/most recent employer, and role in relation to international development research.

Key informant interviews

A total of fifteen key informants were interviewed across the three regions:[8]

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)

LAC KI 1	Regional technical advisor on violence prevention and peacebuilding for international NGO
LAC KI 2	Director and research co-ordinator (joint interview) of social science research centre
LAC KI 3	Executive director of organisation of families of illegally disappeared persons
LAC KI 4	Executive director of community-based organisation that provides local research consultants
LAC KI 5	Teacher and independent researcher at a Caribbean university

8   The references in the left-hand column are used to indicate the source of quotes found later in the document. Quotes from LAC key informants have been translated from Spanish by the interviewer.

West Africa (WA)

WA KI 1	Staff member of NGO working on development and governance
WA KI 2	Senior staff member at urban research centre
WA KI 3	Medical researcher involved in multi-country research
WA KI 4	Head of university department that conducts internationally funded public health studies
WA KI 5	Researcher at community-based organisation providing support to people living with HIV

South Asia (SA)

|	
SA KI 1	Research manager dealing with international and local grants in a global health research organisation
SA KI 2	Urban activist-researcher working in an NGO on issues of housing and other urban services
SA KI 3	Feminist activist and researcher from a community-based organisation working on equity, gender and ethical aspects of health and development
SA KI 4	Public health researcher in a private university
SA KI 5	Social and environmental activist who later moved on to be a researcher in a private university

Main survey findings

Please note that the results of the key informant interviews have been incorporated in the **Key themes and discussion section**, which follows this one. Here we focus on the survey data.

In relation to the **UKCDR definition of safeguarding**,[9] 72.3% of survey respondents (n=297) judged it to be "about right". 11.9% of respondents (n=49) thought it was too broad, while 15.8% (n=65) found the definition too narrow:

UKCDR definition of safeguarding - respondents' judgement
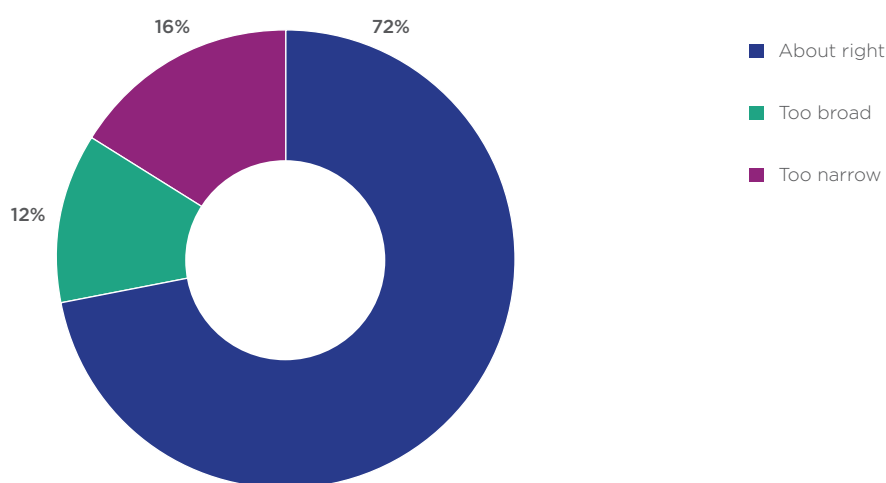
A number of comments from those who found the definition too broad indicated that bullying/ harassment were covered separately within their organisations. When the definition was deemed too narrow, suggestions were made for additional potential forms of harm not explicitly mentioned in the definition, including structural violence, neglect, repression, coercion, financial exploitation and environmental harm. Some concerns were also expressed about overstretching the definition:

> "My sense is that the balance of safeguarding thus far has been primarily on the LMIC end of the spectrum i.e. research participants and communities, rather than Northern researchers. I think this definition is broader than how most people in the development sector would understand safeguarding."
> **–** Survey respondent

Respondents' perceptions were that levels of awareness and understanding of safeguarding as defined by UKCDR were relatively low in the development research sector.

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9   Repeated here for ease of reference: UKCDR define safeguarding as preventing and addressing "any sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment of research participants, communities and research staff, plus any broader forms of violence, exploitation and abuse… such as bullying, psychological abuse and physical violence."

Levels of awareness & understanding of safeguarding as defined by UKCDR in international development research practice - respondents' perceptions
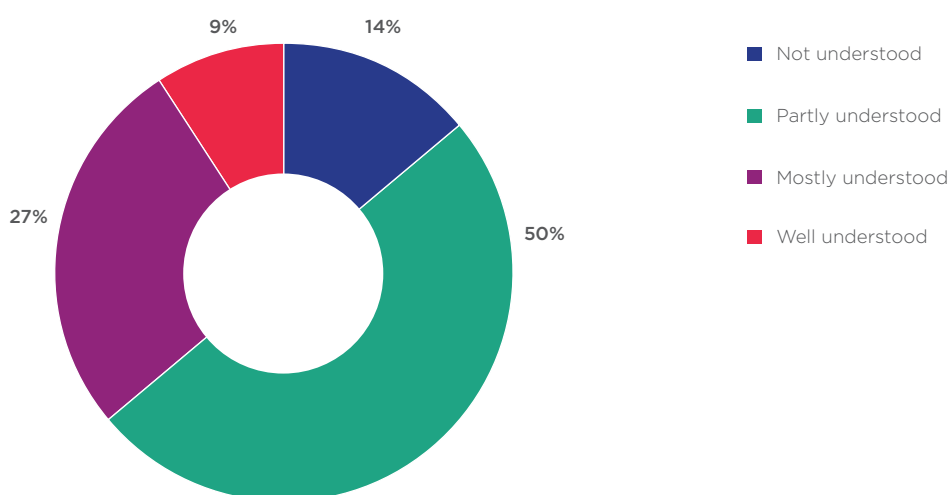
11% 11%

25%

53%

- Not understood
- Partly understood
- Mostly understood
- Well understood
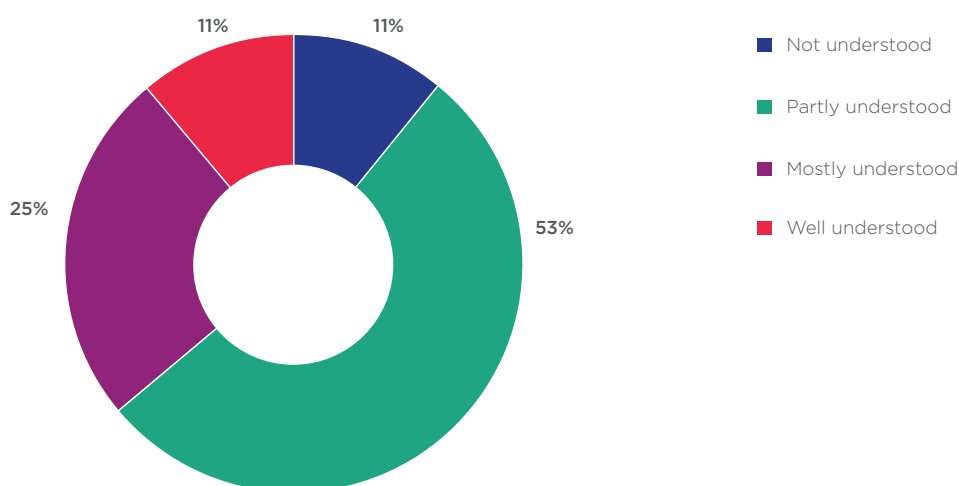
Over 60% of respondents described the UKCDR definition as either "not understood" (10.5%, n=43) or "partly understood" (51.8%, n=213) in international development research practice.

> "Researchers consider safeguarding to be separate from ethics – they have to get ethics clearance from their university and therefore consider that to be all that's needed. There is the opinion that safeguarding is for NGOs not academia."
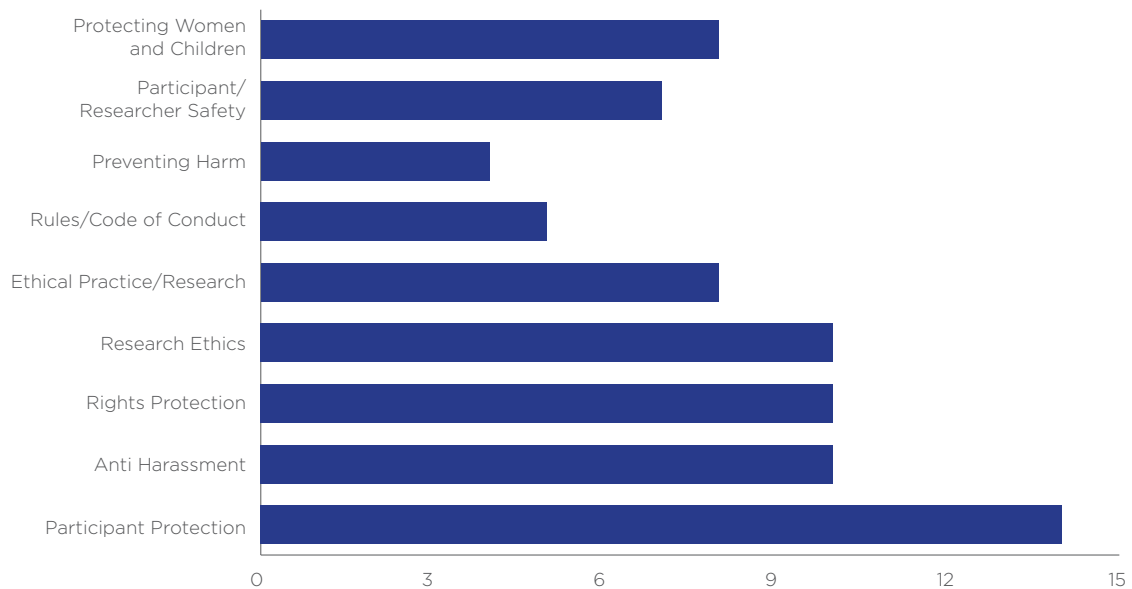> – Survey respondent

The responses hardly changed when respondents were asked to consider how well the definition is understood in the country/region in which they worked, indicating that the lack of awareness and understanding is not country/region specific:

Levels of awareness & understanding of safeguarding in the country/region - respondents' perceptions

9% 14%

27%

50%

- Not understood
- Partly understood
- Mostly understood
- Well understood

Over a third of respondents said that they do not use the term 'safeguarding' in their work:

Do you use the term safeguarding in your work?

36%   64%

- Yes
- No

Alternative terms used by respondents to cover the area of work encompassed by the UKCDR safeguarding definition included: ethics, protection, health and safety, risk analysis, respect, rights and professional behaviour. The image below was generated from interview and survey responses about terms commonly used in relation to or instead of 'safeguarding'.

Most popular alternative terms for safeguarding

Term	Value
Protecting Women and Children	8
Participant/ Researcher Safety	7
Preventing Harm	4
Rules/Code of Conduct	5
Ethical Practice/Research	8
Research Ethics	10
Rights Protection	10
Anti Harassment	10
Participant Protection	14

There were mixed views about whether the term 'safeguarding' translated easily into other languages or into research practices:

"As the definition implies, it is a complex idea. At my institution we would use more than one word to convey this idea. If you want to use a term that people will not misinterpret, try to use a word that does not already have many meanings." – Survey Respondent

"We work with slum communities. We use the language "the communities, families know different aspects of their lives more than us, hence they are our teachers and we the students". We have the skill of articulating and writing or talking about what we learn from them, but are the ones who teach us. Hence we treat them with deep respect and gratitude." – Survey Respondent

"The term does not translate well into Arabic — it means something like providing a financial guarantee. We talk instead of respecting and taking care of each other, rather than listing the various types of harm it is possible to inflict." – Survey Respondent

One recurring issue in free-text survey answers was an emphasis by some respondents on safeguarding applying mainly to children, or groups defined as 'vulnerable' – without recognition of themselves or colleagues as potentially being included in that.

"We find that safeguarding as it relates to children/young people/vulnerable adults is better understood than the broader definition presented by UKCDR." – Survey respondent

Respondents were asked to rate the level of preparation of their current or most recent employer to **respond to a safeguarding incident**, as well as how well prepared they personally felt (NB tables below were generated from the English-language version of the survey).

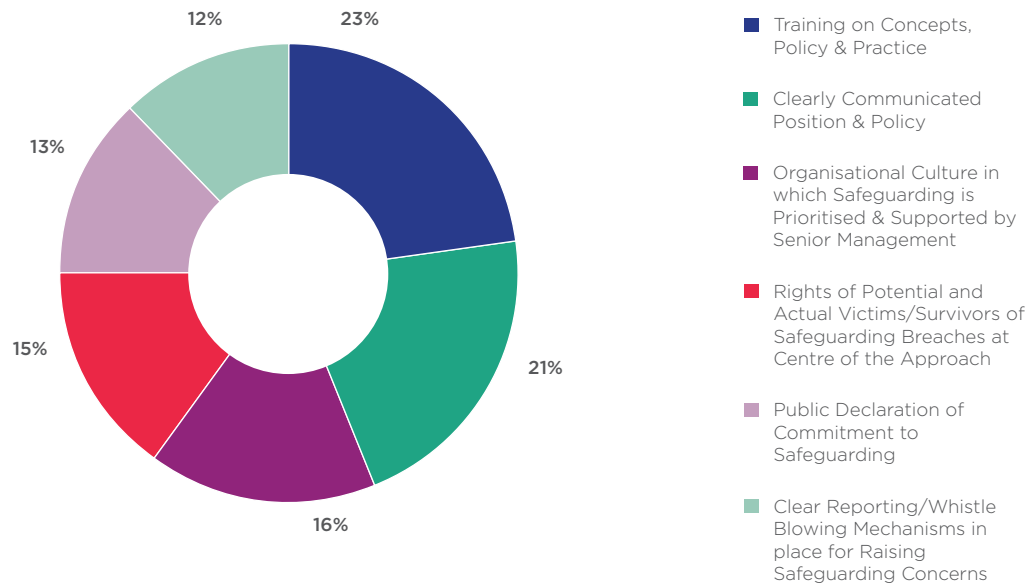**How well prepared do you think your current or most recent employer is to respond to a safeguarding incident?**
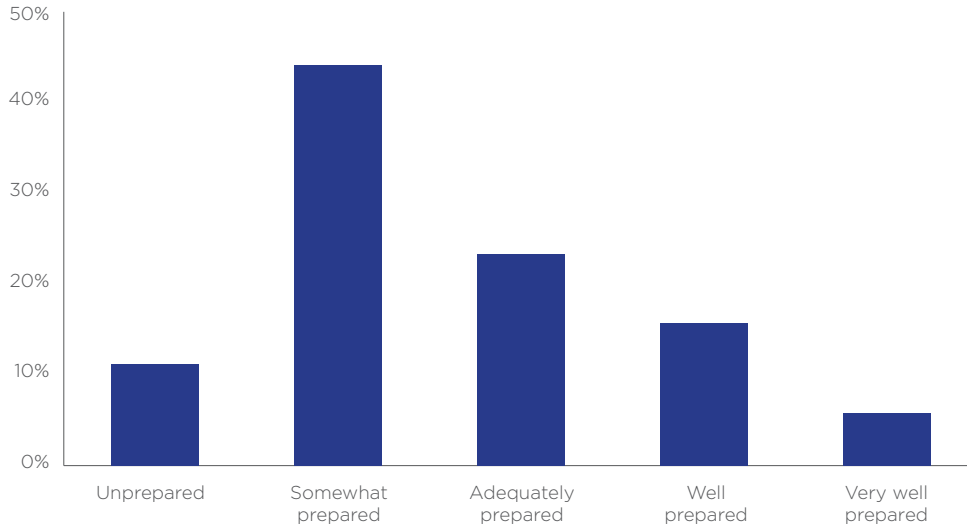
How well prepared do you personally feel to respond to a safeguarding incident?
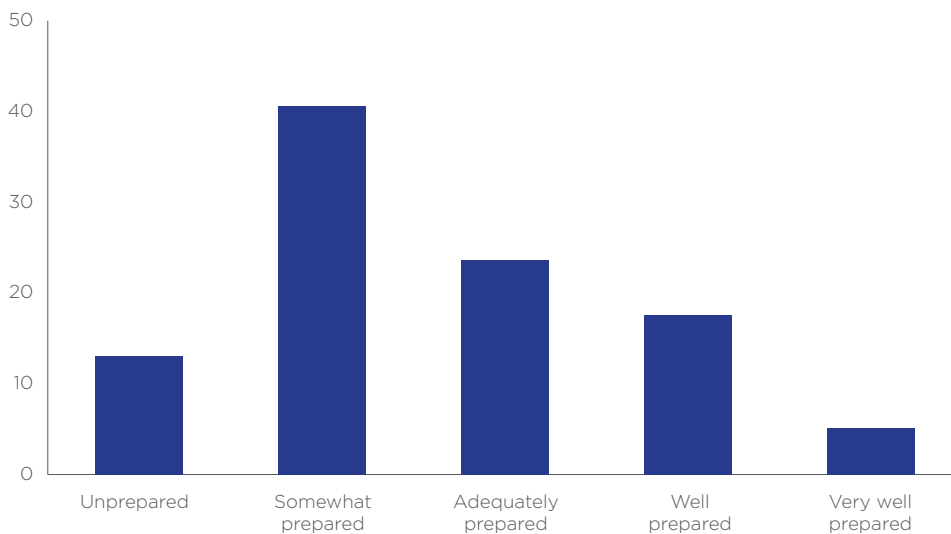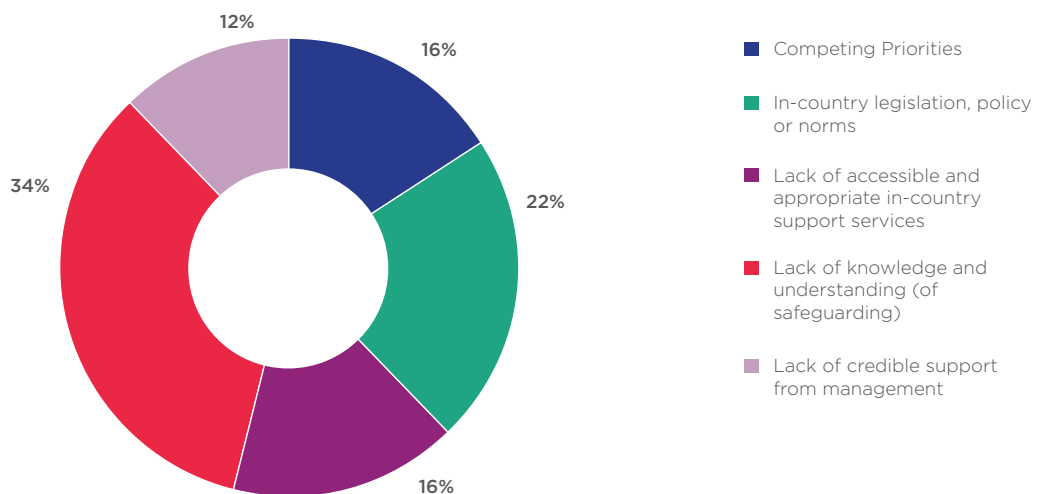
Participants were able to select multiple **priorities for good safeguarding practice** from a list of 16 options. The top six identified by respondents (attracting at least 100 'ticks' each) were:

Priorities for good safeguarding practice - top 6 responses

Legend:
- Training on Concepts, Policy & Practice
- Clearly Communicated Position & Policy
- Organisational Culture in which Safeguarding is Prioritised & Supported by Senior Management
- Rights of Potential and Actual Victims/Survivors of Safeguarding Breaches at Centre of the Approach
- Public Declaration of Commitment to Safeguarding
- Clear Reporting/Whistle Blowing Mechanisms in place for Raising Safeguarding Concerns

When asked to list in order of priority the main **barriers to implementing good safeguarding practice**, the top answer was 'lack of knowledge and understanding', which was cited as the most important barrier by 34% of respondents (n=94).

Most significant barriers to implementing good practice for safeguarding in international development research

Legend:
- Competing Priorities
- In-country legislation, policy or norms
- Lack of accessible and appropriate in-country support services
- Lack of knowledge and understanding (of safeguarding)
- Lack of credible support from management

To overcome these barriers, the top two responses were 'training, capacity building and awareness raising for researchers', often stated as needing to be LMIC specific, and for 'increased resources and capacity building', including specific lead staff and time allocation for dealing with safeguarding issues:

Most popular responses to overcoming barriers
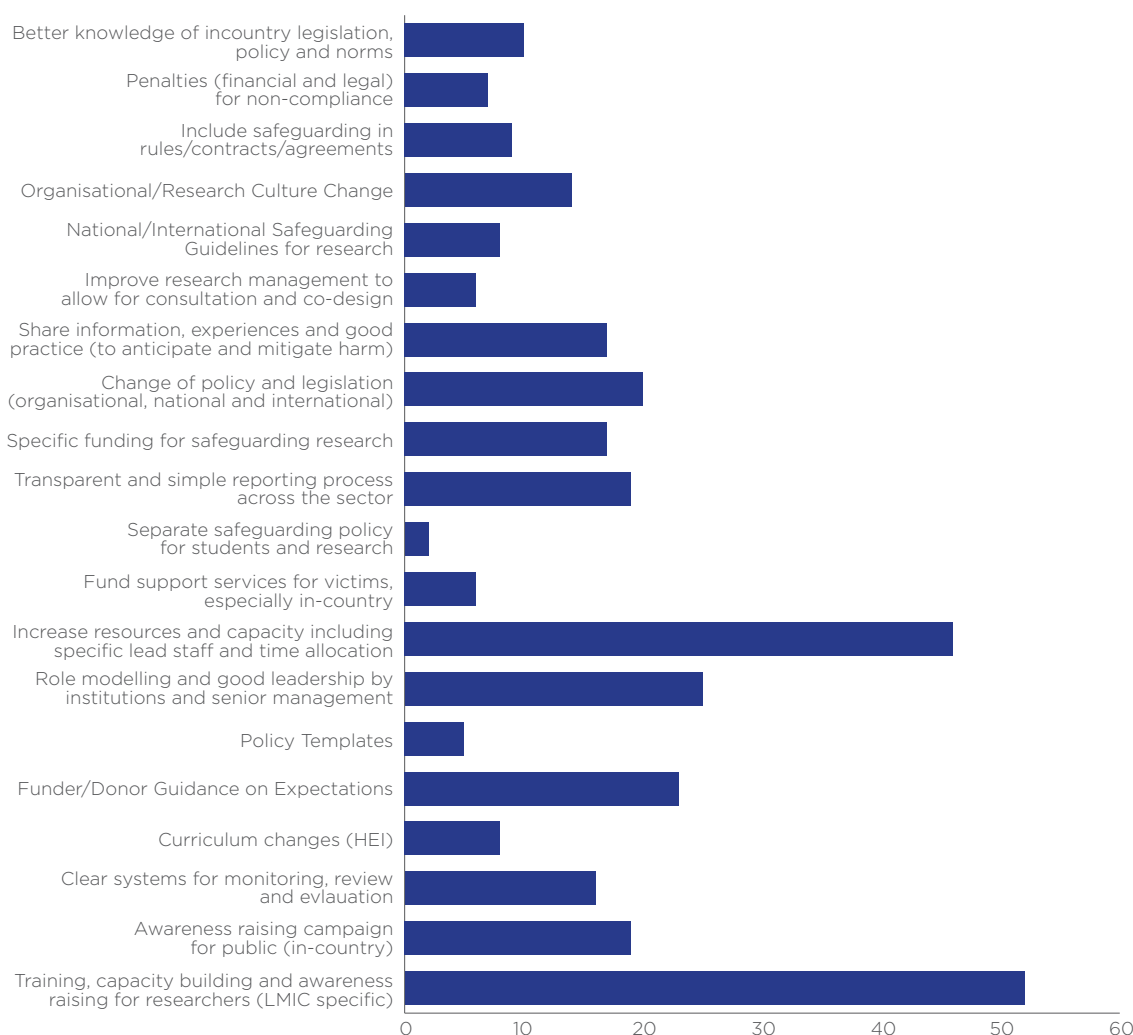
Some respondents provided additional comments giving insight into the context of their answers:

"It's a good thing that safeguarding in research in the institution I work is taken very seriously. But, many other institution do not give priority and want to finish research as soon as possible. So, in my view, safeguarding should be given of high importance and all individuals and organisations should be made aware about it. In addition, adequate resources including human, financial and time should be allocated to practice safeguarding in researches."
– Survey respondent

"Researchers having better understanding and knowledge of local culture, customs, norms and potential risks within the context in which they are operating. Researchers having greater impetus to consider protection of subjects as a priority, rather than collection of data at whatever cost."
– Survey respondent

"First and foremost, this requires an open and reflective discussion within institutions/ research groups, and among partners. 'Sensitive' issues should be aired. We need to clarify how much of a problem (and risk) there may be. Then we need to develop proportionate policies that are implemented, and monitored robustly." – Survey respondent

One survey respondent specifically suggested:

"Central guidance from expert bodies outlining what a strong safeguarding approach looks like would be useful, as would opportunities for cross-institutional discussion to aid co-operation on the topic [and] to help develop policies which can work across the sector."

The **Guidance** being developed as a companion piece to this report aims to address this need and contribute to further dialogue and alignment across the international development research sector.

Key themes and discussion

Together, the survey and interview data provided extensive, detailed and insightful feedback on the draft safeguarding principles. We were able to hear multiple perspectives on the definition, terminology and practical application of safeguarding principles, and how these ideas translated into different languages and contexts. The KIIs in particular allowed us to hear from people based in LMICs who have differing levels of involvement with UK-funded international development research.

There were fascinating exchanges on the scope and reach of the definition, and the kinds of harms that should and could be included. These included comments that the definition implies a prioritisation of sexual and physical harms that may downplay structural violence and root causes; protection of individuals and a focus on vulnerabilities rather than a preventative approach to construct and ensure a safe environment. Other practical points that were raised included patchy coverage of local ethics committees in some countries, and power dynamics between researchers, study participants and international partners. A number of KIIs highlighted the problem that too often there was an extractive approach in international development research with the focus on collection of data potentially straining the relationship between the research, the researcher and the community being researched, even putting fieldworkers at risk. There was strong and consistent support for the aim of providing guidance on safeguarding, using a rights-based approach to safeguarding that is integrated, equitable, co-designed and sensitive to different roles and contexts.

In terms of existing practice, our findings suggest there is a wealth of work that which would come under the auspices of 'safeguarding' as it is understood in the UK, through legislation and practice.

> "We have certain policies, we may not call it Safeguarding. In those policies we have these things spread out…. In the University of [X], we have Office of Research and Development… and they have several policies. For example, if you are engaging in any international collaboration or even local research and your protocol or proposal does not meet their requirements you would not get an approval…. In terms of sexual violence, and sexual exploitation and sexual harassment etc. the university has a sexual harassment policy which safeguards students and staffs on the university. So, we are all guided by that, not only for research but also for teaching." – WA KI 4

However, a significant issue raised is the transferability of the term into other languages and contexts, and the challenges of creating a shared understanding of meaning whether domestically or internationally.

> "It is possible that the terms used in our definition of safeguarding do not translate easily. Cultural differences may mean that even if the definition were accepted its implementation may appear different in different contexts."
> – Survey respondent

"This [definition] is more preventive or prohibitory…. But I think the good thing of [em]powering, promoting is missing from there. So safeguarding is not always about preventing the worst outcome but also encouraging a better outcome… if I leave a person in a better space." – SA KI 5

This multiplicity of terms covering related and overlapping concepts indicates that the terminology itself is perhaps not as important as discussion and guidance about what can actually be done to anticipate, prevent, mitigate and address harm throughout the research process: in the way research is designed, delivered and communicated.

"It definitely has to start from the design of the research project, both the methodology design and the elaboration of the conceptual framework, because let's say how we define our population is also important to prevent harm. From the conceptual framework and how we are going to understand the research problem it's necessary that we don't reproduce prejudices, preconceived ideas, stereotypes of the population that we are going to consult…. I think that from there harm prevention starts, in how people think they are going to consult, how the problem is thought out." – LAC KI 2

A preliminary analysis of the survey and interview data by the team identified a recurring set of topics and themes, which following a review was narrowed to four – all of which had been highlighted in the Phase 1 evidence review and which can be linked back to the nine draft safeguarding principles (see Annex 2).

The findings which emerged from the survey and interview data confirmed the essence of the draft principles and extended them in the following ways:

- **Rights of victims/survivors and whistle-blowers**
  Responses were framed around the rights of those who have been harmed by research, may be harmed by research or who may be harmed by reporting or 'whistle-blowing' on harms which result from research. This approach went beyond the original conceptualisation of a 'victim/survivor' approach to addressing harm, to conceiving of all the possible victims of harm in the design, delivery and dissemination of research.

- **Equity and fairness**
  The research findings illuminated the various levels at which equity and fairness, or the lack thereof, not only provided opportunity for abuse and exploitation but also embedded a culture of partnerships (Global North/Global South) which were inherently unfair, especially in relation to finances/funding.

- **Transparency**
  The responses from participants identified the need not only for the processes for addressing safeguarding harms to be transparent, in relation to both policy and practice, but for the process of identifying potential harms in all stages of research design, delivery and dissemination also to be transparent and collaboratively developed/co-created.

- **Accountability and governance**
  There were two aspects to accountability which the findings supported – the formal accountability processes and procedures for governance and the informal accountability processes within developing partnerships and apportioning fair levels of responsibility for safeguarding.

Each of these themes is explored below, illustrated with supporting evidence.

Rights

The centrality of the rights of actual and potential victims/survivors of safeguarding incidents was raised by UKCDR at the outset, and is now also reflected in emerging frameworks which identify the responsibilities of UK research institutions and partners in addressing harm (DFID, 2018; UUK, 2019). This theme also includes the rights of whistle-blowers or complainants, and ensuring that there are meaningful and effective pathways for support and redress.

The focus on a victim/survivor-centred rights-based approach has been borne out by the data collected during Phase 2. Upholding and promoting the rights of victims/survivors was put forward by consultation participants as a key feature not only in addressing harm which arises from research, but also anticipating and mitigating harm in research design, delivery and dissemination. Some key informants emphasised that giving priority to rights of victims/survivors may mean shifting the focus of – or even abandoning – one's research to avoid harming or revictimising, particularly when the research question is considered 'sensitive' and/or the context is repressive, volatile or stigmatising.

> "The victim is the centre and the processes, all the follow-up processes… all the mechanisms in place must be in favor of the victim and avoid revictimization. And that not only implies the penalty, but also repairing the damage. The restitution and reparation of damage, with all its mechanisms, have to be established to serve the victim." – LAC KI 1

This is as important for research staff as it is for participants.

> [Safeguarding issues] "affect our frontline staff on a daily basis and we try to overcome them. They become more prevalent if the topic you chose for research has serious vested interest. For example, we just did something on public financial management, so it's on the tracking of expenditure…. We see harassments, we see many attempts at bribery, giving bribes to our staff, with the intention of 'I don't want this to be seen'…. You actually need to accompany staff protection as part of your research. It is very important, depending on the sensitivity of the topic. If you are investigating a topic as sensitive as corruption, you'll be touching on very, very vested interests." – WA KI 1

Everyone involved in the international development research chain, from community level to research funders, planners and practitioners, has the right to be safe from harm.

Equity and fairness

The notion of 'equitable partnerships', particularly in 'transboundary' or international research has become an increasing focus of efforts to rebalance the Global South/ Global North power dynamic in research relationships[10] (DFID, 2018; KFPE, 1998; UKCDR, 2017; Rethinking Research Collaborative, 2018; Research Fairness Initiative (2018); TRUST Consortium (2018))

Involvement of LMIC partners at the research design and planning stage, such as was the practice of this consultation, was highlighted as necessary to ensure that research questions and methodologies were contextually appropriate and did not pose an unacceptable risk of harm to researchers, participants or communities.

> "It starts with planning…. Really sort of anticipate any potential harm with methodology, with an approach of research…. When you plan any approach what do you think about? Where are the areas where we need to put particular safeguards in place for this project? Starting within organisations but also externally thinking about the communities, the stakeholders, thinking about volunteers that might be working with us, sort of really planning through and maybe review as you go along how things are going and sort of keep the awareness. Do not just do it at the beginning and then just forget about it."
> – WA KI 2

> "Research is such a[n] act of power in some ways…. I think fundamentally an engagement where the researcher often is in a position of power where they are able to define a conversation and because of that I think the question of safeguarding and preventing harm is very essential…. You trigger off a conversation because you have the skills and ability to do it… but where does it leave the community and then the dynamics that you have set up [in] place in the community?" – SA KI 5

Financial exploitation was raised by several key informants, who contrasted the pay and power of colleagues deemed "international" with those considered "local" – even when the latter had trained the former, or had identical qualifications.

> "Normally local institutions, local researchers are being slighted…. If I produce the same research quality, even a superior research quality, compared to something from Harvard or Oxford, [the latter is] internationally more regarded…. We usually provide the content and then others would stamp their names on it…. We have got PhD holders here and we were discussing a budget where

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10   Department for International Development [DFID] (2018) *Enhanced Due Diligence: Safeguarding for External Partners*. Available at: https:// assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/ government/uploads/system/ uploads/attachment_data/ file/767037/ safeguarding-externalpartners.pdf

Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries [KFPE] (2018) *A Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships, 3rd edition*. Available at: https://naturalsciences.ch/ uuid/564b67b9-c39d-5184-9a94-e0 b1292447 61?r=20190807115818_1565 139307_8ef687bc-7b14-5a4f-ad9ebf494cddc1d7

UKCDS (2017) *Building a Partnership of Equals: The role of funders in equitable and effective international development collaborations*. Available at: https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Building-Partnerships-of-Equals_-REPORT-2.pdf

Rethinking Research Collaborative https://rethinkingresearchcollaborative.com/resources-and-links/ The website includes links to the Rethinking Research Partnerships Discussion Guide and Toolkit and other resources.

Research Fairness Initiative (2018). Available at: https://rfi.cohred.org/

TRUST Consortium (2018) *The Global Code of Conduct for Research in Resource-Poor Settings*. Available at: http://www.globalcodeofconduct.org/ In addition to the Code itself, there are learning materials available on the website.

someone suggested that these people should be paid $100 but then you have international staff that are paid between $800-$1000 a day. And some of them are even taught by our researchers, so it creates an unbending tension."
– WA KI 1

"A lot or half a portion of the funding will stay with the US institution. Then small or a proportionate amount comes to us.... They hide behind the fact that in most LMICs salary levels are low, and things are relatively cheaper in terms of labour. So, with the little amount you can manage and then get your things through. So that is one aspect that I don't think it is fair. There is no fairness in that direction.... When it comes to, let me say task sharing, we do it equally."
– WA KI 4

"I actually think these practices should change. Because it really hurts, you know? Even with your own colleagues, right?.... Economic parity has to be there. Doesn't matter if it's a global position or an Indian position or whatever. You're putting in the same amount of work, you're equally qualified, then the salaries should be the same." – SA KI 1

"We as a local organisation do not receive the same payment or the same recognition that a United States organization receives, and it is the same job and we do the same analysis. Many of them hire us for less money, so I think there is a lack of equity and I don't know, I think this is important because that also dignifies the work of local people, creates new capacity.... Or sometimes we lose the authorship, because they hire us and we never appear in any document, right? They make us invisible." – LAC KI 4

Transparency

Transparent practice, policy and procedures for safeguarding form a touchstone characteristic of good practice (DFID, 2018; UUK, 2019). What is made transparent and open can be queried, thereby not only allowing for organisations and individuals to be held to account but also helping them to identify areas for improvement. However, this aspect cannot be divorced from questions of power and equitability within research partnerships and relationships:

"The organisation or the person controlling the money is the one who tacitly actually gets the power. And even that's, even if the person or the organisation tries to produce as much transparency in the process and makes it as much transparent as it can be, there is this power differential which will exist, no matter. Because today can you and I go back and push certain things to the funder? Not just [X] but any funder that what you are doing is not right and it has to be done this way? Do we have the power to do that? No, a lot of funders still say what needs to be done and way it needs to be done." – SA KI 2

The theme of transparency also relates to safeguarding commitments and policies that are clear and public, as well as openness about incidents or breaches and the measures taken to address them. The importance of learning and sharing lessons, within institutions and across the sector, to improve practice also falls under this theme.

"It is very important about sending a very clear message to the staff of what code of conduct is expected. What won't be tolerated. There is a very clear guideline and whistle-blowing is to be encouraged." – WA KI 2

"I think these sorts of safeguarding mechanisms or the policy discussion, it would really help if all the project teams also come together and talk about during their study, what could have helped? You know, what is it that we don't have that could've helped? So, I think that inception phase discussion is very important." – SA KI 1

"We had a conversation with the institution we are working with about whether or not they were governed by a no harm principle and we made an agreement on shared expectations regarding prevention and addressing harm which was good because both institutions addressed the issue." – LAC KI 2

A further aspect of transparency relates to awareness around the limits of one's vision of safeguarding, risk and harm. As one informant (LAC KI 1) put it, in relation to outsiders' often limited understanding of the local context, "preventing means avoiding and in order to avoid you have to anticipate; you can't see something that you do not have the mindset for." This calls for greater reflection and transparency about the source(s) of knowledge and information that are influential and what gaps may exist in one's own perspective. This links to who sets the research agenda, who conceptualises research questions, and how this may reflect structural inequalities.

"Who's defining the agendas, you know? Is it Northern domination, in defining agendas for research? So, that is, that is an aspect which needs to be safeguarded against. What kinds of roles are borne by researchers in different contexts, to what extent is there a, you know, discussion and consensus-building? Also, issues of representation.... How is it decided how they should be represented? What sorts of solutions are sought, after who seeks those solutions, who suggests those solutions? I think some of these [are] aspects in multi-country-cultural research that need to be looked at." – SA KI 3

"Most of the times international researchers conceptualise and then they develop proposals and then come down, say 'OK this is what we want to do'. The initial aspect of conceptualisation, we are usually not involved. In fact there are some of them that come with existing proposals. Maybe even they have gone through ethics. They would just say 'I have this, and I want you to be involved in it'." – WA KI 3

Partnerships that are unfair and rooted in power inequities mean local partners have less input and therefore cannot ensure fair, safe, and locally relevant/beneficial studies. A more transparent approach that recognises structural issues will help build a stronger foundation for safeguarding. This will also avoid the risk of creating perverse incentives to ignore abusive situations, for example to maintain funding. Honesty with participants and communities about the limits of research, and avoiding raising false hope or expectations is another vital part of transparency. This entails openness about how research is designed, funded and delivered, by whom and for whose benefit (financial, social or otherwise).

"The aspect of transparency is a big challenge. Let us say for example there was a time I was involved in a research for which I was in fact the PI for that research and there was funding for it, although the project that I headed was specifically for one segment, but I do not know how much the funding was…. Even to know the funder I had to do extra to know that." – WA KI 3

"Our research is always meant to be planned together with the community for the community. So it is very important also to get that done, of course we work in slums, therefore we are very dependent on them allowing for the research to happen and to contribute to it. So therefore their buy-in is crucial and that is a whole philosophy in mind, for it to be participatory and make them own the research and to make it as valuable for the community as possible." – WA KI 2

Accountability and governance

Accountability is a significant feature of all approaches to addressing and preventing harm in safeguarding (DFID, 2018; UUK, 2019) and underpins governance in the research process. Numerous comments by consultation participants referred to power dynamics, raising questions about who is accountable to whom and for what. Accountability is multi-directional and complex.

"I think [it is] also really constantly questioning yourself on what is the purpose of the research, is it, are you accountable to the project you are doing or are you accountable to the larger process?… And it is okay if sometimes this particular piece falls apart…. To make peace with it that I am not, it's not about my success, it is also about being aware can it do harm. Even if it, there is a risk then trying to stop. I think we have done it, at points we have called off and clarified to funders that the research will not go ahead." – SA KI 5

One particular recurring theme among both survey respondents and key informants was the need to be accountable to communities for the use of their data, to avoid a model of interaction that was "exploitative", "extractive" or "transactional."

"I see that the issue of returning/sharing results with participants is not addressed here and it seems to me that that it is very important to take into account… not take as an extractive approach of just going to a community, taking out the information and leaving…. We start from the fact that people are the ones who first have the right to know how the information they have shared with us has been treated; so, in our projects we try to include an element of returning/sharing results with the people interviewed." – LAC KI 2

"It's about the way research outputs are produced and communicated. A lot of communities now feel that they are being abused because you simply collect information from [them] and don't bother to keep them updated on your results. These are the sort of things we usually have to apologise for." – WA KI 1

"This kind of research, it has become very goal-oriented, transactional…. I think we all need to reflect on this and see what is it that we're actually doing and how can we give a voice to the people. And I don't mean by just giving them a voice, inviting them to some meeting and… having them share, because, you know, I feel that that's another layer of exploitation actually…. Nuanced issues of what constitutes people's rights and responsibilities in this research relationship, I think those should be reflected somewhere in this conversation around safeguarding." – SA KI 4

Specific policies and referral systems for dealing with sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) were not prominent during the consultation. There was certainly awareness of wider national frameworks, e.g. about sexual harassment in the workplace, but less about the specific application of such policies in the international development research context. Respondents were keen to emphasise how other forms of harassment may be less well recognised:

"I will give you a brief about what I understand safeguarding is. In the Indian context if you look at it from the law perspective etc., one of the biggest safeguarding things, at least that we often have is again sexual harassment at workplace. We do also, at least I think, I do personally think that safeguarding has to go beyond sexual harassment, there can also be other forms of harassment, mental harassment" (SA KI 2)

"No, I think it's [UKCDR's definition of safeguarding] okay because it incorporates, I think what… it's focusing on is sexual exploitation, but I think… intimidation and all of that. But there can be other kinds of intimidation and power play and all of that also …, So… I think the definition is covering that, isn't it?… Not just sexual exploitation. Any other kinds of intimidation and power play" (SA KI 3)

There was also some wariness from respondents about the ways in which referral mechanisms may play out in multi-country partnerships between the Global North and Global South. This was especially in relation to country legal requirements and sovereignty, and their impact on confidentiality, roles, and power differentials in these partnerships. From this perspective, specific pathways for safeguarding requirements could be seen as a potentially punitive mechanism rather than an actual facilitator of ethical practice and protection from harm.

Safeguarding thus risks becoming a parallel process that is yet to find harmony with ongoing ethics requirements and processes in different contexts. The theme of accountability can be helpful here to reflect on the reasonableness of expectations for safeguarding decisions or actions and systems set up to mitigate harm. In order to be proportionate and realistic, the expectations of all actors/partners in the research process must reflect the distribution of legal responsibility, power and resources, as well as recognition of realities on the ground in often challenging contexts.

"I did a lot of research about referral pathways, about who to turn to if there is any concern, or any safeguarding issue, there is nothing. I mean, they refer to the family support unit but even that, when you look online there is no clear number. There is no information out there.... People just become aware of incidences or of concerns, but then if there [are] no systems in place to deal with that increase in the number of reporting, disclosures, etc. then we fail. So, a long way to go." – WA KI 2

"I am saying this from working with very vulnerable groups, where once you have started [you need] the proofs there are enough resources that we can link them to. And it is always important that you make sure it happens, that you link them to some group or something and you have identified those things before you set out for the research.... You have to be very careful about [this] in the preparatory work, are you also looking into repercussions and it's not always possible.... So I think what you have to do there is, each of those things have to be designed and negotiated in that space and see what can be done." – SA KI 5

Next steps

The consultation identified the need for safeguarding advice and support to be applicable to the range of actors in various roles and settings who are involved in the international development research process. It emphasised that safeguarding should be considered in light of asymmetrical power relations that underpin research, both North-South and between researchers and communities. There was also a desire expressed for dialogue, consensus-building and lesson-sharing on safeguarding at both national and international levels:

> "I believe that we could reach a consensus with universities that do research to follow best practices, lessons learned and perhaps a minimum of principles. It does not exist, I tell you, there is interest, but there are no general protocols and much remains [to be done].... I believe that the research you are doing could be of great value in a national dialogue on the subject." – LAC KI 2

> "There has been some work [on safeguarding] done in the area of research but much of it has not been done. So we have an opportunity of establishing policies that suit our local situation.... [We] also have to strengthen our capacity to be able to put checks and balance for international partners. International partners need to say 'Yes, I am going to this country. In the first place I need to understand what is happening there. Work with the local partners'.... The whole thing is new, this aspect of safeguarding. I just believe that maybe this information will help the researchers to advocate for a policy that is representative of different countries not policies that are [UK] centred, which might be very difficult to adapt locally. It might also help to popularise this issue among researchers." – WA KI 3

As a further output of the consultation process, Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research is being produced as a companion piece to this report. The guidance draws on and complements the outcomes of Phase 1 and the findings of the international consultation as outlined above, but is designed to work as a stand-alone document. It provides a practical, values-based framework organised around a set of key questions for different stakeholders to ask themselves – and each other - throughout the international development research process, and is designed to be applicable in low-, middle- and high-income settings.

Training, as noted in the **Main survey findings** section, was also highlighted by respondents as a top priority for future action, alongside the development of supportive systems to address the needs of victims/survivors. This was echoed by one of the key informants, to whom we give the last word:

> "I think we also have to be very careful that it does not turn into sort of just paperwork, just getting a document for the sake of satisfying the funders. It is really important it comes with training; with awareness-raising; with very practical applications, using example[s] for staffs to actually understand what is safeguarding. It is not just a tick box exercise.... To do half or a full package around it... if you then do not know who to go to when there is a concern or you have very strong community structures that actually protect perpetrators because it is more important to keep a breadwinner in the community than protecting a child, this kind of considerations really have to go in line with developing policies." - WA KI 2.

This guidance represents the start of a long-term ambition, and aims to support all actors involved in the research sector to drive forward real change across the sector, to ensure people are safe and protected wherever they are located. UKCDR will continue to work with research funders as they develop and adapt their safeguarding policies to align with this guidance.

Annex 1: Draft principles developed by Orr et al. in Phase 1

Nine key principles for safeguarding practice in international development research[11]

1. Funders, researchers and research organisations recognise their safeguarding responsibilities and declare their commitment to taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm to those involved with research.

2. Safeguarding expectations should be proportionate, contextually sensitive and appropriate to the scope and nature of the research, while upholding international standards governing 'do no harm'.

3. Safeguarding efforts should be joined up within and between organisations as far as possible, with clarity on their nature and scope within the context of each project.

4. Safeguarding should integrate and build on existing measures where these meet requirements, within UK research organisations and in collaborating organisations.

5. Safeguarding is a shared responsibility between collaborating research organisations and should be approached in a spirit of inclusiveness and mutual learning, with attention to risk of unintended harms that could arise from dictating standards.

6. The approach to safeguarding capacity development should encourage open and constructive engagement, cognisant of power differentials, and responsive to emergent needs across the research process.

7. Sufficient provision for safeguarding requires resources and time to build expertise, meet requirements, and respond to safeguarding needs.

8. Underpinning all of these should be attention to the gendered, classed and racialised, as well as sexuality-, age-, (dis)ability-, faith-related and other dynamics of vulnerability, risk, and harm. Research takes place within contexts often structured by inequalities and power imbalances, which directly shape research relations and activities.

9. Approaches to safeguarding should adopt a victim/survivor-centred approach, as recognised by the International Development Committee (Parliament UK, 2018)[12], by clearly articulating standards of behaviour, contextually appropriate and safe reporting, commitment to the rights and needs of victims and survivors, and listening to their voices in the development of policies and practice.

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11   Orr, D. et al. (2019) Safeguarding in International Development Research: Briefing Paper. Available at: https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/resource/safeguarding-in-international-development-research-briefing-paper/

12   International Development Committee (2018) Sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid sector. London: House of Commons. Available at: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmintdev/840/84002.htm

Annex 2: Methodological considerations

Analysis and Deconstruction of the Definition of Safeguarding

> ### Definition of Safeguarding
>
> Consultation to elicit:
>
> Extent of agreement with parameters of the potential victims, types of harm and limited application in the definition

Discussions within the team, international in our makeup, identified that 'safeguarding' was a very Western notion in relation to legal and policy definitions, anticipated to be less well understood in an international context and difficult to translate into other languages. Therefore, to support a more informed contribution to the consultation we had to offer a form of words which explained broadly what safeguarding means in this context.

An explanation of what safeguarding is expected to do, as opposed to just a description of what forms of harm the notion applies to, led to forming of words 'preventing and addressing harm'. This phrase was felt to encapsulate the essence of the draft principles and enabled a more accurate translation into French and Spanish at survey stage.

The phrase 'relevant to research' was removed from the definition. This was purposeful to enable participants to tell us what they felt the parameters should be (e.g. if it should include bystander concerns). From the interviews and the surveys this was borne out by interview respondents questioning why the responsibility for safeguarding only applied to 'violence, exploitation or abuse relevant to research' and furthermore by some of the feedback that safeguarding includes actions to prevent or address harm which is observed in the process of research design and delivery – referred to as 'bystander' or 'observer' safeguarding. Respondents provided examples of acting when participants or research partners/researchers were subject to violence or abuse at home that came to light during research design and delivery.

Analysis and Deconstruction of the draft principles

To consult upon the draft principles in an 'agree/disagree' format would not have elicited any insight into the nuances contained within these principles, and therefore not allowed us to gain an understanding of what already is happening in practice and what the gaps and challenges are. Extracting the essence of the principles and also enquiring into what support is required to implement them (or a variation of them) was key to the consultation.

At this early stage of the work, the research team identified that the principles should be viewed from a rights-based perspective – the rights of victims/survivors, as well as the rights of all actors in the research process. Analysing the principles in this way (illustrated

below) allowed for the touchstones within them to be revealed; that knowledge on safeguarding from potential harms should be co-produced and that responses should be co-developed and context specific, in ways that demonstrate equity, transparency and accountability:

Principle 1

Consultation to elicit:

- Who are the actors with responsibility for safeguarding in international research?
- How should they demonstrate recognition of safeguarding responsibilities?
- What if any are the limits of these responsibilities?

Principle 2

Consultation to elicit:

- What are proportionate and appropriate expectations?
- How or if they should be tailored appropriate to 'scope and nature of research'
- How should local contexts be reflected in expectations?

Principle 3

Consultation to elicit:

- How clear are current efforts communicated between and within research partners

Principle 4

Consultation to elicit:

- What are the existing measures in local settings that work to safeguard from harm

Principle 5

Consultation to elicit:

- What shared responsibility does/ should look like
- What mutual learning does/should look like
- What inclusiveness does/should look like

Principle 6

Consultation to elicit:

- What safeguarding capacity development should/does look like in relation to e.g. training and budget
- What power differentials exist in international research

Principle 7

Consultation to elicit:

- What resources and time is/should be available to support building expertise

Principle 8

Consultation to elicit:

- Definitions of vulnerability, risk and harm, and/or problems associated with these terms
- How factors of 'race, gender and socio-economic status' affect this

Principle 9

Consultation to elicit:

- Definitions of safeguarding victims/survivors or alternative terms
- How victims/ survivors needs and priorities are currently addressed/ should be addressed in both preventing and addressing harm through safeguarding

Annex 3: Online survey

Safeguarding – Preventing and Addressing Harm in International Development Research

Consultation on Safeguarding Principles

The UK Collaborative for Development Research (UKCDR) drew up a set of draft principles and good practice guidance in relation to safeguarding during their first phase of consultation with UK research organisations undertaking international development research.

You can find more information about phase 1 of this work here: https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/resource/safeguarding-in-international-development-research-briefing-paper/

UKCDR define safeguarding as preventing and addressing 'any sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment of research participants, communities and research staff, plus any broader forms of violence, exploitation and abuse... such as bullying, psychological abuse and physical violence.'

UKCDR are now seeking feedback from stakeholders across the international development research community working in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

This survey has been devised by University of Liverpool in partnership with Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. If you have any questions regarding this survey please contact info@ukcdr.org.uk.

The survey should take no longer than 8-10 minutes to complete. The information you provide will be anonymous. The data will be analysed by the University of Liverpool research team.

The information you provide will be used to produce a report on safeguarding. Any data generated in the course of the project will be kept securely in electronic form for a period of time in accordance with Wellcome policy. Any quotes used will be anonymised. The original data forms collected will not be shared with any other third parties.

Thank you for your contribution. Your time and input are greatly appreciated.

Please click below to indicate your agreement with this statement:

☐ I give my consent for the information I provide to be shared with University of Liverpool for the purposes of analysis and use in a report on this project.

Part I: About You

1. Age *[dropdown or tick box]* 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+, Prefer not to say

2. Gender *[dropdown or tick box]* Female, Male, Non-binary, Prefer not to say

3. Where are you currently based? *[dropdown or tick box]*

- Africa – Central
- Africa – East
- Africa – North
- Africa – Southern
- Africa – West
- Americas – Central
- Americas – North
- Americas – South
- Asia – Central
- Asia – East
- Asia – North
- Asia – South
- Asia – Southeast
- Asia – Other
- Caribbean
- Europe – Central
- Europe – Eastern
- Europe – Northern
- Europe – Southern
- Europe – Western
- Middle East
- Oceania
- Other (please specify) *[text box for response]*

4. Please indicate the nature of your current or most recent employer *[dropdown or tick box]*

- Community Based Organisation
- National Non-Governmental Organisation
- International Non-Governmental Organisation
- UN Agency
- Government Department or Ministry
- National Research Council
- Higher Education Institution
- Other Research Institution or Think Tank
- Philanthropic Foundation
- Private Sector
- Independent Consultant
- Other (please specify) *[text box for response]*

5. Which of the following best describes your current role(s) in relation to international development research? Please tick all that apply *[tick box with multiple answers permitted]*

- Academic
- Administrator
- Communications
- Funder
- Human Resources
- Policy/Advocacy
- Programmes/Project Manager
- Researcher
- Safeguarding Lead
- Senior Manager
- Other (please specify) *[text box for response]*

Part II: Definition and Coverage of Safeguarding

UKCDR define safeguarding as preventing and addressing 'any sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment of research participants, communities and research staff, plus any broader forms of violence, exploitation and abuse… such as bullying, psychological abuse and physical violence.'

6. To what extent do you think the concept of 'safeguarding' as defined above is understood in international development research practice across the sector?
[tick box or sliding scale]

Not Understood   Partly Understood   Mostly Understood   Well Understood

Please comment on why you think this is the case *[text box allowing for paragraph]*

7. To what extent do you think the concept of 'safeguarding' as defined above is understood in international development research practice in the country/region you work in?
[tick box or sliding scale]

    Not Understood   Partly Understood   Mostly Understood   Well Understood

Please comment on why you think this is the case *[text box allowing for paragraph]*

8. Do you use the term 'safeguarding' within your organisation or in your work?
    Yes, No *[dropdown or tick box]*

If you or your organisation do not use this term, but address the issues covered by this term, please give details of the alternative term(s) you use *[text box allowing for paragraph]*

9. Do you think the UKCDR definition of safeguarding: *[tick box]*
    ○ Includes too many different types of harm?
    ○ Is about right?
    ○ Does not cover enough types of harm?

If too many, what would you take out? If not enough, what would you add? *[text box allowing for paragraph]*

Part III: Safeguarding in Practice

10. Safeguarding can be addressed in various ways. In your current or most recent experience of international development research, which (if any) of the following included a safeguarding component? Please tick all that apply. *[tick box with multiple answers permitted]*
    ○ Code of conduct
    ○ Ethical review
    ○ Finance and budgeting
    ○ Funding agreement
    ○ Grievance/disciplinary
    ○ Memorandum of understanding/contract
    ○ Monitoring and evaluation
    ○ Occupational health/health and safety
    ○ Organisational strategy
    ○ Performance review/appraisal/supervision
    ○ Recruitment and selection
    ○ Risk assessment
    ○ Training
    ○ Whistleblowing/complaints
    ○ Other – please give details *[text box allowing for paragraph]*

11. What do you think are the top priorities for good safeguarding practice in international development research? Please tick up to 5. *[restricted tick boxes with a maximum of 5 answers permitted]*
    ○ Organisation has a public declaration of commitment to safeguarding.
    ○ Organisation publishes statistics on safeguarding incidents and responses.
    ○ Organisation's position and policy on safeguarding are made clear to research participants and the wider community.
    ○ Organisation places the rights of potential and actual victims/survivors of safeguarding breaches at the centre of its safeguarding approach.

- ○ Organisation has a training programme for staff on safeguarding concepts, policy and practice.
- ○ Safeguarding approaches are jointly developed by the organisation and its research partners.
- ○ Organisations co-create and co-design the research agenda and methods with communities/participants.
- ○ All parties' contributions to research are acknowledged and credited.
- ○ Safeguarding expectations placed on organisations are context-specific and proportionate to their size and capacity.
- ○ Organisation has culture where safeguarding is prioritised and supported by senior management.
- ○ Organisation has clear reporting/whistleblowing mechanisms in place for raising safeguarding concerns.
- ○ Organisation has clear consequences and sanctions for breaches of safeguarding policy/procedures.
- ○ Organisation undertakes regular review, analysis and lesson learning from safeguarding incidents.
- ○ Organisational approach to safeguarding is based on recognition of unequal power relations as the driver of vulnerability, risk and harm.
- ○ Organisation has a process for assessing and mitigating safeguarding risks within international development research.
- ○ Other – please give details *[text box allowing for paragraph]*

12. How well prepared do you think your current or most recent employer is to respond to a safeguarding incident?
[tick box or sliding scale]

Unprepared / Somewhat prepared /Adequately prepared / Well prepared / Very well prepared

13. How well prepared do you personally feel to respond to a safeguarding incident?
[tick box or sliding scale]

Unprepared / Somewhat prepared /Adequately prepared / Well prepared / Very well prepared

14. What do you think are the most significant current barriers to implementing good practice for safeguarding in international development research? Please rank the following from 1 to 8, where 1 = most significant and 8 = least significant. *[ranking box]*
- ○ Competing priorities
- ○ In-country legislation, policy or norms
- ○ Lack of accessible and appropriate in-country support services
- ○ Lack of knowledge and understanding
- ○ Lack of management support
- ○ Lack of resources – financial
- ○ Lack of resources – human
- ○ Lack of time

15. What would help you most to overcome the barriers you have identified above?
[text box allowing for paragraph]

16. Overall – if you have any other comments or suggestions about safeguarding in international development research, please add them here.
[text box allowing for paragraph]

Annex 4: Semi-structured interview schedule

Preventing and Addressing Harm in International Development Research

Welcome and introduction.

1	How would you describe your connection with international development research? (role, location etc)
2	UKCDR use the following working definition of safeguarding as preventing and addressing 'any sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment of research participants, communities and research staff, plus any broader forms of violence, exploitation and abuse relevant to research, such as bullying, psychological abuse and physical violence.' To what extent do you think the idea of potential harm is understood in development research practice in your context? Please comment on why and/or suggest an alternative phrase
3	Clarity about safeguarding responsibilities and expectations, e.g. in the form of policies and agreements/contracts, and a collaborative approach to ensuring 'no harm' is done by research, are central to the Principles. In your experience, does this clarity exist? What currently works well? What are the key challenges/issues for the implementation of safeguarding or preventing and addressing harm [or alternative phrase they have suggested] related to carrying out research in your context?
4	Equitable partnerships between UK research organisations and partners undertaking research within LMICs are the foundation of these principles. Issues of differences in power and capacity/resource are proposed to be a key feature of good practice in safeguarding. [Examples: there may be issues of different levels of funding for international versus local researchers, or pressures put on communities to take part, or issues around who gets credited in publications.] What is your experience?

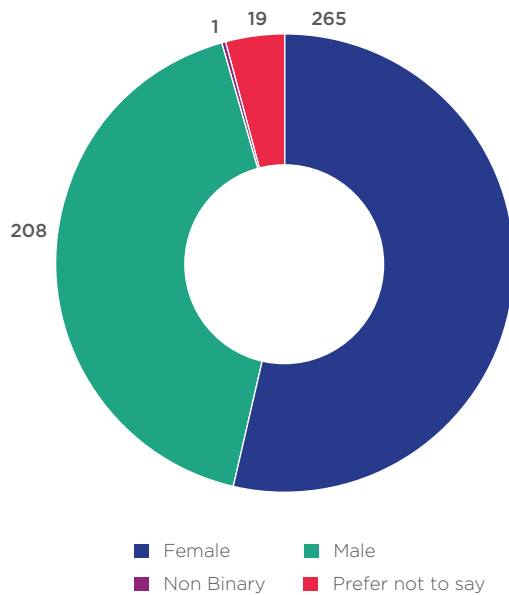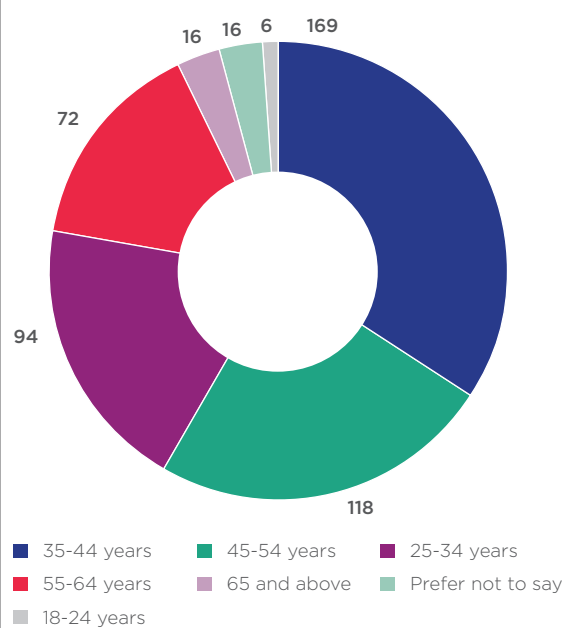|	
5	Recruitment checks, staff codes of conduct and training for those carrying out research are proposed as an important part of how research organisations can assure themselves of good safeguarding standards. What are your views on how this works in your context?
6	Managing a safeguarding complaint (physical or sexual abuse, harassment or exploitation in particular) and managing disclosure by community members, research participants or staff in a way that places the needs and priorities of the victim/survivor at the centre of safeguarding practice and processes, are a central part of these Principles. In your experience, do you think that development research currently places the needs and priorities of victims/survivors at the centre, and addresses power issues for those often disempowered (e.g. women, children and minorities)? If so, how do you think it does this? Can you give one or two specific examples?
7	What are your views on how research can happen in a way that aims to prevent or address further harm in your context, during different parts of the process? Specifically: During the research planning and design stage? In the way the research is implemented? In the way research outputs are produced and communicated?
8	What other comments do you have on the UKCDR aim or the content of the safeguarding document? Are there any other issues you wish to add that we have not covered?
9	Thank you very much for your time and participation. Before we close, here is a reminder of the next steps… [Refer to participant information sheet]

Annex 5: Profile of online survey respondents

Gender and age profiles of the survey respondents are as follows:

Gender of Respondents

- ■ Female
- ■ Male
- ■ Non Binary
- ■ Prefer not to say

Age of Respondents

- ■ 35-44 years
- ■ 45-54 years
- ■ 25-34 years
- ■ 55-64 years
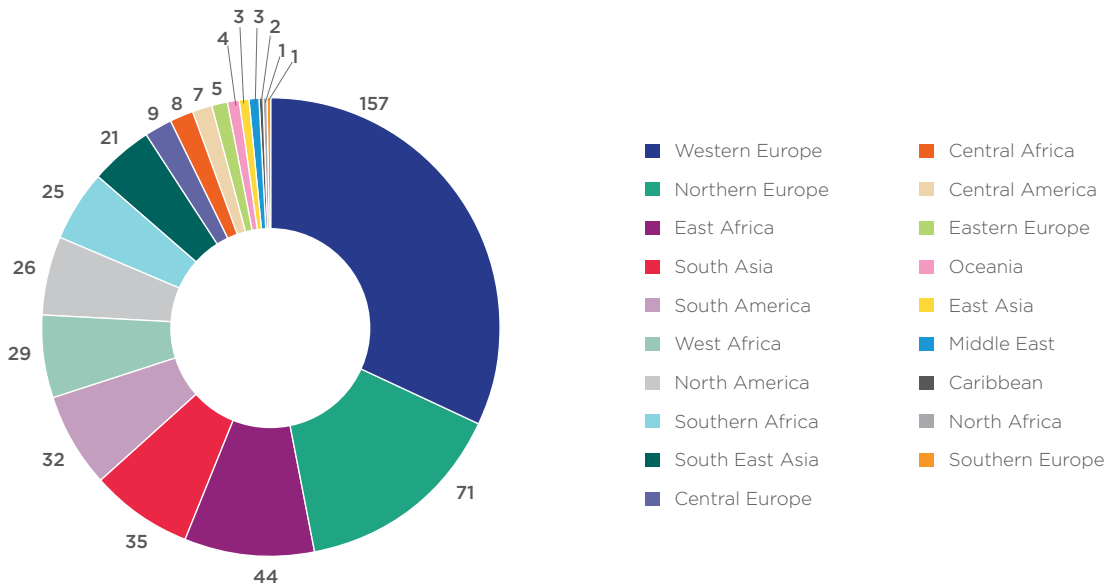- ■ 65 and above
- ■ Prefer not to say
- ■ 18-24 years

Reflecting the survey's UK origin and primary distribution via UK professional networks, the largest proportion of respondents (31.8%, n=157) were based in Western Europe. An additional six respondents who chose 'Other' specified UK or England rather than including themselves in Western Europe. A further 14.4% of respondents (n=71) were based in Northern Europe. However, well over half of respondents came from outside Western and Northern Europe, and there was quite a **wide geographical range of participation** overall.

After Western and Northern Europe, the next highest regional percentages were registered by East Africa (8.9%, n=44), South Asia (7.1%, n=35), South America (6.5%, n=32), West Africa (5.9%, n=29), North America (5.3%, n=26), Southern Africa (5.1%, n=25) and Southeast Asia (4.3%, n=21).

Regions with at least one respondent but fewer than ten, amounting in each case to less than 2% of the overall total, included Central Europe (n=9), Central Africa (n=8), Central America (n=7), Eastern Europe (n=5), Oceania (n=4), East Asia (n=3), Middle East (n=3), Caribbean (n=2), North Africa (n=1) and Southern Europe (n=1).
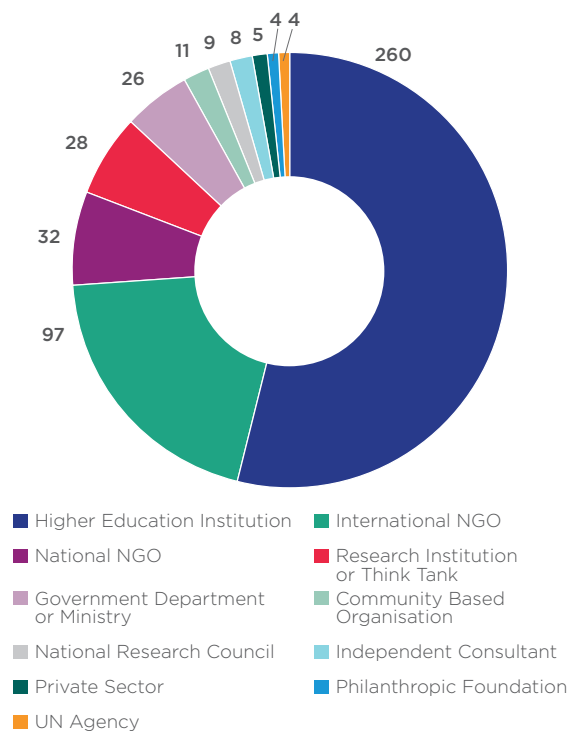
Location of Respondents

Legend:
- Western Europe — 157
- Northern Europe — 71
- East Africa — 44
- South Asia — 35
- South America — 32
- West Africa — 29
- North America — 26
- Southern Africa — 25
- South East Asia — 21
- Central Europe — 9
- Central Africa — 8
- Central America — 7
- Eastern Europe — 5
- Oceania — 4
- East Asia — 3
- Middle East — 3
- Caribbean — 2
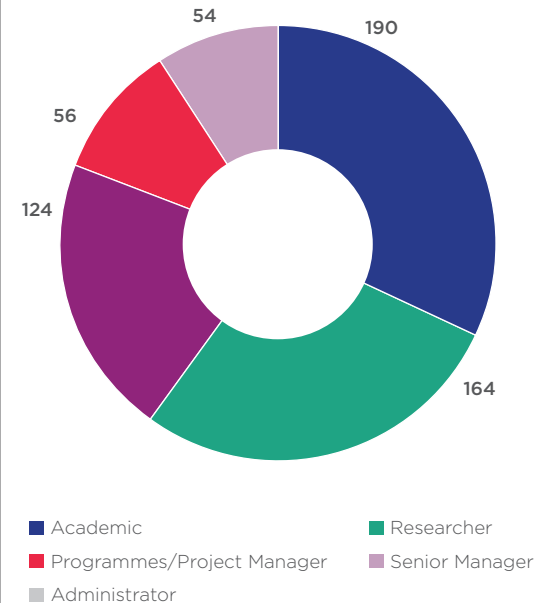- North Africa — 1
- Southern Europe — 1

In terms of current or most recent employer, by far the largest group of respondents were from higher education institutions (HEIs) at 52.7% (n=260). The next highest percentage came from international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) at 19.7% (n=97), with national NGOs at 6.5% (n=32). Other employers included research institution or think tank (5.7%, n=28), government department or ministry (5.27%, n=26) and community-based organisation (CBO) (2.2%, n=11). Employer types represented by under 2% of respondents included national research council (n=9), independent consultant (n=8), private sector (n=5), philanthropic foundation (n=4) and UN agency (n=4).

When asked to identify their role(s) in relation to international development research, respondents could select as many as they found applicable. The top 5 responses were Academic (n=190), Researcher (n=164), Programmes/Project Manager (n=124), Senior Manager (n=56) and Administrator (n=54), with some specific roles identified such as Scientific Advisory and Technical Advisor.

Current/Recent Employer of Respondents

- Higher Education Institution — 260
- International NGO — 97
- National NGO — 32
- Research Institution or Think Tank — 28
- Government Department or Ministry — 26
- Community Based Organisation — 11
- National Research Council — 9
- Independent Consultant — 8
- Private Sector — 4
- Philanthropic Foundation — 4
- UN Agency — 4

Role in International Development Research

- Academic — 190
- Researcher — 164
- Programmes/Project Manager — 124
- Senior Manager — 56
- Administrator — 54

UK Research Funding for Development in South Africa

Get in touch