SAFEGUARDING IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH:

EVIDENCE REVIEW

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Abbreviations

CC – Charity Commission

COC – Code of Conduct

DFID – Department for International Development

ER – Ethical reviews

ESRC – Economic and Social Research Council

HEI – Higher Education Institution

ID – International Development

LMIC – Low- and Middle-Income Countries

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

ODA – Official Development Assistance

ODI – Overseas Development Institute

PSEA – Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

REC – Research Ethics Committee

REF – Research Excellence Framework

RI – Research Institute

UKCDR – United Kingdom Collaborative on Development Research

Executive summary

In October 2018, UK funders of international development research issued a joint statement affirming their commitment to safeguarding. In the wake of this, members of the UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR) sought to coordinate their expectations of research organisations and have commissioned the research reported here to review the existing evidence on safeguarding in International Development (ID) research, gather views from key stakeholders, and derive recommendations for potential guidance or principles of good practice. Based on a literature review, policy review, media review, surveys and interviews with stakeholders, the following seven themes were identified as important:

1. Defining and understanding safeguarding

Safeguarding is a relatively new term, used until recently almost exclusively in the UK. This, along with the recent broadening of the term to include bullying and its application beyond traditionally defined groups, has required adjustment of organisational policies and poses challenges when applying the term to research contexts across different legal and contextual frameworks. The scope of safeguarding needs to be made clear within organisational policies, in joined-up fashion.

2. Risks and vulnerabilities for researchers, fieldworkers and communities

Women, junior researchers and local fieldworkers are more likely to be at risk of harassment by fellow researchers and/or risks posed by challenging research contexts, topics, and relationships. Risks to communities increase where researchers have easy access to personal information about participants, and where people feel compelled to participate in research. Safeguarding planning should take into account these risk factors and seek to address them through the prevention and reporting mechanisms developed.

3. Differences and overlaps between research and international development activities

There is wide variety in scope and focus among NGOs and among researchers, making it difficult to generalise about differences between the two. Researchers are sometimes positioned as 'observers' or information gatherers, as opposed to providers of resources, services or programme, but this distinction is often not clear-cut and does not necessarily counteract power dynamics. A distinctive feature of research identified by some stakeholders was the research ethics review process. Existing research ethics frameworks and research integrity procedures are likely to address some but not all aspects of safeguarding, and this can be made more explicit within the ethics review process.

4. Training and guidance

There is sometimes a lack of of systematic guidance and training on safeguarding in research systems and procedures, which may be due to lack of clarity about training needs and/or limited resources. Basic training to ensure awareness of safeguarding, which may be done through online lessons or at induction, should be mandatory for relevant employees and student (e.g. doctoral) researchers throughout research organisations. More tailored training may be linked to preparation for fieldwork.

5. Working in partnerships

Introduction of safeguarding due diligence has meant demands for formal information and sometimes extensive preparatory work with partners in LMICs. There are concerns about both the administrative burden and the potential for neo-colonial power dynamics. Discussions about safeguarding with partner organisations should be conducted in the spirit of two-way learning and capacity building, rather than imposed as a set of requirements, with honest acknowledgement of

policy requirements that must be met. Agreed codes of conduct can clarify expectations of working relationships.

6. Whistleblowing and reporting

The key barriers to reporting are well known and connect to levels of seniority as well as gendered and racial power dynamics. Reporting can be hindered by fear of retribution and fear or causing risk or harm to the perpetrator as well as to survivors, including risks of public identification, stigma, blame, or retaliation as well as a lack of appropriate legal and social support. Reporting mechanisms should be clear, accessible, and should anticipate and address key barriers to reporting.

7. Organisational and institutional responses to reporting

The International Development Research Funders' Statement on Safeguarding goes beyond 'do no harm' principles. Researchers are conscious of the limits of their ability to report and/or intervene in all cases of harm they might encounter. It is important to recognise the limits of researchers' expertise to identify and intervene, especially within a broad definition of safeguarding. Researchers should be provided with basic preparation for how to respond to disclosures. People reporting should be advised of the response and what to expect. Consideration should be given to what immediate support can be provided to them, as well as to researchers where needed.

Based on the research findings, 9 key principles for safeguarding practice in International Development research are proposed:

1. Funders, researchers and research organisations recognise their safeguarding responsibilities and declare their commitment to taking all reasonable steps within their power 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. This involves identifying risks, reasonable measures to mitigate these, and attention to the interests of potentially affected individuals and communities. At the same time, safeguarding efforts should also involve attention to unanticipated risks emerging from the research process.
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 be supportive to encourage open 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-, and 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 in research should adopt a victim-centred approach, placing victims and survivors at the centre of responses.[1] This would involve clearly articulating standards of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, routes to raising concerns and reporting abuse,

commitment to the rights and needs of victims and survivors, and listening to their voices in the development of policies and practice.

Introduction

Following significant concerns about safeguarding in the international development and humanitarian NGO sector, the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) undertook considerable work on reform across the aid sector, including the introduction of new 'due diligence' safeguarding requirements for all suppliers in June 2018, specifying six key areas: safeguarding, whistleblowing, human resources, risk management, code of conduct, and governance and accountability. In October 2018, UK funders of international development research issued a joint statement affirming their commitment to safeguarding at the 'Putting People First: Tackling Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment in the Aid Sector' Summit.[2] In the wake of this, members of the UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR) sought to coordinate their expectations of research organisations and have commissioned the research reported here, to review the existing evidence on safeguarding in International Development (ID) research, gather views from key stakeholders, and derive recommendations for potential guidance or principles of good practice.

The term 'safeguarding' has historically been used to refer to the prevention of and response to abuse or neglect of children and vulnerable adults. In statute (e.g. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Children Act 2004, Care Act 2014), and indeed in the ID (Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups) Bill which underwent its second reading on 4th July 2018, its scope continues to be restricted to adults with care and support needs. However, definitions of safeguarding relevant to international development have been extended in scope to safeguarding 'everyone within our organisation at all times',[3] explicitly including staff 'bullying' as a potential safeguarding issue, or even to all those coming into contact with the organisation[4], without such restrictions. The scope of safeguarding for purposes of this review was specified by UKCDR as follows:

> '*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.*'

This definition reflects a broader conception of the term. As will be discussed in this report, shifting definitions have caused uncertainty in some organisations. While many international commitments to safeguarding have focused specifically on PSEA (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse), the relationship between this and other forms of abuse and neglect covered in policies is not always clear. Additionally, there may be variability and ambiguity in the coverage of safeguarding, with respect to professional versus personal life, applicability to individuals not directly associated with research activity (the so-called 'bystander' role), and so on.

International development (ID) research, for purposes of this review, is defined as UK-funded research undertaken in countries receiving Official Development Assistance (ODA). Hereafter 'research' is used throughout this report to refer to research undertaken in ODA-eligible countries. ODA funds are classified as those relevant to both economic development and welfare in listed Low - and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs)[5]. This spans research disciplines and countries, making it challenging for funders and for this review to set definitive guidance that would be meaningful and appropriate for all potential research contexts. Much of this review reports literature and stakeholder views rooted in health, social care or conflict research, because these are the fields with the most experience with safeguarding to date. However, safeguarding under the broader definition is relevant to all researchers, from those whose work takes place in laboratories rather than in communities, to those working closely with children and vulnerable adults. We have aimed to take

account of the different risks and capacities that may exist in different fields of research coming under the ODA banner.

This rapid review was guided by two overarching questions:

1) *What is known about the prevalence and nature of vulnerability, power imbalances, and safeguarding concerns within international development research?*
2) *How is safeguarding currently addressed within international development research, what is the evidence on how fit for purpose it is, and what models of good practice can be identified?*

This evidence review presents methods, findings and draws from them suggestions for principles and good practice.

Methods

Over a period of six weeks, the research team carried out: (1) an initial scoping review of the academic and grey literature; (2) a review of relevant media reports; (3) a review of organisational policies; (4) a survey of researchers; and (5) semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. Together, these provide an initial map of current developments and evidence in this rapidly developing area, in order to inform funder approaches to the next steps in consultation and evaluation.

Ethical approval was obtained from Sussex University Cross-Schools Research Ethics Committee (reference ER/DO32/1).

Literature review

A scoping literature review was employed to establish what is known from existing academic and grey literature about the prevalence and nature of vulnerability, power imbalances, and safeguarding concerns within research. Scoping reviews allow for broader review questions and a faster process than systematic reviews, but are nevertheless transparent and replicable.[6] The literature review covered journal articles and grey literature, identified through:

- Keyword searches of six academic databases, selected to cover literature across a range of relevant disciplines: Anthrosource, BLDS (British Library for Development Studies), Eldis, Global Health, IBSS (International Bibliography of Social Sciences), and Web of Science;
- Hand-searching key journals (review of titles and abstracts of all content published within last five years): Africa Education Review; African Journals Online; Development in Practice; Gender and Development; Indian Journal of Sociology; International Journal of Educational Research; International Journal of Social Research Methodology; International Social Work; Journal of Development Studies; Journal of South Asian Development; Progress in Development Studies; and South African Journal of Sociology;
- References identified from articles produced by the database searches.

Literature met the inclusion criteria if it:

1. Was published within the fifteen-year period since 2004;
2. Focused explicitly on international development research, defined above; and
3. Focused primarily on research or researchers' roles, experiences, and/or responsibilities in safeguarding matters.

There would doubtless have been much to learn had we been able also to explore research literature where researcher safeguarding practice is discussed as an aspect of ethics in papers that are primarily about study findings. However, the timeframe and scope of this review meant that it was only possible to search for literature which had an explicit and central focus on safeguarding.

Details of the search terms, numbers of citations obtained from each source, and screening process can be found in Appendix A.

Media review

To complement the academic and grey literature review, a review of relevant media reports on safeguarding was also carried out. The purpose of this was to identify publicly known research-related safeguarding incidents which may not have been covered in the academic literature. Nexis News was searched in both English and French, covering international online and print media sources in the UK and LMICs. International development repositories were also searched: Reliefweb, Devex, Guardian Global Development, Third Sector, Charity Today, and Times Higher Education.

One limitation in this search is that connections to research may not be made obvious in the media reporting of events. It is possible that relevant reporting was missed because reporters had been unaware of this aspect of the story or seen no reason to highlight it.

Media searches were conducted using the same keywords as the literature database searches, with the addition of some targeted headline terms. Details of the search terms and numbers of citations obtained from each source can be found in Appendix A.

Policy review

Publicly available safeguarding policies were also sought and reviewed to investigate current practice in the research sector. The review focused on: scope of safeguarding within the policies; forms of training; procedures for reporting, follow-up and review; and mention of research and overseas work. Research organisations were selected from among respondents to the review survey, the Russell Group of UK HEIs, and institutions ranked within the top twenty of the REF 2014 Unit of Assessment for Anthropology and Development Studies. While high-quality international development research is by no means restricted to these organisations, these selection criteria were used on the basis that these they were particularly likely to be extensively engaged with international development research, and that therefore their policies were more likely to have content relevant to the review. All but one was a HEI.

Policies of seven key NGOs were reviewed for discussion of research. Only one policy (ChildFund) explicitly mentions research; this focused on ethical issues such as informed consent. The full list of policies reviewed can be found in Appendix C.

Stakeholder survey

Separate online surveys were circulated through institutional mailing lists and professional networks to international development researchers and research organisations. The surveys aimed to establish to what extent and in which form safeguarding is considered as part of guidance, procedures, and requirements for international development research, and to identify suitable candidates for follow-up interviews. The survey questions can be found in Appendix B.

Stakeholder interviews

Interviews were conducted via Skype or by telephone with selected stakeholders, to identify and explore more fully their experiences of addressing safeguarding, covering existing practice in prevention, protection, response and governance. Selection criteria aimed to gather views from a

range of different stakeholders, including researchers in HICs and LMICs, research services / Human Resources staff, research managers, funding agencies / delivery partners, NGO staff (see 'Findings from stakeholder surveys and interviews' for further details). The stakeholder interviews were not intended to gather a representative sample of each of the different categories of stakeholder across the sector, something which would have been impossible within the time and resource available, but to gain indications of potential good practice and key challenges from key informants in a position to comment. In most cases, contact was made with organisations, who then signposted the research team to the most appropriate individual to interview. Further snowball sampling was used to enhance the geographical and disciplinary diversity of stakeholder perspectives within the timeframe available for this component of the work.

The commissioning UKCDR team specified several stakeholders to prioritise for interview, drawing on their knowledge of developments in the sector, and this informed the interview recruitment approach, subject to interviewee availability within the six-week timeframe of the review. In order to facilitate interviewees to speak freely, however, interviewee identities have not been shared beyond the research team. The interviews were recorded, where interviewees were willing for this to take place, and careful notes made of the key points raised. These notes were then mapped into six themes, which were based on the questions this consultation exercise was commissioned to answer. The section is structured by these themes.

In accordance with the terms of the commission, consultation did not take place with vulnerable communities in LMICs as it would not have been possible to address these sensitive issues effectively, and with adequate support in place, within the six-week time-span available to the review. In line with a victim-survivor centred approach to safeguarding, this will be an important step and is expected to take place during a second phase of consultations.

Findings from the Literature and Media Reviews

As noted above, the literature review focused on publications that focused primarily on research or researchers' roles, experiences, and/or responsibilities in safeguarding matters, within international development contexts. A total of 59 articles were included in the review, and included studies and reflections by researchers based at institutions in the UK as well as European countries (e.g. Germany, the Netherlands), North America (US and Canada), Australia, and LMICs (e.g. Pakistan, India, Indonesia, South Africa). These examined aspects of research and researcher challenges and experiences in a wide range of LMIC contexts, in South and Central America (e.g. Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Guyana, Suriname, Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador), the Caribbean (e.g. Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago), North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g. Sierra Leone, Ghana, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, South Africa, Egypt), the Middle East (e.g. Palestine, Yemen, Syria, Turkey, Lebanon), and East and Southeast Asia (e.g. India, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia).

Searches of Nexis resulted in the identification of 35 reports. In some cases, stories from different media sources covered the same case. Four reports were from UK media sources, 14 from European countries (Germany, France, Italy), three from other international sources, and the remainder from LMIC media sources (based in Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, India, Pakistan, Egypt, Tanzania, Rwanda, Nigeria).

1. Risks and vulnerabilities for researchers, fieldworkers, and communities

Risks to researchers: The reviewed articles discussed experiences (mainly among women) of different forms of sexual harassment, intimidation, and assault during field research, from gatekeepers, acquaintances, or strangers.[7] These ranged from comments on one's looks, explicit flirting, and catcalling, to regular telephone calls or text messages, sexual comments or proposals, and touching, to sexual and/or physical assault, rape, and attempted abduction. These risks were described by a number of UK-based, as well as Germany-, Canada-, and US-based, researchers conducting fieldwork in South and Central America and the Caribbean (e.g. Venezuela, Colombia, Guyana, Suriname, Brazil, Cuba), the Middle East and North Africa, and Southern and Southeast Asia (e.g. India, Malaysia) – illustrating the pervasive nature of this form of harm. In discussing these issues, intersecting risks associated with racialised and gendered aspects of identity have been highlighted, along with the significance of sexual identity.[8] Nationality, race, ethnic or cultural background, and religion are also important to consider in relation to safeguarding, particularly for 'insider' researchers.[9]

Researchers' reliance on gatekeepers (individuals and organisations) for access to research sites and participants can create power imbalances and risks, and some articles described harassment of female researchers by male gatekeepers in positions of authority.[10] As one paper noted, "harassers are often gatekeepers who have the power to restrict a researcher's access to the community and information. In such cases, harassers are often aware of their power and authority in relation to the researcher and her work, and assume her dependency on him".[11] Some informants can also be in positions of power relative to researchers: "A researcher can actually be much more dependent on her informant than the informant is on her. Power asymmetries can be particularly pronounced in research with elites, especially those with outsized access to coercion and capital".[12]

The behaviour of research colleagues can also raise concerns about safety, risk and vulnerability.[13] A survey of academic field experiences distributed through US anthropological societies revealed high rates of harassment and assault by colleagues, including peers and superiors.[14] In this study, 72% of respondents (n=666) had had directly observed or been told about inappropriate or sexual remarks by field researchers or colleagues. Women were more likely to report that comments occurred frequently, while men were more likely to report that comments never occurred. 64% of respondents had personally experienced sexual harassment (70% of women and 40% of men), and 22% had experienced sexual assault (26% of women and 6% of men). Harassment and assault were experienced mainly during trainee career stages (students, postdocs). Men experienced harassment and assault mainly from peers, while women experienced violence mainly from superiors. This study was discussed in one report identified during the media review, which highlighted the findings concerning harassment by academic superiors and resulting implications.[15]

The media review also identified one case of alleged sexual harassment of a researcher by a senior colleague. In 2016, the former head of the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was charged by police in India following accusations of stalking, intimidating, and sexually harassing a researcher at a think tank where he worked as director-general.[16]

This evidence review did not identify any equivalent survey of fieldwork experiences among UK-based researchers, although current reports of harassment and abuse in UK HEIs[17] suggest there is no reason for complacency. While outside the direct focus of this review, it is also worth noting that the media has increasingly reported sexual harassment by university faculty staff as a problem in many countries.[18] While media reports do not necessarily distinguish instances of such harassment in research or in international development from cases in other areas of university life, it would not be surprising to find that they extend to these areas. Although not dedicated to ID or ODA-funded research, strictly speaking, reports of bullying have also been publicly revealed in the journal of a closely related discipline, anthropology, and led to the resignation of the editor and reconfiguration of the editorial board structure.[19] This too highlighted the vulnerability of early career researchers,

as well as the way that commitment to a worthy goal – in this case, open access scholarship – may lead individuals to tolerate levels of unacceptable behaviour they would otherwise not.

A number of articles highlighted the significance of the research topic for researchers' risk and vulnerability. Research topics focusing on sensitive political subjects in 'democratically restricted environments' or in collaboration with politically oriented organisations can present particular threats for researchers.[20] These include being monitored or harassed by security and intelligence forces, having research permits revoked, or being detained by state security institutions,[21] discussed in relation to field research in contexts such as Kyrgyzstan, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Rwanda. In one survey of 55 political scientists conducting research in the Middle East, the majority of whom were based in North America,[22] the greatest challenges to conducting field research were related to authoritarian political conditions, including surveillance and monitoring by security, arrest and or detention, and police harassment. Researchers may also be perceived or suspected of being spies connected with national intelligence agencies.[23] Such safety implications may be particularly significant in country contexts without clear legal and institutional guidelines for research.[24] Some articles noted the intersection between politically sensitive nature of research and gendered dimensions of risk, including vulnerability when researching male-dominated fields, such as politics.[25]

These potential risks were highlighted by the media review, with most of the reviewed reports discussing risks to researchers associated with involvement or interactions with state security forces, including police, military, immigration, or other officials. These included five reported cases of alleged harassment, intimidation and accusations by state officials:

- In January 2019, a French academic researcher accused immigration officers in Malaysia of bullying and intimidation upon her arrival at the airport. Her name had been placed on a 'suspicious list' based on her research on Malaysian politics.[26]
- In 2018, a Human Rights Alert researcher and her family were reportedly harassed and intimidated by Indian army personnel and police.[27]
- In 2017, a French researcher was accused of inciting the assassination of Turkey's president following comments about the outcome of a referendum on controversial constitutional changes.[28]
- In 2012, an Irish researcher with the International Crisis Group in Kyrgyzstan was accused by the national security committee of stoking ethnic unrest (a serious criminal offence) and inciting people to riot, due to his research on Kyrgyz-Uzbek relations.[29]
- In 2007, an Iranian-American researcher in Iran was accused by the Intelligence Ministry of engaging in espionage and propaganda against the state.[30]

The media review also identified three reported cases of detention, prosecution, and imprisonment by state officials:

- In 2007, two Amnesty International researchers (one British-American, one Nigerian) were harassed, arrested, and detained in Gambia, following a visit with an opposition supporter in prison.[31]
- Between 2014 and 2016, a British researcher in Thailand had his passport confiscated and was subject to a travel ban and indictment hearing following charges of criminal defamation based on his contributions to a report alleging labour rights abuses at a Thai company's factory.[32]

In 2018, a UK based PhD researcher, Matthew Hedges, was detained and sentenced to life in prison in the United Arab Emirates – and subsequently pardoned – following accusations of spying for the UK government. He was researching UAE security strategy.[33] Finally, the media review identified four reported cases of killings of researchers in which official involvement was suspected:

- In 2013, an American researcher in Singapore was found hanged, reportedly strangled (although described by the police as suicide). He had reported that his life was in danger due to his involvement in a sensitive telecommunications project.[34]
- In 2014, a Transparency International researcher was murdered in Rwanda, reportedly by two police officers who feared he might denounce their involvement in smuggling activities.[35]
- In 2016, a UK-based Italian PhD researcher, Giulio Regeni, was tortured and murdered in Egypt. The Italian intelligence services have alleged involvement of members of the Egyptian national security agency, arising from his research on trade unions in Egypt.[36]
- In 2017, two UN researchers were murdered in Congo, for which a Congolese militia leader and a police officer were later arrested.[37]

Research on topics such as gendered violence can present particular risks to researchers, potentially leading to risks of retaliation: "Fieldworkers can find themselves in threatening situations if the abuser finds out about the research".[38] Research on topics such as gendered or sexual violence can also present risks of vicarious or secondary traumatisation or psychological distress for researchers as a result of listening to and witnessing experiences and effects of violence.[39] This can lead to emotional responses such as anger, guilt and shame, fear, and depression, as well as nightmares, intrusive thoughts, and difficulty concentrating.[40]

Risks to researchers are also affected by the wider research context, including 'ambient risks' associated with armed violence, street crime, unrest, civil unrest, political instability, and so on,[41] as described in reports on research in Africa and the Middle East (e.g. Uganda, Egypt, Palestine) and in South and Central America and the Caribbean (e.g. Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia, Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago). One US-based survey of 93 anthropologists conducting fieldwork in Central America[42] reported that characteristics of field sites associated with abandonment of fieldwork included a significant military presence, corruption among security personnel, kidnapping, extortion, or homicide being significant problems, and police protection that is insufficient for law and order. Research on – and thus association or affiliation with – particular communities (a number of articles referred to research with gangs) can place researchers at risk of physical violence,[43] as can research involving different groups who are in conflict with one another.[44]

The media review identified some cases of violence against researchers by armed groups or members of the wider community. These included two reported cases of abduction and three reported cases of killings or attempted killings of researchers:

- In 2009, a French researcher was killed in a robbery by armed men in Mexico.[45]
- In 2011, an American university researcher was abducted in India by suspected Maoists, during her research on 'Maoist problems in India'.[46]
- In 2013, a man was accused of attempting to kill an American researcher in Egypt, reportedly because he resented American foreign policies.[47]
- In 2016, two researchers and their driver were killed in Tanzania, after being suspected by village residents of being 'blood hunters'/'blood suckers'. They had not reported to the local government upon arrival in the village.[48]
- In 2017, 10 researchers from the University of Maiduguri were kidnapped in north-east Nigeria by militants suspected to be linked to Boko Haram, while working on oil exploration with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation.[49]

These risks can be exacerbated when researchers lack extensive knowledge of local politics and society, meaning that they might be unaware of and unprepared to respond to security-related or ethical challenges, particularly in the context of a "growing tendency for researchers to drop in and out of insecure field sites without extensive knowledge of local politics".[50]

A number of academic articles highlighted that standards and expectations associated with fieldwork and being a 'good researcher' (such as the capacity to withstand difficulties 'in the field') can place

researchers at risk, when risks are perceived as a 'normal' or expected aspect or condition of fieldwork.[51] Reviewed articles also noted the value that is often assigned to first-hand/original research in risky contexts, with researchers "applauded for their bravery and innovation when traveling to 'dangerous' field sites or presenting research with […] vulnerable populations".[52] A US-based study involving over 50 interviews with women ethnographers[53] discussed sexual harassment and violence in the context of 'standards' or expectations of solitude and danger in ethnographic research. Respondents described beliefs that "as a good ethnographer one must enter the field alone and cope with the danger and emotional difficulties", indicating that a "reason participants reported pushing their instincts and safety to the side was their perception that dangerous ethnographies are the ones most glorified and rewarded in academia".

These risks may be particularly salient for early career researchers, doctoral researchers, or other student researchers. They may have more limited field research experience, with dissertation field research being the first major research project and first individual research for many graduate students, and may push boundaries due to a desire to 'prove' oneself as a researcher and not fully understand the potential consequences of their actions.[54] Student researchers may face additional pressures associated with degree timelines, funding constraints, expectations for extended fieldwork, and fear of failing to complete the project,[55] which can increase risk and vulnerability for both researchers and the communities in which they work. Student researchers may also be less likely to have support from in-country research assistants, as they may be less likely to know how to find an assistant or to pay them,[56] or may feel the need to 'appease or please' their interviewees.[57] They may also downplay difficulties due to a greater concern about implications for reputation and career prospects.[58]

Risks to other fieldworkers: UK-based researchers in LMICs often work closely with in-country research assistants, fieldworkers, and interpreters, in order to facilitate translation and access to communities and information, provide advice or guidance on security and safety as well as political contexts, and inform approaches to and navigation of research sites.[59] Only a few articles considered the particular risks and vulnerabilities that face these local fieldworkers, highlighting an important gap in existing research. Involvement with external researchers can exacerbate risks for local fieldworkers, including concerns about personal safety and intense daily work schedules, tensions between fieldworkers and their communities as well as suspicion and accusations toward fieldworkers, and monitoring by security forces.[60]

The types of tasks assigned to in-country research assistants may be associated with higher risks of traumatisation, given their direct engagement with participants and embeddedness in the research context. They are often responsible "for participant identification, translation, archival research, and other forms of research support, which can directly expose them to the same or, more likely, even higher levels of trauma than the primary researcher".[61] Additionally, "in-country research assistants do not get to go 'home' once the project is completed, and may struggle to gain physical distance from the information they collect. This can make it especially difficult to disengage and mentally recuperate".[62] They may find it harder to disengage emotionally or to remove the risks associated with research, yet adequate provision is not always made for their support.

Involvement with international research projects and relationships between researchers and local field assistants may sometimes present risks of exploitation. As reported by a number of UK-based researchers, as well as US-based researchers, there are usually significant financial disparities between researchers and in-country research assistants/fieldworkers. In-country researchers are not always paid sufficiently for the work they do, may be pressured to work long hours, and their contributions to/ownership of the research and intellectual products may not be recognised.[63] Despite critically important contributions to research design, data collection, analysis, and conclusions, local researchers' contributions may often be unrecognised or uncredited, resulting "in the widespread erasure of local contributions from many published studies".[64]

In contexts of limited employment opportunities, "out-of-work or underpaid professionals may affiliate with foreign researchers for little or even no pay in the hope that doing so could lead to future employment, educational opportunities, or open other doors".[65] A study of UK research projects involving local research assistants in Lebanon[66] described widespread feelings of exploitation, loss of control, and 'experience of personal erasure' among local researchers. Forms of exploitation centre on three core issues: unjust wage and labour (working hour) conditions, false or misleading promises by lead investigators (about support for visas/emigration and academic or job opportunities), and exclusion from academic authorship (deceit about the prospect of becoming named co-authors in research papers).

Reliance on local fieldworkers can also limit researchers' oversight and control of research strategies, and thus of safeguarding processes and practices. This might occur if local fieldworkers develop strategies without fully explaining them or engage in some deception of participants about the nature of research.[67] This, combined with embedded financial and power disparities, raises important questions about the extent to which responsibility and accountability can be transferred to local research assistants.[68] Research assistants can also draw external researchers toward research topics or communities that may be more politically risky.[69]

Risks to communities: Research projects may present their own risks to those who participate in them. When conducting research in international contexts, researchers may have significant access to communities, and these contexts (particularly conflict-affected or 'fragile' contexts) "can constitute permissive environments in which researchers can engage in conduct that would be considered deeply problematic at home".[70] Risks to research participants and other community members associated with research activities that were discussed in the reviewed literature included re-traumatisation of participants.[71] Participants may also be placed at risk of violence as a result of research participation, as a result of increased visibility or through failure to ensure confidentiality.[72] Data gathered by researchers on politically sensitive topics may incriminate respondents or subject them to targeting by authorities or security forces.[73] Such risks can be intensified through power imbalances between researchers and participants, such as in contexts where researchers have easy access to personal information about service beneficiaries,[74] or where socio-economic vulnerability means community members feel compelled to participate in research in order to access care or treatment.[75] This latter point was also noted in one report identified through the media review.[76]

Reliance on gatekeepers as part of research activities can also present risks to participants. For example, a US-based researcher discussed working with gatekeeping organisations involved with sex workers in India, noting that NGOs may exploit the women they work with in controlling access by researchers: "Several participants… expressed during interviews their resentment over the organization's practice of mandating their participation in these projects".[77] Risks may sometimes occur as a result of research into safeguarding-related matters. For example, uncovering of violence against children could result in retaliation by the adults concerned, as reported in a paper by UK researchers in Uganda: "some children could have experienced some retaliatory violence, where school staff became aware that children had disclosed their experiences to the interview team".[78]

Only one reviewed article discussed engagement in violence by researchers themselves, with a UK-based research reflecting on engagement in physical violence as part of participant-observation in a Nicaraguan gang during the 1990s.[79] The media review identified one instance of sexual abuse by a researcher. In 2007, a French researcher was accused of sexually assaulting two boys in Togo in the early 1990s.[80] This was reported over 10 years later, and the case was brought to trial in 2007. One survivor reported that the researcher had promised to adopt him and send him to study in France, and that he frequently 'exchanged' money, food, and medication for sexual favours. The researcher was defended by a senior researcher on the grounds of his intellectual achievements and desire to integrate into Togolese society. This spurious defence relies on a problematic privileging of 'good

research', illustrating potential barriers to whistleblowing and accountability that should be addressed in principles and guidance.

The media review also identified two cases of alleged exploitation of communities and participants by researchers. The first, in 2016, involved French researchers in Guyana who were accused of 'biopiracy' when they patented an antimalarial molecule after 'pillaging' community knowledge and biological resources,[81] while the second, in 2004, involved British researchers accused by a Kenyan scientist of stealing blood samples from orphaned children with HIV/AIDS in Kenya.[82]

2. Differences between research and international development activities

In some situations, there may be distinctive risks associated with some research methods. In discussing possibilities for risks or harm to researchers, a number of reviewed articles emphasised the significance of trust, close connections, and intimacy in field research, which can create forms of vulnerability.[83] Researchers may try to reduce power hierarchies with participants to establish comfort and trust.[84] Particularly for female researchers, interest in a respondent and their perspectives – central to qualitative research – can be misinterpreted as sexual or romantic desire.[85] The US-based study involving over 50 interviews with women researchers also discussed sexual harassment and violence in the context of 'standards' or expectations of intimacy in ethnographic research, with many respondents reporting that "intimacy – or becoming as close as possible with research participants by spending as much time as possible with them — was a key evaluative benchmark".[86]

Some reviewed articles identified risks associated with expectations of 'exchange' for research assistance. Field research relationships "are often mediated by expectations of exchange and reciprocity", and research that involves "taking something from someone – be it research data, life stories, time or assistance in accessing field sites – forges a relationship structured by debt, and some form of reciprocity is expected".[87] In some cases, this may take the form of demands for sexual favours.[88] Only two reviewed articles commented specifically on intimate or sexual relationships between researchers and individuals in research sites,[89] illustrating a clear gap in research on this important issue.

The relationship between safeguarding and research ethics: The literature review and stakeholder consultations both pointed to areas of overlap between the concept and practice of safeguarding and research ethics frameworks, but also gaps that limit safeguarding processes. This tension was apparent in the literature review. Some articles referred to ethics regulation in discussing risks and protections of researchers and participants, while others highlighted potential gaps in some institutional ethics procedures, such as risks associated with field relationships.[90] For example, as noted by one UK-based researcher, ethical review procedures may focus more on external threats (e.g. 'dangerous' environments), with less attention to risks associated specifically with field research relationships, even though "for many fieldworkers, the more serious dangers we encounter emerge out of relationships formed with people in the field… from the relationships forged during the research process itself".[91] Although this literature does not indicate the extent to which such gaps might exist within UK research contexts, it does draw attention to the importance of explicitly addressing these issues as part of ethical processes and guidance.

3. Training and guidance

The literature review identified potential gaps in systematic attention to, and guidance on, safeguarding issues (such as risks associated with research relationships and gendered dimensions of risk) in research-related systems and procedures, including methodological or fieldwork training and discussions.[92] This was often mentioned specifically with reference to sexual harassment and violence affecting female researchers. These gaps in existing guidance and training were noted mainly by researchers from North America (US and Canada), but also by some UK-based researchers (as well as European researchers). As some UK-based researchers reflected, although they had

attended various pre-fieldwork trainings and had completed detailed ethical clearance and risk assessment forms, "they often felt unprepared to cope with the 'emotional and ethical challenges' … they experienced, in particular those associated with sexual harassment and assault".[93] In a study involving interviews with 16 PhD anthropologists at UK universities, all respondents found the pre-fieldwork course provided by their department unsatisfactory and described feeling insufficiently prepared for the technical, physical process of doing fieldwork.[94] This results in reliance on informal engagement with experienced researchers willing to provide guidance and advice,[95] as well as 'learning in the field', which can cause stress and anxiety for researchers,[96] and often involves the individual development and adoption of 'personal rules' or individual strategies to mitigate risks or respond to experiences of violence during the research process.[97]

Although this literature does not indicate the extent to which this is a generalized phenomenon within UK research contexts, it does draw attention to the importance of explicitly addressing these issues as part of safeguarding training and guidance. While training and guidance have likely improved in recent years, these findings highlight the importance of fieldwork training addressing the ethical, emotional, and physical dimensions of research and the complexity of risk and vulnerability associated with research settings and relationships.

Research on sexual harassment and assault in field sites based on 26 qualitative interviews (sampled from respondents to the survey of academic field experiences distributed through US anthropological societies, mentioned earlier) reported significant variability in the clarity of appropriate professional behaviours and rules (and associated consequences) at field sites. Of 54 field contexts described in the study, rules were ambiguous or absent in 36, with "sexual harassment described more often in conjunction with field contexts lacking clarity in codified rules or standards for appropriate behavior, as compared to those with clear rules".[98] Respondents also described a lack of consequences for violations of rules (implicit and explicit) of 'appropriate' conduct. Positive fieldwork experiences were associated with clear codes of conduct and rules for 'appropriate' behaviour, modelled by senior research team members, and enforcement of rules ensuring accountability for violations. Although this study focuses on US-based researchers and no comparable study has been conducted with UK-based researchers, these findings highlight the importance of specific codes of conduct and standards for field research sites – as well as processes for ensuring the enforcement of rules and standards.

A UK study of physical and emotional harm suffered by qualitative social researchers[99] reported that junior researchers and PhD students are the main recipients of such harm, and that the duty of care to young/inexperienced researchers (e.g. PhD researchers) is generally 'devolved' to research supervisors or grant-holders. However, they note existing resources (e.g. advice on the conduct of risk assessments, resources from funders to cover safety provisions, counsellors to provide support) may not be fully mobilised by supervisors and grantholders to ensure the safety of supervisees and contract researchers. This highlights the importance of attention to the mechanisms through which existing guidance reaches researchers, particularly those who are less experienced or more precarious.

Some articles noted the importance of training for all research team members, including in-country researchers and field assistants.[100] One paper emphasised the importance of training addressing research ethics, safety, legal issues, rapport building, and methods for referring participants to support services,[101] along with opportunities for collaborative discussions about research approaches in order to contribute to addressing power relations between researcher and field assistants.[102]

Developing guidance: In the above-mentioned US-based study on sexual harassment and assault in field sites,[103] the authors emphasise the need for site-specific policies, with clear codes of conduct and rules for 'appropriate' behaviour in research sites, modelled by senior research team members,

as well as having explicit conversations, training, or meetings about these issues. They also emphasised the need for enforcement of rules and observable consequences, ensuring 'accountability for transgressions'.

Other reviewed articles noted the need for pre-fieldwork training focused specifically on boundaries, contextual power relations, and coping mechanisms,[104] with a particular emphasis of gendered dimensions of risk and vulnerability. It was suggested that safety and risk training and assessments could be conducted at the departmental level or within methodological teaching, as opposed to being 'outsourced' to safety officers or external bodies.[105]

A number of reviewed articles emphasised the importance of attention to 'local' knowledge as an effective way of identifying and responding to potential risks and developing guidance.[106] This might involve seeking information and guidance from participants and other local community members, neighbours, and in-country colleagues, and through working with local organisations.[107] A paper by a team of researchers from multiple countries, including the UK, discussed an approach to health research with men who have sex with men involving the development of community engagement plans.[108] These could address safeguarding issues through discussions of the research context, research design, ethical issues and challenges, implementation approaches, and feedback. These plans engaged representatives of the specific community being researched, as well as other stakeholders (e.g. local authorities), and can involve multiple forms of interaction (from information sharing to consultation to partnership).

One reviewed paper identified a series of questions to guide researchers conducting field research, address some important safeguarding issues:[109]

- "How well do you understand the political context you'll be working in? Have you reached out to others who have worked in your research site to ask about the ethical challenges they faced? How would you handle the challenges they faced if you encountered them in your own work?"
- "Who will you reach out to if you need to discuss ethical issues that arise during your fieldwork? What will you do if you feel your research is endangering someone in ways that you didn't anticipate? What ethics issues are you concerned about that were not raised in your human-subjects review? How will you deal with these?"
- "What types of researcher-subject relationships are you comfortable with?"
- "Would all of the practices you are employing be considered ethical in your home country? Would you be comfortable with someone treating you or your loved ones the way you are interacting with your research subjects and partners?"
- "If you are employing local staff, what factors did you consider when negotiating a rate? What are your research assistants and collaborators contributing to the project? If a colleague at your home institution were performing this role, would they deserve an author credit? If not, how else can you appropriately and adequately compensate your local colleagues' time and labor?"

They also identified a series of questions for reviewers, which include:

- "If the project involves work with vulnerable populations, does the researcher possess the necessary skills and/or training?"
- "What responsibilities fell to local partners and what fell solely to the author? How did the author recruit or establish relationships with local partner organizations? What did local partners receive in return for their participation?"
- "Are the contributions of local partners sufficiently acknowledged or credited? What risks were assumed by research assistants or fixers in facilitating the research? Did the author establish a prospective security protocol for managing these risks? How much were local staff paid for their labor? How was this fee agreed? If you or a faculty member at your home institution had undertaken the labor invested by the researcher's local staff, would you expect it to merit an author credit?"

While these questions highlight important points related to safeguarding, some gaps can be noted, including gendered risks and vulnerabilities.

Only one reviewed article described a specific approach to safeguarding research participants. UK-based researchers working on a project on violence towards children in Uganda[110] described thorough preparation on the meaning of consent, role-playing situations in advance, a code of conduct adapted from Save the Children's policy, daily debriefs for self-care and to pick up issues of concern, and three weeks of training that all interviewers took. There was a protocol for follow-up care provision in response to safeguarding concerns, which was developed with local child protection officers and allowed for anonymised discussion with the child protection officer in cases where the child did not give consent for referral. Ultimately, however, the protocol proved insufficient as the researchers felt that the standard child protection response was inadequate at times; they therefore repurposed the role of counsellors employed by the study to take over this work from the local child protection officer. The authors identify the problems with planning for this fall-back position from the start ("planning from the beginning to circumvent local child protection services fails to respect local sovereignty or to strengthen local systems") and emphasise the desirability of working with local agencies, but suggest preparing a Plan B in case this approach meets challenges.

4. Working in partnerships and with communities

Some of the reviewed articles drew attention to how power imbalances in international research 'collaboration' are shaped by international inequalities as well as colonial legacies and racialised power relations. For example, one paper whose authors included UK-based researchers explored the experiences of African researchers with respect to collaboration with 'northern' researchers/institutions, based on interviews with 29 researchers and focus group discussions with community advisory board members and peer leaders.[111] Junior staff members, technicians, and field staff, in particular, "thought that collaborations were starkly unequal" and described the domination of decision-making processes by 'northern' researchers/institutions: "Our collaborators control everything and when our definitions and theirs differ, their opinions carry the day". A particularly contentious issue concerned the distribution of resources and duties, including income differentials: "One leading scientist […] wondered why for some aspects of science universal standards applied, while for others, notably scientists and technicians' remuneration, local standards were used".[112]

Power imbalances also can exist between international researchers and in-country research partners when foreign researchers are perceived as being associated with international networks, connections, and funding. Particularly in partner organisations who rely on international donors, staff may feel obligated to support their research, based on potential personal and professional benefits associated with affiliation with foreign academics.[113]

5. Whistleblowing and reporting

The reviewed literature also highlighted a lack of clear institutional mechanisms addressing prevention, reporting, and responses related to safeguarding concerns specifically in field research settings. For example, while institutional policies and channels may exist for sexual harassment or violence within the context of home universities, specific mechanisms may be absent in field research settings.[114] Although this point was noted by a researcher based in the Netherlands, it raised an important consideration for UK and LMIC policies.

Key barriers to reporting inside organisations: Barriers identified by interviewees are echoed in the literature: a lack of clear reporting mechanisms within field research sites, lack of support and sympathy from colleagues and supervisors, concerns about being a 'good' researcher, fear of jeopardising research, and concerns about educational and career prospects. In the survey of academic field experiences distributed through US anthropological societies,[115] respondents had

limited awareness of workplace policies or mechanisms for reporting sexual harassment and assault. Only 38% (n=666) had encountered a code of conduct at any field site, and 22% had ever worked at a field site with a sexual harassment policy. Among respondents who had experienced harassment or assault, only 18% had been aware of a mechanism to report, and less than 20% of those who reported harassment or assault were satisfied by the outcome of reporting. Although this study focuses on US-based researchers and no comparable study has been conducted with UK-based researchers, these findings highlight the importance of policies and reporting mechanisms specifically addressing field research sites – as well as the importance of ensuring awareness of existing reporting mechanisms.

Some of the reviewed articles described a lack of support and sympathy from colleagues and supervisors (within their home institutions and in-country) when concerns or experiences of violence were reported[116] as well as well as victim-blaming attitudes.[117] In a US-based study involving over 50 interviews with women ethnographers, respondents described "mixed reactions when they spoke to men who were their colleagues and mentors about their experiences. While some expressed concern, others laughed or told them to 'suck it up,' framing harassment as just one more difficulty researchers must cope with in the field".[118] In some cases, these responses may be informed by concerns about creating problems for current and future research. As one US-based researcher who was sexually assaulted while working in India reported, "I was advised not to go to the police, because that could result in problems for our research project and potential future permits".[119]

Discussing experiences of sexual violence with supervisors, particularly male supervisors, can present a particular challenge. As noted by some UK-based researchers, "Male colleagues often seem unaware of the difficulties female fieldworkers may face in their research […] they often fail to recognize fieldwork as a gendered and sexed experience as they themselves may not have experienced fieldwork in this way".[120] For PhD students in particular, discussing experiences of violence with supervisors can be difficult. A study involving interviews with 16 PhD anthropologists at UK universities reported that many felt 'silenced' when discussing fieldwork with their supervisors, as "the need to maintain a 'professional' relationship limited the extent to which they could speak candidly about their experiences".[121]

The reviewed articles also noted that researchers may hesitate to report or choose not to report concerns or experiences of violence due to concerns about being a 'good' researcher or out of fear of jeopardising current and future research. Researchers may tolerate harassment for the sake of 'good data', to enable research to proceed, or because certain risks or harms may be seen as a 'price' to be paid for access to research spaces and populations, or as a 'normal' or expected aspect or condition of fieldwork.[122] Researchers may worry that responses to or reporting of harassment or violence might cause perpetrators to speak badly of them to their networks and prevent access to research communities and information.[123] Difficulties – and silence – are heightened because of internalised pressure to project an image of being a 'good' researcher and of 'competent' and smooth fieldwork experience by downplaying difficulties.[124] For example, researchers might worry about losing credibility "by seeming unable to withstand the inevitable hardships of fieldwork or to collect accurate data".[125] A study involving interviews with 16 PhD anthropologists at UK universities reported that ending research and going home early 'was a source of great shame'.[126]

The reviewed articles also noted that researchers may hesitate to report or choose not to report due to concerns about potential implications for their future educational and career prospects.[127] A study based on 26 qualitative interviews (sampled from respondents to the survey of academic field experiences distributed through US anthropological societies, mentioned earlier)[128] reported that sexual harassment and assault in field research sites affected research collaborations and access to professional resources and opportunities. This had negative implications for researchers' career trajectories, such as career stalling, relocation or lateral career moves, or leaving career paths altogether. Concerns about implications for reputation and future career prospects may be

particularly significant for student (e.g. doctoral) researchers: "among graduate students, who are yet to acquire status, struggle for recognition as anthropologists, and (believe that they) need to impress and convince their supervisors of their capacity to conduct 'good' ethnography, such perceptions lead to the silencing of accounts of experiences and/or the downplaying of difficulties".[129]

Uncertainty over reporting may be in part linked to uncertainty over 'appropriate' versus 'inappropriate' behaviours in different cultural contexts. As one UK-based researcher reflected, "In my own cultural setting, these would immediately be labelled as 'sexual harassment' or unwanted sexual attention, and I would have had no qualms in enforcing my boundaries and, if necessary, voicing anger or offence… I hesitated to respond from within my own ethnocentric conceptions of gender relations and definitions of 'harassment'".[130]

Key barriers to reporting outside of organisations: Some reviewed literature also noted that reporting can be hindered by fear of retribution and fear or causing risk or harm to the perpetrator as well as to survivors, including risks of public identification, stigma, blame, or retaliation as well as a lack of appropriate legal and social support. The reviewed literature identified reporting-related concerns relevant to reporting both within and outside of organisations, specifically a fear of causing risk or harm to the suspected perpetrator[131] or to survivors. Some articles noted the potential for reporting to place children at risk of stigma or retaliation.[132] For example, UK researchers working in Uganda noted that "reporting cases to local child protective services did sometimes result in consequences that we viewed as harmful, including stigmatising children by naming them publicly as 'abused' and in one case, exposing them to retaliatory treatment from perpetrators who came to know of the child's disclosure".[133] India-, US-, and Germany-based researchers working in India identified challenges associated with mandatory reporting of child sexual violence, noting that mandatory reporting laws intended to enhance child protection "may result in inadvertent harm (i.e. perpetrator retribution, heightened survivor stigma, labelling, and blaming) due to exposure of abuse history in the setting of saturated enforcement, legal, and community support systems".[134] Reporting violence perpetrated by gatekeepers could also place the researcher in potential danger.[135] In general, however, issues of reporting or raising alerts about exploitation or abuse of community members were rarely discussed in the reviewed articles, reflecting an important gap in existing research.

Summary

Multiple forms of vulnerability were identified in the literature as potentially arising in the research context. The media review revealed instances where research risks led to very troubling outcomes. Researchers have identified inadequacies in preparation for the field and argued that these risks need to be addressed explicitly, with sensitivity to the influences that can discourage researchers from sharing the risks and experiences to which they may be exposed. Another group for whom risks may be particularly exacerbated by inequalities in power relations is local fieldworkers. The literature notes the risks that research may create for participants and, in one case, the vulnerabilities of which researchers may become aware in the course of their work. One study, which researched violence towards children, describes the careful planning warranted to prepare for supporting participants with safeguarding.

The literature review revealed that few empirical studies have examined the prevalence of safeguarding issues in ID research, particularly among UK-based researchers. While many of the reviewed articles were based on researchers' personal reflections and it cannot be automatically assumed that UK-based researchers' experiences are similar, this literature nevertheless highlights some crucially important challenges and issues that should inform safeguarding responses.

Findings from the Policies Review

The policies of 47 research organisations were identified and reviewed. Seven of these organisations either had no current safeguarding policy, did not make it publicly available on their website, or had taken it down while it underwent revisions. Forty safeguarding policies were therefore reviewed in total. Thirty-nine were HEIs, while one was an NGO research organisation. Many organisations are currently reviewing their safeguarding policies, so this review can only be considered a snapshot. Moreover, information that is not contained within the safeguarding policy might be found elsewhere, e.g. research-related issues may be found within the organisation's research ethics guidance, so it cannot be assumed that omissions here necessarily indicate that the organisation has not addressed gaps identified here. However, the review shows the extent to which safeguarding and research are currently joined up within policies.

The policies of seven major NGOs were also reviewed for reference to research. Only one policy (ChildFund) explicitly mentions research; this focused on ethical issues such as informed consent.

Reference to research within the policy

Twenty-seven of the 40 policies made specific reference to research. For many, this simply specified that safeguarding in research activities is the responsibility of the Research Ethics Committee. Most stated that the safeguarding policy applies to all university activities; they go on to list a number of these, though research was rarely found within this list. It is likely that where research was not mentioned, it was considered implicit and therefore no mention was made here. Others referred to the need for DBS checks on researchers carrying out work with children or vulnerable adults.

A small number of the safeguarding policies were clearly institutionally located within Student Well-being and/or were primarily focused on applicants and students. This may indicate that the focus on safeguarding does not in practice reach throughout the institution.

Scope of safeguarding

Most policies opened with a declaration of commitment to the principle of providing a safe environment for everyone involved with the organisation. However, 32 policies then operationalised safeguarding with reference only to under-18s and specified groups of adults. Policies varied in how they defined adults who came within their scope: some referred to 'vulnerable adults,' others to 'adults at risk,' and others to 'adults in vulnerable circumstances,' according to the law or guidance they were following (e.g. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, No Secrets 2002, Care Act 2014). In accordance with these statutory definitions, the scope of safeguarding concerns is restricted in these policies to individuals with care and support needs which may prevent them from protecting themselves from risk of abuse or neglect; some make explicit reference to 'disability, age or mental or physical illness.' It was occasionally noted that vulnerability might arise in situations going beyond those described in these definitions; for example, the Goldsmiths University safeguarding policy states that the university acknowledges that all students may be potentially vulnerable, though it does not explicitly apply this insight with reference to other groups with whom university staff may come into contact.

Two policies were effectively child safeguarding policies only, either not referring to adults or making such brief mention as to provide no helpful guidance for staff as to understanding or procedures.

Six of the policies reviewed go beyond statutory definitions of vulnerability:

- School of Oriental and African Studies: After noting the statutory definition of adults at risk, the policy notes that 'SOAS recognises its responsibility to the whole community who may,

at a particular time, need to be protected from exploitation whether that be financial, sexual, criminal, extremist or political ends, emotional abuse, domestic abuse, or grooming.'

- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine: Those 'undertaking School activities in low and middle-income income (LMICs) should be aware that children and 'vulnerable adults' […] may include all children and adults participating in a research study in the LMIC.'
- Overseas Development Institute: The policy 'recognises that criteria used to categorise individuals and groups as vulnerable may vary by context and be socially constructed, that individuals who meet the criteria may not self-identify as vulnerable, and that the 'vulnerable' label is not without challenges. Nevertheless, researchers have a particular responsibility to consider the ethical implications of including participants in research who may be compromised in their ability to provide informed consent, or at particular risk of experiencing negative repercussions stemming from participation in research. This includes workers or recipients in a power imbalance and people of dissenting opinions.'
- King's College London (KCL): Safeguarding is defined as 'Taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect *people*, *especially* adults at risk and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur' (our emphasis). The policy notes that international programmes and projects may require different considerations from local activities, and refers staff to the university's specific *Safeguarding Protocol for International Activity in Low- and Middle-Income Countries*.
- Institute of Development Studies: After listing common criteria for 'vulnerability,' the policy provides the additional criterion: 'is unable, *for any other reason*, to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation. It is recognised that people who meet one or more of the criteria above may not be vulnerable at all, or all of the time. Until a member of IDS staff has direct contact with people on an individual basis, it may be impossible to identify whether vulnerability exists in relation to the research involving adults that they are planning' (our emphasis)
- Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine: 'Safeguarding is about protecting certain people who may be in vulnerable circumstances. These people may be at risk of abuse or neglect due to the actions (or inactions) of another person/organisation.' The policy goes on to note that vulnerable adults may include 'members of staff, students, research participants, beneficiaries, patients and other community members who we have direct and indirect contact with through our work.'

It is notable that of these six institutions, all but KCL focus primarily on research overseas. This may account for why they have so quickly adopted a scope for safeguarding that goes beyond the statutory guidance applying within their home jurisdiction of England and better matches the safeguarding guidance set out by DFID.

Research definitions of 'vulnerability' informing the work of ethics committees are often broader than set out in these safeguarding policies. For example, the LSE Research Ethics Policy gives the following definition, derived from ESRC research ethics advice:

'Vulnerability may be defined in different ways and may arise as a result of being in an abusive relationship, vulnerability due to age, potential marginalisation, disability, and due to disadvantageous power relationships within personal and professional roles. Participants may not be conventionally 'vulnerable', but may be in a dependent relationship that means they can feel coerced or pressured into taking part, so extra care is needed to ensure their participation is truly voluntary.'[136]

It should not therefore be assumed that researchers are not guided by a broader definition than given in the safeguarding policies. However, they may not connect this with safeguarding.

Links to other policies

Several safeguarding policies are linked to, or occasionally cross-reference, related policies. Nineteen policies linked to a bullying and harassment policy, while twenty-one made no direct reference to one within the safeguarding policy.

Recruitment and vetting

DBS checks are specified for staff whose work brings them into contact with children and / or vulnerable adults (as defined in UK statute). The policies reviewed did not require them for other posts. Some policies make reference to informing relevant authorities if the employee leaves their post for reasons related to misconduct or unsuitability to work with children or vulnerable adults.

Responses to safeguarding concerns

All the safeguarding policies set out a reporting procedure. Except in cases of extreme urgency, this is usually to a designated safeguarding point of contact within the organisation, whose role it is to refer on to the appropriate safeguarding authority for investigation. Many policies set out a referral form and decision-making flow chart to show the process. Some also provide guidance to staff on how to respond to disclosure of safeguarding concerns. More rarely, this guidance identifies possible reasons why referrals may not be made when they should be (e.g. SOAS), so that staff consider more carefully their duty to report.

As most of these policies do not give explicit consideration to overseas research, there is rarely specific mention of how to report when carrying out fieldwork overseas. In policies where this is mentioned, it usually remains a named designated safeguarding officer within the institution who is expected to know how to proceed with the alert.

Many safeguarding policies emphasise that it is not the role of any employee of the research organisation to investigate a safeguarding concern, but rather to recognise concerns and refer them on. This is an example of where clear and unequivocal safeguarding referral processes can become blurred by the expansion of safeguarding to include such things as staff bullying, for example, which might often be more appropriately investigated within the institution than by referral to safeguarding services within social care or related agencies. Again, this highlights the importance of clarity around the scope of safeguarding and the implications this has.

CASE STUDY: POLICY ON RESPONDING TO REPORTS

The ODI (Overseas Development Institute) safeguarding policy is of interest, as an organisation specialising in international research. It sets out an obligation to report all concerns, suspicions or allegations to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. It also sets out some explicit guidelines which should inform the response:

> '*The person(s) reporting the matter and the DSO / Deputy must act in accordance with the local law and with sensitivity to local custom and practice. The DSO / Deputy will carefully evaluate the implications of reporting any incidents to local authorities as the authorities to which incidents are reported and the manner in which they are outlined can have a fundamental impact on the child or vulnerable person concerned. The first priority should always be to do no harm, or where harm has already occurred, ensure that subsequent action does not increase the extent of that harm.*' (p. 6)

These guidelines go some way to addressing concerns raised by multiple stakeholders about the potential for reporting to have negative consequences for victims / survivors in certain situations (see Stakeholder Interviews).

Key roles

Most policies establish a Principal or Lead Safeguarding Officer, who oversees Designated Safeguarding Officers located within different units of the organisation. These latter are the points of contact for reporting concerns. The Principal Safeguarding Officer role is held by individuals in different positions in different organisations; often it is taken by the Director of Human Resources, Chief Operating Officer or Director of Student Services. Where it is the last of these, safeguarding within the organisation seems more likely to be primarily focused on applicants and students.

Training

Varied approaches to training are described in the policies. Some simply specify who holds responsibility for ensuring that safeguarding training takes place, or state that appropriate training will be provided. Some include safeguarding training as part of induction for new staff. Some offer tiered levels of training, with basic – usually online – training offered for most staff, and more specialist training provided for staff with specific responsibilities for safeguarding or who regularly work directly with children or vulnerable adults. Refresher training is rarely mentioned.

Learning lessons

Most policies do not explicitly discuss procedures for reviewing and learning from safeguarding alerts. Some include responsibility for learning from incidents within the role description of the Principal Safeguarding Officer or as part of the function of a Safeguarding Committee. The University of Nottingham's policy is distinctive in highlighting the importance of learning lessons from incidents, by reflecting on 'whether there are features of the University that may have contributed to, or failed to prevent, the abuse occurring.'

Many policies also leave unclear the details of ongoing oversight of safeguarding. While the key roles with responsibility for oversight are clearly specified and policies are usually subject to review every 1 or 3 years, it is rarely made clear how frequently senior management as a group reviews safeguarding issues. This is of note given that DFID's enhanced due diligence standards require 'regular reporting.'

Summary

Most HEI policies are generic or focus specifically on student and visitor welfare; few make more than a passing mention of research. Some explicitly acknowledge that safeguarding is the responsibility of the Research Ethics Committee. Research guidance, research misconduct and research ethics policies are of clear relevance to safeguarding, but they rarely – if ever – mention the term explicitly. The focus in most safeguarding policies is on clear and unequivocal advice on the scope and definition of safeguarding, so with a few exceptions, statutory rather than wider definitions of 'vulnerability' are followed closely. Training in the basics of safeguarding for all staff is becoming more common, but it is not clear how well adapted this would be to the distinctive demands of research in overseas contexts.

Findings from the Stakeholder Interviews and Surveys

In total, 30 key stakeholders were interviewed across 25 organisational affiliations. In parallel, online surveys were distributed to researchers and research organisations, to seek views from across the wider sector.

Interviews

In total, 30 stakeholders were interviewed across 25 organisational affiliations:

Stakeholders	Number of Individuals Interviewed
Funders and delivery partners	7
UK-based research organisations (n=9):	
Researchers	5
Research Services, Management or equivalent role	8
LMIC-based research organisations (n=4):	
Researchers	4
Research Services, Management or equivalent role	1
NGOs	3
Independent safeguarding expert	1
Other organisation	1
Total number of stakeholders interviewed	**30**

The LMIC-based research organisations were located within three different countries within Africa and from one country in Asia, and all were experienced in international collaborations in research. Attempts were also made to consult with LMIC funding agencies, but only one agency, from an African country, replied within the review timeframe. This response stated that they had no information on this matter, suggesting that safeguarding was not a current priority for them. While prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment are very much on the international agenda at present, our interviewees in LMICs felt that funding agencies might see many of the wider safeguarding issues as coming within the remit of research ethics committees rather than directly within that of the agencies themselves.

Organisations have not been individually identified, as a condition of ethical approval was to ensure anonymity. This proved to be an important guarantee to enable interviewees to speak frankly.

Six themes were used to frame the interview data:

1. Defining and understanding safeguarding

2. Differences between research and international development activities
3. Training and guidance
4. Working in partnerships
5. Whistleblowing and reporting
6. Organisational responses to reporting

Surveys

Two surveys were conducted – one of individual researchers and one of research organisations. Eighteen researchers (eight UK faculty; three PhD / postdoc; four independent researchers; one UN-based researcher) responded to the first survey; 12 research organisations responded to the second. However, all but five of the organisations responded briefly by providing links to policies and did not complete the full survey. We have therefore disregarded the quantitative results as the response rate was too low to be representative. However, qualitative responses to the surveys raised some interesting points and have been included in the analysis.

There may be several reasons for the low response rate: weaknesses in the survey design or distribution; survey fatigue (we discovered that a similar survey was distributed to HEIs recently, independently of our work); and the short time-frame for response, dictated by the time limitations of the review. An unanticipated complication we were informed of for the research organisations survey was that in some institutions no single person had oversight of all the areas asked about, and the online survey format did not lend itself to shared responses. This in itself is interesting in light of the interview findings that safeguarding in international development research does not sit neatly within established safeguarding roles in some HEIs (see below). Those responses received, and findings from other strands of the review, also raise the possibility that many individuals did not feel confident in answering about safeguarding, or did not necessarily recognise the applicability of the term itself to their activities and therefore did not proceed with the survey.

1. Understanding of safeguarding

Many interviewees, within both research institutions and some funding agencies, highlighted uncertainty around the scope of safeguarding and precisely how far associated responsibilities extend. Interviewees based in LMICs were mostly unfamiliar with the term, unless they had recently needed to address it because of collaborations with UK institutions. NGOs who also conduct research as a part of their work, report that while safeguarding is widely understood and addressed within programming and the wider organisation, this is less integrated into research practices in the same way. Within the UK, interviewees mostly expressed the view that safeguarding was not understood well within the research sector, with words such as '*vague*' and '*confusing*' used to describe it. They referred to recent shifts which were seen to have broadened the scope of safeguarding beyond the focus on children and vulnerable adults and had produced uncertainty:

> '*The shift has been from a clear regulatory definition to almost a cultural definition*';
>
> '*Bullying and harassment gets pulled into safeguarding, but what else is in there?*';
>
> '*the definition has changed […] so it's a complete shift in mindset and understanding.*'

Organisations with a primary focus on international development research perhaps found it easier to adjust quickly to this wider scope. However, for the majority of HEIs for whom international research is only part of what they do, bridging the different contexts of safeguarding was reported to present challenges. Some noted that their institutions' safeguarding policies had not been prepared with research in mind, but focused primarily on student welfare and visitors to campus. One interviewee noted that

'universities, perhaps even more than charities, are very much fixated on the children and vulnerable adults definition because that's the one they go by, and the idea that they will have to extend that to everyone they come into contact with as a provider of any service at all is a very big thing for people.'

In institutions where safeguarding was thought of in these terms, it requires considerable reorientation to think through expanding the coverage of safeguarding policies, as existing organisational structures covering safeguarding may not be set up for this. One interviewee spoke of how the safeguarding policy was in the charge of a section dealing with non-research issues. This could lead to a risk of safeguarding *'falling between the cracks,'* as existing processes were not set up for addressing research expectations. Similarly, for many research institutions, both HEIs and NGOs, the lines between research ethics and safeguarding are not clear and this can lead to confusion about which policies cover what.

Many interviewees, from both research organisations and funders, felt that there is an urgent need for clear definitions that set out how widely expectations reach. Further to this, one noted that *'vulnerability depends on how wide you want to cast the net.'* This naturally gives rise to questions of capacity and what expectations are placed on researchers. From another angle, one researcher noted the potential for safeguarding practice to become disempowering if

'the expansion of definitions of safeguarding from a focus on children and vulnerable adults to encompass anyone with whom organisations work has meant that we see everybody in a developing country as a potential victim,'

He also noted the need for attention to how 'vulnerable' people can organise and speak for themselves. This concern was echoed by another:

'I think that safeguarding as a word, as a concept, feels a little bit alien inside the research. That's not to say that it shouldn't be taken seriously and thought about, but it feels to me there is also a danger of taking away the agency of others when you talk about safeguarding, like 'we know what's good for you, we know how to protect you' and we do reproduce a lot of these models in our work.'

Although one of the original reasons for the shift in terms from 'protection' to 'safeguarding' was precisely to move away from such paternalism, safeguarding's links with 'vulnerability' mean that for some it has retained similar connotations. These are felt particularly acutely in the starkly unequal conditions which characterise international development research.

2. Differences between research and international development activities

There are many overlapping aspects of research and ID activity more generally, not least due to the scope and scale of research and research-like activities carried out in partnership with development organisations or by staff or consultants working for such organisations. However, aspects of research are distinct in terms of practice and aims as well as the role of researchers and their relationships with the communities with whom they engage – particularly for those affiliated with HEIs or research organisations. Perspectives of interviewees regarding the specificities of safeguarding in research varied widely, reflecting the wide variation in topics of study, discipline and methods employed by researchers. Interviewees from LMICs highlighted the ongoing relationships that local researchers may have with the communities where they work, which must be built on trust if they are to continue and which are less likely to exist in this form for non-local researchers who tend to *'fly in and out'*, but the same might be said of at least some NGOs, depending on the work they do. Some academics suggested that

> '*relationships between researchers and the people with whom they're working are much closer than in the context of NGOs and beneficiaries*.'

By contrast, some NGO interviewees felt that research involves '*less time working in communities*.' Perhaps this illustrates that ODA-funded researchers may differ as much between themselves in many aspects as they do from NGOs.

A key difference, highlighted by some interviewees, is that researchers may be positioned as 'observers' or information gatherers, as opposed to providers of resources, services or programme. This may mitigate researchers' opportunities to use resources abusively. However, researchers may still be *perceived* by community members as having influence over resource provision, particularly when in partnership with NGOs or government bodies. Additionally, researchers are not always simply observers or gatherers of information – and considering them as such can lead to complacency about potential safeguarding risks, particularly given that even 'observational' research does not limit their access to vulnerable groups or opportunities to commit abuse or exploitation. Research may sometimes be linked to community employment opportunities, access to services, or small forms of compensation for participants' time, or expenses covered. Certain research projects may involve some element of service provision or intervention, such as clinical trials, experimental interventions, health or education interventions, participatory action or activist research, and so on. Power dynamics associated with these roles require careful attention, particularly given the diversity of forms of research methods and approaches, as well as increased expectations and requirements about research impact.

Some interviewees also highlighted the limitations of research organisations' capacity to intervene in response to safeguarding risks:

> '*Universities may be working in contexts where you haven't got UNHCR, UNICEF handily on your doorstep for a safeguarding referral*.'

Some NGOs may face similar challenges.

Other stakeholders saw little difference between research and development interventions in relation to safeguarding, although it was noted that some researchers might be less well prepared than NGO staff to identify safeguarding risks. This could depend on both inexperience in contexts of international development and on disciplinary background, as one research services manager noted:

> '*There are lots of people who might be interested in doing international development but it's not that straightforward to go from what they may be doing into international development. It's great to bring in interdisciplinary approaches, but it does mean you will have people seeing it as another funding source*.'

Disciplinary focus shapes potential risk; as one interviewee noted of biomedical science research, '*we are dealing with labs rather than refugees'.* But safeguarding considerations relating to power dynamics, exchange of resources and potential exploitation of in-country researchers have relevance across diverse disciplinary contexts.

Both research and NGO programme delivery activities are diverse, making it difficult to draw hard-and-fast lines between them, and certainly funders expect to apply the same standards to both. Given that safeguarding also covers relationships within a research team, one important role of safeguarding training and guidance is to show the scope and relevance of safeguarding even for those researchers whose work does not necessarily bring them into significant direct contact with communities, or whose self-perception differentiates them clearly from NGO workers.

The relationship between safeguarding and research ethics: Perhaps the key difference noted between research and NGO activity is the established existence of ethics review infrastructure in HEI research communities. Research activities, particularly within UK HEIs, are subject to institutional research governance, including research ethics regulation that addresses risk of harm and protection of research participants as well as researchers. Interviewees from many research institutions, HEIs, and NGOs expressed that the lines between research ethics and safeguarding are not clear and this can lead to confusion. Ethics guidance is significantly broader than most HEI safeguarding policies in how it conceptualises 'vulnerability':

> 'Researchers will need to consider additional ethics concerns or issues arising from working with potentially vulnerable people. Vulnerability may be defined in different ways and may arise as a result of being in an abusive relationship, vulnerability due to age, potential marginalisation, disability, and due to disadvantageous power relationships within personal and professional roles. Participants may not be conventionally 'vulnerable', but may be in a dependent relationship that means they can feel coerced or pressured into taking part.' [137]

This potentially positions ethics procedures well to adjust to the expanded scope of safeguarding. There is existing guidance on research misconduct which covers placing those involved in research in danger as potentially a form of research misconduct, sets out expectations of whistleblowing mechanisms and protection for whistleblowers, and sets requirements to report to funders, which would be relevant to safeguarding.[138] Difficulties remain, not least in mapping the overlap with safeguarding explicitly. Practice in some organisations is for research projects to receive scrutiny and sign-off for safeguarding in parallel with the ethics review process.

The literature review and stakeholder consultations both pointed to areas of overlap between the concept and practice of safeguarding and research ethics frameworks, but also gaps that limit safeguarding processes, as was also reported in the literature review. One interviewee commented that *'sometimes ethics review is quite specific and may not feel comfortable looking at the full range of what is in safeguarding,'* in that it may focus on project-specific issues and take for granted readiness for more generic forms of harm covered under safeguarding. It is therefore vital that the latter are covered elsewhere in the researcher's preparation for the field. Another interviewee noted that

> *'our policy is heavily aligned to the UK definition, there's very little mention of abuse of position within the organisation. We're about to enter into discussion with our REC to decide remits. It's a very grey area*.'

Two interviewees expressed the concern that ethics review could sometimes be seen as an event at the beginning of research, limiting the potential to feed back and learn from developments as the project is implemented. One survey respondent noted that *'most ethical considerations are addressed superficially so I can watch my back'.* Some ethics regulatory guidance now addresses this issue. For example, the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics stipulates that all research organisations must *'establish and publish working practices and procedures for monitoring research'*.[139]

Tensions may emerge between core research ethics principles and safeguarding responses, notably between commitments to confidentiality and anonymity for participants, and the reporting of safeguarding concerns. While ethics frameworks often allow for limits on confidentiality alongside duty of care, this can still present important dilemmas for researchers.

However, in discussing institutional research ethics frameworks and processes it is important to note that not all research activity will necessarily go through a formal and independent ethical review. For example, NGOs doing evaluations, business development initiatives or research without human participants may not pass through a REC but could still fall under the ODA definition of research. Here it is important that effective safeguarding policies are in place and followed that deal proportionately with the risks to which these projects give rise.

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CASE STUDY: EMBEDDING SAFEGUARDING

One institution took a multi-pronged approach to embedding safeguarding within the organisation. This focused on:

1) Awareness-raising sessions and the introduction of mandatory safeguarding online training. This consisted of key concepts, some scenarios, and a basic quiz at the start and end of the training module.

2) A number of key individuals were named as 'safeguarding points' throughout the institution, from among both faculty and research support staff, to address queries and act as 'safeguarding champions.'

3) Existing processes were bolstered to address safeguarding. The institution's ethics application form was adapted to specifically ask about potential safeguarding issues for researchers, for research participants as a result of the research, and for community members and others with whom the research might bring researchers into contact. Due diligence on safeguarding was boosted, building on the existing financial process.

This combination, introducing new measures while embedding safeguarding within key existing practices, has been effective in highlighting its relevance to staff across the institution.

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3. Training and guidance

Varying approaches had been taken to training, depending on available resources and how far advanced institutions were in addressing the safeguarding agenda. One smaller research organisation, lacking resources to develop its own training materials, complained of having to use '*off-the-peg materials which aren't always useful*.' Some interviewees, as well as survey respondents, called for a '*sector-standard training package*,' though there are challenges in meeting the diverse needs of different researchers with a generic module. Members of some institutions had attended individual half-day workshops through regional international development networks; working through case studies and thinking of how researchers might respond in their own settings was usually identified as the most useful part of these workshops which '*generally generate discussion and an expert can be on hand to answer questions*.' A two-level approach was suggested for cascading learning through larger institutions: academic leaders and project managers, human resources officers and senior leadership were key people for dedicated face-to-face training on safeguarding, while others might be expected to complete an obligatory online learning module. This could mitigate the current challenge faced by researchers that training and guidance is by and large provided informally and, on an ad-hoc basis by colleagues within or outside of one's own institution.

A common response to training was reported:

'once people get an understanding of what we mean by that much broader definition of safeguarding, partly what's happened is that people have realised, actually I'm already doing these things. I just haven't put it under that safeguarding heading.'

In other institutions, attention to safeguarding issues (though they might not be specifically named as such) remained largely within ethics training and explicit training on safeguarding did not as yet specifically focus on research or on overseas activity. While much content relevant to safeguarding may be covered by these '*bits of training*,' as one interviewee described them, it makes it difficult for institutions to achieve an overview of how well safeguarding is being addressed and to assess that learning. Coverage across the sector may thus be fragmented, with researchers missing out on training if it is not systemic. Therefore, even if training in, for example, bullying and harassment continues to be offered separately from safeguarding training, this should be mapped in relation to safeguarding.

One survey respondent suggested that '*more training is needed and should be a condition to undertaking research overseas, with approval of travel conditional on completing training'*. Although many institutions' safeguarding policies explicitly stated that they applied to students as well as staff, even some of the universities that were quite advanced in the development of safeguarding training offered it only to those with an employment contract. This is unsurprising given how new this framing of safeguarding is, but if safeguarding is to become central to the research work of HEIs rather than an add-on, it will be important to roll out relevant training to doctoral researchers. Doctoral students carry out a significant amount of research in some fields without necessarily being employed on a project. As one interviewee noted, '*there is capacity-building in training doctoral students in safeguarding.*' It ensures that safeguarding becomes embedded throughout the institution. One HEI aimed to incorporate safeguarding as one of three fundamental pillars of research training for all, alongside data protection and ethics.

For those who might encounter safeguarding incidents directly during research work, it was suggested that beyond identifying and knowing where to refer safeguarding issues, it is important to '*give people skills for how to respond when somebody discloses.*' Described as '*a crutch to hang on to, an initial response from which to build towards doing something,*' it was argued that this kind of preparation can make staff feel more able to respond appropriately.

CASE STUDY: SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine's safeguarding policy for research was developed with reference to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, the Keeping Children Safe international child safeguarding standards and the CHS Alliance PSEA Implementation Handbook. There is a distinct safeguarding policy for It is designed to ensure that research projects build safeguarding in centrally from the outset of planning. Among the steps it takes to do so are:

- Setting out key questions for Principal Investigators to consider in research design in assessing risks of encountering sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment (p. 12)
- Clearly stating that due diligence requirements based on DFID's, including sign-up to a safeguarding policy and code of conduct, will be required for any research collaboration to proceed (p. 13)
- Describing a clear organisational safeguarding incident investigation process for learning lessons. This incorporates a risk level rating system and a clear threshold for reporting to funders and regulatory bodies. (p. 18)
- Describing how to offer support to the person affected by the incident (p. 20)
- Providing a safeguarding risk mapping tool for use in research planning (p. 37)

Policies on safeguarding students and bullying / harassment are cross-referenced and dealt with in separate documents.

Preparing guidance for staff could, like ensuring sufficient training, be hindered by fragmentation. Where this is an issue, one way forward suggested is for organisations (a) to map what they do in relation to different aspects of safeguarding and (b) check if the training they offer/require incorporates appropriate attention to safeguarding, and adapt if necessary. An example of how one NGO, Christian Aid, did this is reproduced below (Figure 1):

ECID Accountability framework

GESI Strategy
PROGRAMMING IS INCLUSIVE
GESI MAINSTREAMED INTERNALLY
POLICY AND PRACTICE ARE GESI TRANSFORMATIVE

LILO
GESI AUDIT
GIPP REPORT

INFORMATION PROVISION
FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS MECHANISMS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IS PARTICIPATORY, INCLUSIVE AND RESPECTFULL

STAFF ARE SUPPORTED TO DO THEIR JOBS EFFECTIVELY

Core Humanitarian Standard
TRUST BUILT BETWEEN ACTORS
PROJECTS ARE TIMELY, RELEVANT AND RESPOND TO FEEDBACK

DO NO HARM
RISK ANALYSIS
MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING PLAN
BENEFICIARY FEEDBACK
COMMUNICATIONS, POLICY & ADVOCACY, RESEARCH STRATEGIES
RESPONSIBLE DATA MANAGEMENT & GDPR

REPORTING MECHANISMS IN PLACE AND FUNCTIONING
CA PROVIDING LEADERSHIP AND CAPCITY BUILDING

CA Safeguarding Policy
CONSORTIUM PARTNERS HAVE EFFECTIVE SG POICIES
STAFF AND BENEFICIARIES AWARE OF CODES OF CONDUCTS AND SG POLICY

DUE DILLIGENCE
PEER REVIEW
CODES OF CONDUCT

PERSONAL INFORMATION TREATED CONFIDENTIALLY

CONSENT FORMS
DATA COLLECTION
DISSEMINATION

APPROPRIATE DESIGN AND COLLECTION OF DATA
PARTICIPATION BASED ON VALID, INFORMED CONSENT

Ethical Framework

ACCOUNTABILITY: the process of using power responsibly, taking account of, and being held accountable by, different stakeholders, and primarily those who are affected by the exercise of such power.

Results of linkages between GESI, Ethics, CHS and Safeguarding

Potential unintended negative consequences are understood and mitigated

Data is collected, managed and used confidentially and appropriately

Feedback and complaints mechanisms are trusted and used by all (including for sensitive complaints)

Beneficiaries understand the behavior they should expect from Consortium members and partners

Prevention and mitigation the effects of abusive behaviour

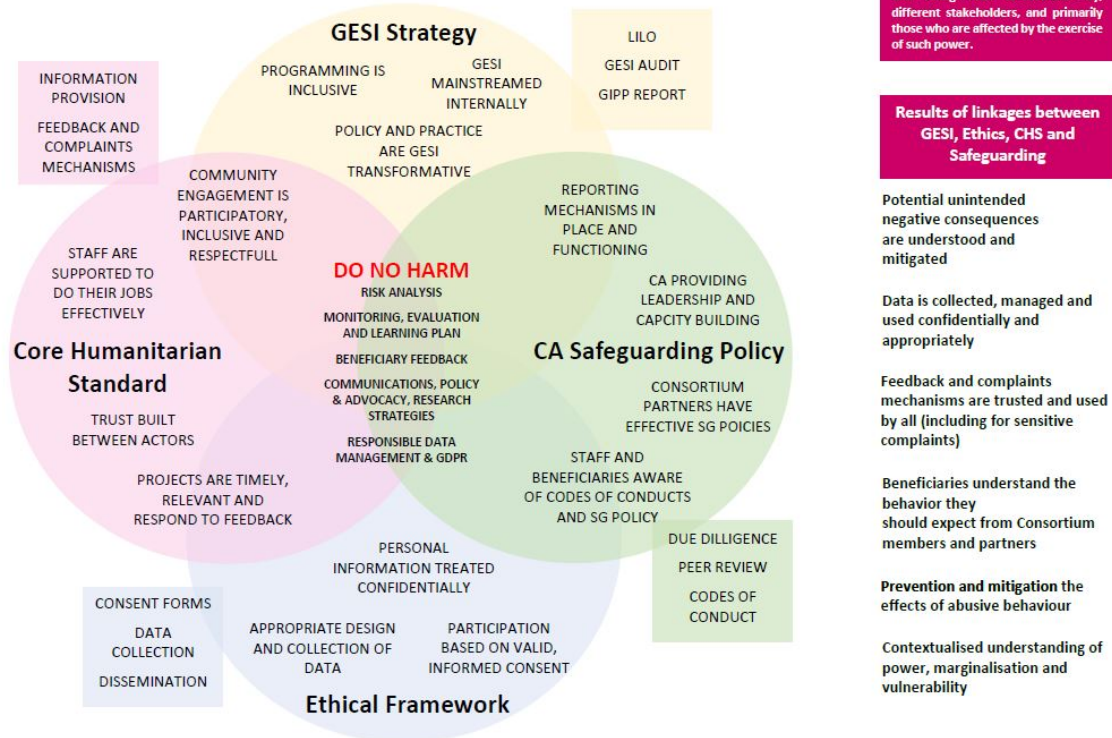Contextualised understanding of power, marginalisation and vulnerability

Figure 1. Mapping Safeguarding: ECID Accountability Framework (Christian Aid)

Project-specific guidance should explore what can be done proactively to prevent safeguarding risk. Examples of this would include limiting lone working as far as possible or ensuring the suitability of interviewers (e.g. ensuring female interviewers interview female participants if working alone).

Guidance for safeguarding within research settings should be based on a recognition that while foundational ethical principles are crucial and provide a basis for research, operating with precise guidelines can be inflexible and dangerous. For example, requiring consent simultaneously needs to ensure anonymity in contexts where lives might be put at risk by participation in research; the duty to report may need to be met in ways that avoid putting the person in further harm's way. As emphasised in the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics, 'ethics issues are best understood within the context of specific research projects'.[140] Beyond this, recognising how safeguarding and ethical research challenges are connected to gendered power relations both within a research team and in relation to research participants. As one NGO stated, '*we want to go beyond a compliance and tick box of "do no harm", but one that is reflective of our understanding of gender and power'.*

However, even those interviewees who highlighted the limitations of guidance also recognised its importance:

> '*People always say to avoid the tickbox, but to have a safeguarding policy specific to international research is a good start because it frames the distinctive issues. Vetting and all cascades out of that. It is tickbox but it galvanises efforts, really drilling down into the specific needs of the sector.*'

> '*These guidelines are helpful in bringing to light these issues we've known about for a long time. They can't replace the moral compass of the Principal Investigator. [...] It makes it sound like I don't get people to fill in forms. I get everyone to fill in significant forms down to*

who to contact if I don't hear. It concentrates thinking … it's filling in forms, but for a purpose.'

4. Working in partnership and with communities

The introduction of safeguarding due diligence has meant sudden demands for formal information and sometimes extensive preparatory work, along with an often urgent need to agree formal safeguarding measures, such as codes of conduct and accountability, with partners in LMICs. This could be challenging for researchers and research organisations at times. One interviewee stated that '*We absolutely do not want to create a policy and say you've got to sign up to ours*.' Some said it was easier to manage when creating new organisational links than where there have been long-standing relationships without this paperwork. One research organisation reported long-term partners' reluctance to sign up retrospectively to a new code of conduct because of fears arising from lack of explicit clarity about the scope of safeguarding:

> '*There are no black and white lines about what we can and can't do, so we may breach and be subject to disciplinary action. Compared to residential care there are really clear guidelines what we can do – we don't have this here, asking staff to conform to clearly defined standards*.'

The need for a code that the organisation could apply to the full breadth of safeguarding across the diverse cultural contexts in which it worked was interpreted by these local partners as leaving them open to future accusations. Fears of getting the 'grey areas' wrong made them wary. Although we noted above the need for flexibility, this example shows how uncertainty about safeguarding causes nervousness. The stakes are high in issues of harm and can deter people from engaging openly and fully with safeguarding challenges. Such fears need to be openly addressed.

Some interviewees also worried about the administrative demands these requirements would put on grassroots organisation partners, whose governance or literacy levels may be limited. Yet many felt it important to distinguish between the formal administrative burden and the substance of what is under discussion. One interviewee noted that while some partners may need assistance with capacity to address formal processes, those same partners are often clearest about the need to address safeguarding risks:

> '*The more grassroots the organisation, the more likely they are to understand these issues. That's their lived experience. It's not new and surprising; it's about talking through how to formalise it with them*.'

It was acknowledged that there is '*no quick answer*' and that it is necessary to just '*keep working through this*' with them. UK research organisations needed to explore flexibility, trying to use plain language and simplify internal processes wherever possible – a valuable process that could contribute to working also with small community groups in the UK. One research manager noted that:

> '*Terms like 'due diligence' and 'safeguarding' are kind of meaningless. In Research Support we're saturated in that language for so long you forget how niche it is, technocratic. We have to look at how we can communicate this for our partners*.'

Given that the term 'safeguarding' is rarely recognised outside the UK except by individuals who have already had to deal with these processes, this point on language is a very relevant one. Research interviewees in LMICs spoke of '*what we call ethics, and you are now calling safeguarding*.'

Beyond the imposition of administrative burden, researchers were very conscious of the risks of being seen to impose an approach:

> '*Putting in place codes of conduct can feel very oppressive and inappropriate when you're trying to build an equal partners relationship.*'

One noted the ethical importance of '*respecting partners as equals, not secondary because they're recipients of funding or not based in the UK*,' and all aspired to the development of codes of conduct and practice based on mutual learning and discussion, where '*there's as much capacity-building going the other way.*' Another researcher described an inception workshop for a new research project and how these issues would be addressed:

> '*Our partners will be expected either to produce their own codes of conduct or sign ours, but I don't just want to do that as a 'sign on the dotted line' but it will have to be part of a discussion about how we actually take this forward and what challenges it might bring up […] I am planning to incorporate a light-touch element of safeguarding in saying quite explicitly that we in the UK are now under new pressure to respond to an expanding definition and be quite up front about the potential for this grate on – first that this will be new to our African institutions because they won't have had to deal with this and at the same time make sure that we're responding to our funder demands, but at the same time make sure that we embed practices in a way that's both feasible and culturally manageable in this context, so I think we'll have to have a dialogue.*'

There were concerns expressed about the potential for top-down insistence on specific standards to work against this shared development. While most funders we interviewed recognised that there would need to be some cultural flexibility, there were concerns over the contexts in which taxpayers' money can be spent and whether some practices can be accepted. For the most part, research organisations had found that codes of conduct could be established without strong disagreements, though there had been difficulties. For example, one research organisation highlighted difficulties in applying the code of conduct on sex with individuals under 18. They worked with a partner organisation based in a community where this was not prohibited (indeed, it is not against the law in the UK) and one employee reported that he worked with individuals who were married to 'children' under this definition. Staff wondered if they were expected to report this or there was some discretion, given that there were no suggestions that 'abuse' was taking place according to cultural norms. Would a strict application of the code of conduct prevent meaningful engagement with community organisations?

While the ideal approach was considered to be to develop codes of conduct together or to apply existing codes, organisations have found it useful to have a template that can be shown to prospective partners as a starting-point for discussion, to minimise the burden, or for adoption if preferred. It is important when working in a large collaboration for a central person to be nominated, to whom safeguarding reports can be centrally funnelled.

Researchers mostly reported working well with partner institutions, though some had known instances where colleagues had reported bullying by members of the partner institution. Not all were optimistic about being able to hold partner organisations to account to full codes of conduct if these were not already embedded:

> '*Partnership negotiations are helpful in encouraging attention to these issues. It's unrealistic to hold partner organisations to account. […] I can draw attention; I'm not in a position to require it from partners. DFID can't do it, so how can I?*'

A concern for many was how infractions by one organisation might have consequences for the wider consortium.

5. Whistleblowing and reporting

Although the intention of safeguarding is always to prevent incidents of harm in the first place, it is necessary to give thought to how to facilitate reporting and to respond appropriately.

Reporting within Organisations: Internally, institutions in the UK generally had existing policies for the reporting of bullying and harassment, though these were often presented alongside or cross-referenced within the safeguarding policy rather than formally incorporated within it. Partner institutions in LMICs had grievance procedures, and the process of exploring due diligence could serve as an opportunity for revisiting these and formalising not just the immediate response, but ongoing monitoring and learning measures. One funder highlighted that full development of these formal measures would take time, but recognised the commitment of overseas partner institutions and accepted that:

> 'Overseas programmes feel that it's very important and understand what we're doing, but things start from a lower level. [...] We're going to have to be a bit flexible – not foregoing what we believe in, but being pragmatic. [...] It won't all be in place by the time people sign up to it - that won't be the case. Not a high-handed approach that doesn't deal with people rather than trying to build capacity, it has to be a more mature approach around that. It needs to be working towards it for us to consider it.'

Because HEI bullying, harassment and grievance procedures had been developed before safeguarding policies, were less distinctive than other dimensions of safeguarding in relation to the issues raised by international development research, and had therefore been focused on by different workstreams, our interviewees mostly had less in-depth knowledge of the processes informing these policies. However, some spoke to measures that had been taken within their organisations. Matrix management structures were highlighted as a strength within academic institutions, with mentors, cross-cutting memberships of research units, managers and HR departments constituting multiple options for whom to consult for advice or recourse; to some extent these served as a counter-balance to the traditional hierarchies of academic research, though of course their effectiveness depends on active efforts to raise awareness and support those sources of guidance in how to respond. The importance of early engagement with the issues to head off potential problems was emphasised. The key barriers to reporting were identified as fears about the consequences for complainants' careers if whistleblowing on someone in a position of relative power, the effects on team relations if whistleblowing on a colleague, and worries over whether exposing individual behaviour might threaten the viability of a research grant. To address this last deterrent, it was seen as valuable for funders to emphasise the message that wherever possible, individual infractions would not lead to the failure of the whole consortium.

One research organisation spoke of responding to notifications of inappropriate behaviour. The first related to 'huddles' as a practice at international conferences, which were experienced as 'physically oppressive behaviour.' After it was reported, staff received training and were supplied with information about how to complain internally and externally. The second related to female staff being propositioned by government officials while working overseas; guidelines on how to deal with this were provided. This response perhaps reflects the options the organisation felt to be available to it in the light of the prevailing power dynamics; while equipping staff with guidelines and information is useful and may affirm the organisation's support for their right to call out

inappropriate behaviour, this approach nevertheless appears to leave the onus on them to report and thereby take the initiative in dealing with the situation themselves.

Reporting by participants and communities: There was much discussion with interviewees about what constituted appropriate complaints pathways and how make them usable. It was clearly recognised that there are often significant obstacles to overcome. There may be little reason to expect that the most vulnerable groups start from a position of trust that their reports would be heard and responded to by research organisations:

> '[There] are technical challenges but there are also local ways of behaving, and why would people think that we'd doing anything to help them? Our staff will deliver training on promoting participation but may not have a lot of direct contact with end users.'

Interviewees noted that

> 'it's down to people's trust and willingness to use the reporting systems that we have in place. It has to be a big concern, not just introducing policies and procedures, a real culture change of engaging with communities and convincing them that they will be listened to, people in power will be held to account.'

While in many cases this groundwork had been laid through the development of long-standing relationships with communities where research would take place, this could vary depending on the nature of the research and the duration of the relationship with communities. Researchers interviewed from HEIs in Africa pointed to long-standing practices in their institutions of community engagement, of public events at the start and finish of any project, and ongoing engagement with local leaders who could act to convey any concerns from the community. Research organisations that worked indirectly through local partner organisations were not always as confident that the mechanisms in place would be so robust:

> 'It's a catch-22. We're dependent on sub-contractors to cascade out the complaints process and then on recipients to respond to it.'

For researchers working in remote areas where 'there's nobody for miles, there is no health clinic to refer people to, you just have to know the local community mechanisms that do exist,' it becomes more difficult to provide multiple means of engagement. Providing appropriate means of communication for communities lacking recourse to multiple options remained a challenge in some areas. Information materials with contact details were regularly provided and there would be verbal discussion of their meaning and implications as a matter of course. However, where literacy levels are low there may be obstacles to effective reporting. Although it was suggested that most people would be able to pick out and use a local phone number on an information sheet, not everyone in communities would necessarily have access or opportunity to do so; in some settings, language may also be an issue. While ethics permission for use of information materials may often be given in advance of full engagement with the communities, it is therefore an important step to build in initial discussion with community members about what means of communication and feedback they would deem appropriate and useful in the event of safeguarding concerns or other difficulties with the research, as an integral part of broader discussions about what communities themselves consider to be 'ethical research.' Community Advisory Boards may be useful in this regard.[a]

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[a] Though not specific to research, Bond's (2018) *Eight principles for building trust through feedback* may be a useful resource to guide planning: https://www.bond.org.uk/resources/eight-principles-for-building-trust-through-feedback

Because of the challenges of facilitating reporting and the desire not to place the burden of raising concerns solely on 'victims,' some interviewees spoke of the need for team members to look proactively for signs of concern:

> *The difficulty is getting incidents reported by the most vulnerable groups. Often you find out by accident something has happened. You can have as many posters up as you want – need to do much more training with staff volunteers on the ground to recognise signs in behaviour and explore carefully; it's very hard if you're a researcher and it's not your area, for example, if you're a biologist* [as opposed to someone working in clinical health or social care research].'

Where research projects involved direct contact with groups who come under the statutory definitions of safeguarding – children and 'vulnerable' adults – research fieldworkers would usually be expected to have relevant knowledge, training and a protocol to follow, though this has been less standard for those working in other research areas. Research that does not explicitly focus on children or vulnerable adults often still takes place in settings where researchers interact with these populations, particularly in disciplines/projects where researchers are 'embedded' within communities, hence the importance of equipping all fieldworkers with at least a basic knowledge of safeguarding. However, this process also needs to address explicitly with researchers the boundaries of their role and competency; basic training is limited in the skills it can provide researchers whose primary expertise is in unrelated areas.

Good resource mapping before commencing fieldwork was highlighted as an important step for all research projects. Where possible, or at least where clearly relevant to the research project focus, it was suggested that it is preferable to identify a specific individual as a contact as it makes the process less terrifying. The mapping process should extend to *'doing your homework'* on forms of

risk and harm that may arise in the community outside the direct involvement of the research team and planning clearly from whom advice would be sought (with back-ups in the event that the default choice is unavailable). As well as local partner research organisations, NGOs working in the area are noted as an important resource who may be able to share the results of their own mapping exercises. Reporting mechanisms may be more stringent and detailed in NGO research where this is linked to wider programmes, there are often clearer lines or reporting and a shorter chain from location of any incidents to whomever responds to the report. More broadly, interviewees wondered if such mapping exercises could be shared more widely, to allow building on previous knowledge and avoid each new project reinventing the wheel.

Unintended consequences of reporting: Sex work was named as an example where reporting exploitation may put the person supposedly being 'safeguarded' at greater risk, if the reaction of the authorities is likely to be punitive. Another cited example is reporting violence committed against LGBTQ persons in countries where homosexuality is illegal. For researchers working in conflict-affected settings, the concern over likely responses was particularly acute: '*the logic of trying to get help from the state that you think is involved in carrying out killings of people that you're working with!*' In these cases, researchers warned that UK requirements for reporting would do more harm than good; it is critical that safeguarding guidelines and requirements do not inadvertently endanger people, and these researchers argued that situated application of ethical principles was more appropriate to the risks inherent in their work.

6. Organisational and institutional responses to reporting

Most interview discussions focused on 'bystander' safeguarding concerns – instances of harm that researchers encounter in the community – as interviewees reported limited direct experience with harm done to researchers or by researchers themselves. Two did report isolated cases of local fieldwork assistants some years previously misunderstanding and failing to follow the full protocol for informed consent. It was noted that '*good training and supervision is where you pick up problems.*' This is an important complement to community reporting mechanisms and highlights the value in regularly team reviews of safeguarding issues while in the field.

Stakeholders recognised the importance of having procedures to respond appropriately in the event of an accusation against a researcher, removing opportunities for further harm while the individual is investigated. Interviewees from UK institutions noted that they might be very dependent on local partners or agencies to carry out the investigation. One interviewee familiar with safeguarding in NGO contexts noted that this is a common issue, and that NGOs often employ a consultant for this purpose or fly in a specialist investigator.

Bystander responses and responsibilities: DFID's safeguarding principles include organisations' duty of care to 'children and vulnerable adults in the community who are not direct beneficiaries but may be vulnerable to abuse' (DFID 2018: 3), going well beyond 'do no harm.' This highlights a further quandary for researchers; it is not universally clear how far researcher responsibility to report and/or intervene might go in this regard. There is also a crucial need to recognise the limits of researchers' expertise to identify and intervene, especially within a broad definition of safeguarding. As one interviewee asked:

> '*What is it reasonable that we do?...We're addressing this internally with scenarios to get heads around this (you're based in a village and become aware that the father is beating 14-15 year old daughter black and blue: what do you do? Asking researchers to do their homework on regulations and rules in the country and the community – would you report that? To the police? To the chief? Report it internally, ask local partner for their advice?). It's*

very difficult for universities, as opposed to NGOs we are not there to intervene, could really do with more centralised guidance… Are you making the safeguarding risk worse? We have no answers; as an institution we just keep discussing this internally – you can't just ignore it.'

CASE STUDY: SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS

Support for those affected by safeguarding issues could also be needed for research team members. In one research project discussed, fieldworkers came across both emotionally challenging situations which exposed them to death, grief and violence. In such circumstances it was essential to build emotional support into the research plan and budget. Even though these fieldworkers had a careful map of resources for referral, sometimes continued responsibility for involvement was unavoidable. In some cases when fieldworkers suspected abuse, participants initially denied abuse was happening to them, but later would call and confirm the fieldworkers' suspicions. Fieldworkers might be asked to accompany participants to the police, attend court proceedings and support 'victims' during the process. The fieldworkers emphasised that these experiences highlighted the need for continuing research involvement in communities and the value of having built into the project relevant training, review of experiences and referrals (though researchers must recognise that their opportunity or right to find out what has happened post-referral may be limited).

This case example highlights that even referral to an appropriate source may present added, unanticipated demands, and underlines the importance of building in capacity for contingency. While in this case, the nature of the project meant that the fieldworkers were better prepared and supported to play this role than others might be, researchers must also be aware of the boundaries of their expertise and role.

Some researchers interviewed in LMIC institutions were particularly wary about mandating reporting to state systems and favoured aiming at a community solution. For example:

'You can go to the field and see something untoward. Researchers may use their initiative and usually the community is quite receptive […] However, some practices might be cultural. Working with the community could become difficult, it's very situational. You flag it and the government comes down on them. When it's something very embedded in the community… it can be done, but it should be done very carefully.'

Some objections were framed as '*pragmatic*': for example, that people would need to continue to live together within their community after any intervention so it is best dealt with in the community; there were worries about disrupting the research community's relationship with the local community; others had concerns about the consequences of external intervention where communities might have difficult relations with the state:

'I think researchers, government funders need to discuss carefully if the route of reporting exists and you are confident the response will be appropriate.'

There are potentially difficult issues here regarding how far community norms can be relied on to enable the protection of individuals from abuse, but there was acceptance that addressing those dilemmas more openly could be valuable, as long as it was entered into with mutual respect rather than presented as an immediate imposition tied to funding constraints: '*I think something like that could be good and make us more thoughtful.*' One researcher working in a LMIC organisation spoke of having negotiated a mutually acceptable response with an ethics body in anticipation of the possibility of identifying domestic violence in the course of a health research project:

> '*They wanted us to report it to the police. We negotiated a more contextual response, which didn't take away her agency and worked with community leaders. Going to the police would be seen as a very aggressive act and potentially put the women at risk.*'

Disquiet was expressed by researchers about issues considered to be safeguarding in one context, but not in the local context or according to national law (e.g. Female Genital Mutilation or corporal punishment of children). While researchers might well intervene where these were not generally accepted practices and a response could therefore be expected, the issue becomes more problematic where, as one interviewee put it, '*you train people to go into somewhere and press a panic button that literally doesn't exist in those societies.*' Difficulties were raised on two grounds. The first was practical:

> '*I can't see how we can be expected to provide services where they don't exist. I don't agree with the view that we're a research institute so we can't do anything at all, but it has to be within context.*'

The second was ethical:

> '*I think one definitely needs guidance that says you should make sure your presence as a researcher does no harm to anybody vulnerable – that's a clear principle...I would question whether researchers should be responsible now for imposing different kinds of protection values and practices on people in other settings and I think it might be quite dangerous to do so.*'

Elevating such interventions into a universal principle, which effectively gives researchers a humanitarian mission, made these researchers wary and put into question their ability to contribute to the general well-being of the population through the function of research as a public good in its own right.

In different field settings, it was relatively common for information sheets to discuss the limits of confidentiality and that researchers may have a duty to report disclosures where someone was at risk. One research manager discussed how it could be useful to phrase that as '*relevant agencies,*' a deliberately general formulation that left open for discussion with the participant who these might be (though may potentially run the risk of raising false expectations if not backed up with subsequent action). One researcher, working on a project with high risk of safeguarding concerns, spoke of maintaining a contingency fund to cover safeguarding risks (paid for out of the lead researcher's consultancy, which allowed flexibility in its use). This could address safeguarding needs, such as a taxi to take participants or other community members to a clinic. In this case, the amounts needed were small and therefore affordable, but it was acknowledged this would not necessarily be a sustainable solution in all contexts. For this reason, this interviewee emphasised that due allowance needed to be made for safeguarding in research budgets, as it is important

> '*to know that there are funds available to support people, it's very disempowering to report and feel nothing can be done.*'

As well as ensuring referral pathways and appropriate support for survivors, it is important to know how to follow up serious allegations against organisation staff as part of a comprehensive reporting regime. While some large NGOs have trained investigation teams, this resource is not always available to others, and unlikely to be standard for HEIs. HEI interviewees discussed the need to make contingency plans for such investigations and potential challenge of undertaking them in distant settings. It may be advisable in such circumstances to access a consultant. The *PSEA*

Implementation Quick Reference Handbook [141] was highlighted as a useful resource in planning for this eventuality.

Reporting to funders: The role of funders is important in setting the tone for safeguarding and ensuring adoption of policies and good practice. Some interviewees spoke of the importance of an environment where uncertainties and even mistakes can be shared, so that the lessons can be learned. One survey respondent suggested as a step forward: *'Clear and confidential reporting mechanisms, possibly along two tracks. One which allows for a 'no fault, but lessons learned' process and the other to be for more serious cases.'* In our consultations with funders, they recognised the need for a supportive approach to building capacity in this field, in order to achieve the standards that will be expected. Research Ethics Committees (RECs) have a potentially important role in this regard, and existing frameworks (e.g., ESRC, European Commission) already incorporate expectations for ongoing monitoring and allow for provision of ongoing ethics advice, as well as general reporting of untoward incidents arising within projects. EU funding, for example, incorporates 'ethics deliverables' into grant requirements, as well as incorporating the option of requiring an independent ethics advisor for ethically complex or high-risk projects.[142]

Discussion

This review has explored the research sector's responses to new requirements and definitions relating to perennial problems of ethical research, risk and duty of care. NGOs have largely taken steps to bring their policies into line with what is required by DFID's due diligence requirements[143] and are gaining experience in meeting the challenges that this presents, which is not to say that these are simple to resolve. Many HEIs, meanwhile, although they have considerable institutional experience of dealing with many safeguarding-related issues through their RECs, face the challenge of agreeing policies on safeguarding that span across the range of their activities, where this has previously been considered primarily in the light of responding to statute within the UK, and often with a primary focus on students. Training, guidance, bullying and harassment policies, and research ethics processes may between them effectively cover many of the issues of concern, but the shift to safeguarding as an overarching framework means there is a need to map out provision comprehensively in order to pick up any gaps that might weaken practice in international development research and adequately extend existing policies to field research contexts, where there may be little oversight from the institution and differing sociocultural norms and legal frameworks. One interviewee based in a LMIC organisation asked

> *'Can existing mechanisms be sufficient? Is there room to consider what institutions are already doing to protect their populations?'*

Certainly, the focus on safeguarding should not be about reinventing effective practice for the sake of it. Rather, it should mean taking the opportunity to review critically what is already done and systematise the lessons from it, sharing good practice wherever possible across the sector. Avenues to facilitate this would be widely welcomed.

While good practice was a core focus of the consultation interviews, very few interviewees felt able to highlight case examples exemplifying it. They felt that the process of embedding is at an early stage, with limited evidence available as to its effects. This echoed the findings of our scoping review, which identified few sustained examinations of cases exploring good practice in research. Interviewees were either unable or, occasionally perhaps, unwilling to discuss how safeguarding issues had been investigated and what the results were for perpetrators, and the few safeguarding

reports they mentioned having received in the context of international development research related to safeguarding issues originating outside the interviewee's organisation.[b] Many suggested that they might be able to answer more confidently in six to twelve months' time. It is clear that there is a wealth of experience within individual researcher and team practice, both within the UK and among partners in LMICs, but this has often not previously been categorised as safeguarding, making it difficult to extract the lessons in an overview exercise like this one. For example, some interviewees referred to what one called a form of '*parallel ethics process*' practised within a '*community of practice ethics*' among those working on research on conflict-affected societies, that operated informally as a more contextually-informed back-up to official ethics procedures and facilitated deeper thinking about the issues. The new focus on safeguarding in international development research has sharpened interest within institutional research services in establishing networks and shared repositories of learning, and in following up and learning lessons from events in the field, to strengthen approaches to safeguarding.

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[b] The BBC has recently reported widespread use of non-disclosure agreements by HEIs, which would of course limit what relevant information could be discussed on these matters. See BBC (2019) *UK universities face 'gagging order' criticism*. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-47936662 (Downloaded 25th April 2019)

Funders and researchers alike recognised in the interviews that this is a process rather than an event. It is one thing to require policies and referral mapping, but harder to assess their quality, and some funders noted that this is a learning process for them also. In the interviews, funders expressed the intention that the capacity-building aspect of ODA would extend to safeguarding and be built into bids. The aim is for a culture where safeguarding is not simply a matter of tick-box compliance with due diligence requirements, but an aspect of tailored, case-by-case planning for all individual projects. Research organisations would value supportive approaches that facilitate efforts to put appropriate measures in place before awards commence, even if not everything is yet in place at the point of bidding. Funding agencies are looking to see how they can monitor progress in the embedding of safeguarding to ensure that it is addressed meaningfully. If this is to work effectively it will be important to consider the nature of what gets reported to funders. One interviewee at an NGO noted with regard to safeguarding reporting to the Charity Commission:

> 'We report nearly everything because the guidance is quite woolly, not tight enough – we would rather over-report. If one of our researchers fell over and gashed his head, it's safeguarding and we'd report that.'

Another research organisation stated:

> 'We went through a lot of iterations of learning about that. Although I think the Charity Commission has got this much broader definition, I think their reporting is still very much on the old definition, in terms of what they expect you to share. I think it will develop as cases come up.'

While there is guidance on what to report (Charity Commission 2018), these differing views show the scope for interpretation that is an inevitable part of safeguarding reporting. Therefore, given the varying definitions and understandings of safeguarding that we have noted, funders should aim to provide clarity in setting out reporting requirements if the data is to be meaningful.

Concerns were expressed among some researchers that, while the focus on safeguarding presents welcome opportunities to discuss and improve practice, it might also lead to increased 'risk-avoidance' on the part of institutions, with a chilling effect on research on unstable contexts where research on crucially important social and political issues relevant to international development take place. There were also worries about administrative burden. The concerted efforts of funding agencies to move forward in alignment, rather than each asking for something different, are helpful in this regard.

Developing suitably flexible yet rigorous principles and policies, for application across the broad range of approaches and settings that constitute research in ODA-eligible countries, requires persistence and dedication from funders, research organisations, and researchers. It is also necessary to consider the diversity to be found among researchers, a category which includes academics at all career levels, NGO staff, and consultants or contract researchers; the more openly available shared learning can be made, the more effective efforts to raise standards across the sector will be. Sustained discussion of these issues between all stakeholders, carried out with genuine willingness to learn from each other, held promising potential to improve research practices and the contribution they can make to the well-being of the people with whom research engages.

Key Principles of Safeguarding Practice

The suggested principles and guidance for good practice outlined below are informed by the literature review, policy review and stakeholder interviews described. Different evidence sources addressed these issues in varying degrees of detail, and thus together provided insight into the complexity of the topic and the range of issues to be considered in principles and practice.

These principles and guidance have drawn on options being explored by stakeholders as well as analyses in the literature. We have been conscious that principles and guidance must be suitable for application across differently resourced organisations and therefore cannot assume extensive capacity or in-house expertise. They must also be applicable across the wide range of ODA-eligible research: this covers not only studies focusing directly on harm and abuse, or taking place in humanitarian contexts, but also studies involving other forms of community work (e.g. on environmental sustainability), or indeed economic development activities that may be based on product development where there is limited direct contact with communities or participants.

It must be noted, however, that neither the literature review nor the stakeholder interviews (nor any of the other sources of information) provided clear evidence of specific good practices. While the evidence review was able to identify many challenges facing safeguarding against harm, it also underlined that evidence for the effectiveness of policies and procedures in the research field is limited. Although good safeguarding practice can be identified at the level of individual research studies, few stakeholders were confident that it was yet possible to confidently evaluate the effectiveness of efforts to introduce and implement specific safeguarding policies. These proposals, and suggestions for how funding agencies might follow up on the impact of changes, are therefore put forward for consultation on their feasibility and utility, rather than as any kind of definitive solution.

With these considerations in mind, we propose the following principles to inform safeguarding practice in international development research:

1. Funders, researchers and research organisations recognise their safeguarding responsibilities and declare their commitment to taking all reasonable steps within their power 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. This involves identifying risks, reasonable measures to mitigate these, and attention to the interests of potentially affected individuals and communities. At the same time, safeguarding efforts should also involve attention to unanticipated risks emerging from the research process.
3. Safeguarding efforts should be joined up within and between organisations as far as possible, with clarity on its 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 be supportive to encourage open 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-, and 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 in research should adopt a victim-centred approach (International Development Committee 2018), placing victims and survivors at the centre of responses.[144] This would involve clearly articulating standards of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, routes to raising concerns and reporting abuse, commitment to the rights and needs of victims and survivors, and listening to their voices in the development of policies and practice.

Good Practice Guidance

Clarity and scope of safeguarding

- The scope of safeguarding needs to be made clear within organisational policies, in joined-up fashion. Differences in approach (e.g. between statutory legislation and funder definitions) should be explained clearly to avoid confusion.
- Alignment of requirements between funders is important to avoid organisations needing to respond to multiple sets of requirements. NGOs and research funded by DFID are contractually required to meet DFID's due diligence requirements, so these serve as a useful basis for other funders to adopt.
- Existing policies and practice on bullying or research ethics may appropriately stand separately from safeguarding policies, but there should be an overarching framework making the relationship clear and enabling organisational mapping and audit.
- While recognising that no research is without risk, researchers are expected to make ethical decisions in thinking through risks in relation to specific research projects and putting in place reasonable steps to minimise and mitigate these, centring the interests of the person(s) at risk.
- Researchers cannot realistically be expected to resolve 'all forms of harm' they may encounter through their research or as a bystander, and boundaries of responsibility and expertise must be clearly defined, with team members having access to safeguarding advice.

Guidance and resources

- Many research organisations have a lead safeguarding officer and some have safeguarding champions in different areas of the organisation. These may be key sources of advice, guidance and awareness-raising. It is important that among them there is familiarity with safeguarding specifically in international development contexts.
- Organisational guidance should include advice and resources for identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns, including (a) anticipating and mitigating concerns in advance of a project starting, and (b) in terms of support or advice when concerns arise in the course of a project.
- Safeguarding policies should include or link to: scope of safeguarding; responding roles and responsibilities within the organisation; whistleblowing policy and appropriate reporting routes; interface with ethics, research integrity and misconduct, and human resources; training expectations; vetting procedures; risk management; how safeguarding incidents are recorded and reviewed; and accountability and management of safeguarding within the organisation. It may be useful to include specific discussion of research contexts overseas.

- Resources for safeguarding should be budgeted in from initial development of research proposals. Funders should consider requiring entries in the budget for appropriate safeguarding activity, which could include budget lines associated with training on safeguarding (for both UK-based and LMIC researchers), consultation with LMIC partners and community members on safeguarding needs and strategies, the development of project-specific safeguarding materials and translation of existing materials (policies, codes of conduct, and so on), printing of documents, and support to reporting mechanisms.

- Research organisations would benefit from a repository to make template safeguarding resources available in different languages. This could include: example codes of conduct and awareness-raising resources; initial resource mapping of referral support points and reporting requirements in different settings; case studies of how safeguarding issues have been addressed in the context of research studies. Planning is currently underway at DFID to create such a collective resource; in the interim, some research organisations have made a start on collating their own resources.

- To avoid risks of duplication or inconsistencies associated with proliferating regulations, as well as gaps between different regulations, organisations should undertake mapping of existing resources and systems (e.g., HR, research ethics) and to develop these only as necessary to encompass safeguarding requirements.

Training and researcher support

- Generic safeguarding training, often done through online modules or as part of induction, should be mandatory for relevant employees, students (e.g. doctoral) and researchers throughout research organisations. At a minimum, this should cover awareness of what safeguarding is, common risks and vulnerabilities, expectations on responding, and knowing where to find further guidance and advice.

- In keeping with the advice above to build on existing strengths where possible, organisations should map safeguarding content currently incorporated in ethics and research methods training and adapt if necessary.

- Awareness of safeguarding could form part of assessment of researcher capacity and expertise in funders' assessment of grant applications as part of wider efforts to build culture change and encourage engagement in training, although this should be complemented by commitment to invest in resources for safeguarding within research funding.

- As generic safeguarding training in some institutions is unlikely to focus on international activities, further training may be necessary for international development research. This might focus specifically on PSEA in international contexts (including common risks and vulnerabilities); safeguarding challenges when working in contexts with different cultural norms and legal systems; managing the challenges of safeguarding within international partnerships; and building safeguarding alert and whistleblowing mechanisms and responses into research plans. Wherever possible, such training should be based on case studies relevant to situations researchers might encounter and take into account trainees' baseline knowledge. Because of the wide variety of safeguarding challenges that different research projects may face, it is hard to be prescriptive about content and this training may be best delivered largely within research teams or communities of practice familiar with the specific risks, in consultation with safeguarding leads, and linked to fieldwork or project needs.

- Research projects should consider incorporating ongoing training and capacity building, e.g. by scheduling regular discussions of safeguarding issues for researchers in the field and, where warranted by the project, through appointment of a safeguarding advisor.

- Support for fieldworkers who are confronted with emotionally challenging safeguarding situations in the community should be available.

Safeguarding and ethical review

- Safeguarding processes should be reviewed by research organisations to ensure that key issues (e.g. codes of conduct; off-duty conduct; working relationships with colleagues; response to safeguarding discoveries that arise incidentally to the research) do not slip through the cracks between research ethics review and other procedures. RECs have an important but specific role in overseeing issues of conduct, risk and vulnerability within current safeguarding procedures, which complements that of Human Resources, Safeguarding Officers / Committees, lead researchers and other parts of the organisation.

- Existing research ethics frameworks are likely to address many aspects of safeguarding. These issues might be made more explicit with ethics review processes to facilitate recognition and mitigation of potential safeguarding risks and foster the development of a common language for discussing safeguarding with collaborators and funders. This practice would also highlight the potential for RECs to support researchers with monitoring and ongoing management of safeguarding concerns and reporting, in line with existing frameworks (e.g. ESRC). Elements of project applications which are found not to sit comfortably within the research ethics review process might be given parallel review by an appropriate safeguarding officer.

- RECs should consider the attention given to feedback, reporting back on field experiences, and learning lessons in their processes. Particular attention may be given to closing the learning loop between decisions by RECs here, RECs in the countries where the research is conducted, and feedback from communities about safeguarding concerns or avenues for reporting (see below).

- In ODA research projects where ethical reviews may not be required or appropriate (e.g. where research does not directly involve human subjects), project leaders should take reasonable steps to show that they have alternative risk-proportionate and sufficient measures in place with regards to mitigating risks and vulnerability.

Working in partnerships

- A basic requirement for research projects should be to map, agree, and regularly review codes of conduct, key referral points for safeguarding concerns, and relevant legal reporting requirements.

- Discussions about safeguarding with partner organisations should as far as possible be conducted in the spirit of two-way learning and capacity building, rather than imposed as a set of requirements, particularly when these might be in conflict with local cultural contexts and standards. Equally, this involves honest acknowledgement of the requirements imposed by funders, international commitments and legal requirements. This involves recognition, on the part of UK-based researchers, of the norms and standards of the countries in which they are working, and of the neo-colonial dynamics of imposing UK-centric standards. This is in line with large-scale approaches to research funding in the UK, as illustrated by UKRI's Global Challenges Research Fund, a key component in the delivery of the UK Aid Strategy, which explicitly notes its commitment to 'genuine and equitable' global partnerships centred on capacity building and co-development of activities with international partners.[145]

- Approaching partnerships in a spirit of collaboration can enable the tailoring of safeguarding strategies to local contexts, ultimately rendering them more effective. Given DFID's

Enhanced Due Diligence requirements that first tier partners ensure appropriate safeguarding standards 'down the chain', working collaboratively with partners can ensure that this takes place. Safeguarding guidance should recognise that collaborative approaches to safeguarding (e.g. in relation to information sharing, the limits of confidentiality and reporting policies) involving communities and partner organisations are not only ethically sound, but also ensure greater buy-in.

- Collaborative approaches to safeguarding can also enable UK-based researchers and institutions to learn from local safeguarding approaches, which can strengthen safeguarding efforts.

Reporting and whistleblowing

- Communities and research participants should be consulted about how they would wish to report concerns, and viable means of reporting made available to them accordingly. Reporting mechanisms need to be independent and accessible.
- Reporting mechanisms should be clear and should anticipate and address the key barriers to reporting. Several of these are described under this section above.
- Wherever possible, there should be multiple reporting options, but at least one should always be clearly independent of the research team.
- People reporting should be advised of the response and what to expect. Consideration should be given to what immediate support can be provided.
- A suitable individual within one of the collaborating research organisations should be designated as 'safeguarding focal point' for any research collaboration, providing a clear line of accountability and oversight in-country.
- There is already a duty on organisations and a process to report research misconduct, which would encompass many safeguarding incidents arising from researchers failing in their duty of care to 'do no harm', to research funders. The interface of this duty with safeguarding could be usefully mapped and reinforced.
- To mitigate one barrier discouraging reporting, funders should reinforce the message that support for projects will not normally be threatened by responses to infractions by one individual or organisation.

Learning lessons

- Where research involves community participants, opportunities to learn from them about their experience of the research, including safeguarding aspects and strategies, should be built in to research design and fed back to research communities wherever possible.
- At both a project and an organisational level, collective review of safeguarding issues should be regularly scheduled and action points carefully followed up. Lessons learned from this should feed into regular review and ongoing adaptation of safeguarding guidance, policies and resources, building on input from local partners and communities. At organisational level, it is recommended that safeguarding become a standing item for senior management to consider reporting rates and lessons learned.

Suggestions to Evaluate Change

Meaningful evaluation of the impact of changes to safeguarding in research is challenging, as stakeholders in the research were only too aware. Uncertainty over the scope of safeguarding may lead to confusion or inconsistency, with variations in reporting practice. Funders could therefore consider focusing on specific priority areas of safeguarding, as in the DFID due diligence

requirements, in order to set effective SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-limited) goals. The following three levels set out which changes in practice could be assessed.

1. Design and adoption of policies

This is the easiest level to assess through audit mechanisms and policy content analysis. It is relatively straightforward to determine whether: (a) organisations have policies in place that make explicit the safeguarding aspects of research and researchers' responsibilities; (b) have instituted and mapped the content of safeguarding training provided; (c) make use of codes of conduct for all international development research and agree these with collaborating organisations; (d) require a safeguarding focal point to be named for each research project; (e) follow good practice in establishing reporting mechanisms; and (f) have procedures in place to review and learn from safeguarding events in the course of research.

One example of how this is already being done is DFID's due diligence assessments on grant applications received. Other funders could consider instituting similar assessment processes on incoming grants and adopting similar formats to reduce administrative burden.

2. Change in knowledge and attitudes of researchers

Confirming the existence of policies does not in itself prove that they are being implemented. Knowledge and attitude change of researchers can be evaluated through future research, in any or all of the following ways:

- Evaluation of safeguarding training received by relevant researchers

- Survey of fieldwork experiences regarding risk and safeguarding

- Levels of researcher reporting of safeguarding concerns

Evaluation of training is standard practice in most organisations, so could be applied once safeguarding training has been mapped or developed. Evaluations could be collated on an ongoing basis at organisational level, to inform further development and ensure relevance.

3. Effects on the conduct of research

Reporting is often used as a proxy for real levels of safeguarding concerns. However, low reporting could mean that preventive measures have been effective or, equally, that the reporting mechanisms in place are inaccessible or ineffective. Reporting levels cannot therefore be treated in isolation from the context but are a valuable indicator where mechanisms have been put in place to address the barriers highlighted earlier. Research teams should as a rule actively seek feedback from both local fieldworkers and community members to establish how far this has been successful. This is a particular area where attention to ethics applications and practice should show what is being done.

A key indicator of safeguarding success is whether the person affected feels that the response has been satisfactory. Inevitably, research organisations may often not be told of individual outcomes, although they should keep the person informed of actions being taken and provide every opportunity for feedback. Where known, the satisfactoriness of outcomes is an important element in learning lessons to improve safeguarding processes. Funders should consider carefully how much information is needed in order to monitor change and require the minimum of case details commensurate with that goal. This will limit confidentiality and legal concerns.

Conclusion

The current focus on safeguarding presents a fresh opportunity to examine the research community's responses to perennial challenges. Developing suitably flexible yet rigorous principles and policies, for application across the broad range of approaches and settings that constitute 'international development' research, requires persistence and dedication from funders, research organisations, and researchers. Many of our interviewees, from research organisations and funding agencies alike, were cautious when asked about case examples of good practice. They felt that only seeing the results of new policies, training and measures over the next months would allow them to make judgements about how effective these were. At the same time, many felt that sustained discussion of these issues between all stakeholders, carried out with genuine willingness to learn from each other, held promising potential to improve research practices and the contribution they can make to the well-being of the people with whom research engages.

Appendix A: Literature and media review scoping review

1. Search terms

Searching for relevant literature was conducted by combining search terms in three categories: safeguarding-related; international development-related; and research-related.

Safeguarding-related terms	International development-related terms	Research-related terms
safeguarding abuse harassment bullying exploitation violence sexual protection vulnerab* Additional terms used for media searches: accuse* suspect* assault* murder* killed abduct kidnap*	international humanitarian development Afghanistan OR Algeria OR Angola OR Antigua OR Barbuda OR Argentina OR Armenia OR Armenian OR Aruba OR Azerbaijan OR Bahrain OR Bangladesh OR Barbados OR Benin OR Belize OR Bhutan OR Bolivia OR Botswana OR Brazil OR Brasil OR "Burkina Faso" OR "Burkina Fasso" OR "Upper Volta" OR Burundi OR Urundi OR Cambodia OR "Khmer Republic" OR Kampuchea OR Cameroon OR Cameroons OR "Cape Verde" OR "Central African Republic" OR Chad OR Chile OR China OR Colombia OR Comoros OR "Comoro Islands" OR Comores OR Mayotte OR Congo OR Zaire OR "Costa Rica" OR "Cote d'Ivoire" OR "Ivory Coast" OR Cuba OR "Djibouti" OR "French Somaliland" OR Dominica OR "Dominican Republic" OR "East Timor" OR "East Timur" OR "Timor Leste" OR Ecuador OR Egypt OR "United Arab Republic" OR "El Salvador" OR Eritrea OR Ethiopia OR Fiji OR Gabon OR "Gabonese Republic" OR Gambia OR Gaza OR "Georgia Republic" OR "Georgian Republic" OR Ghana OR "Gold Coast" OR Grenada OR Guatemala OR Guinea OR Guam OR Guiana OR Guyana OR Haiti OR Honduras OR India OR Maldives OR Indonesia OR Iran OR Iraq OR Jamaica OR Jordan OR Kazakhstan OR Kazakh OR Kenya OR Kiribati OR Korea OR Kosovo OR Kyrgyzstan OR Kirghizia OR "Kyrgyz Republic" OR Kirghiz OR Kirgizstan OR "Lao PDR" OR Laos OR Lebanon OR Lesotho OR Basutoland OR Liberia OR Libya OR Madagascar OR "Malagasy Republic" OR Malaysia OR Malaya OR Malay OR Sabah OR Sarawak OR Malawi OR Nyasaland OR Mali OR "Marshall Islands" OR Mauritania OR Mauritius OR "Agalega Islands" OR Mexico OR Micronesia OR "Middle East" OR Moldova OR Moldovia OR Moldovian OR Mongolia OR Montenegro OR Morocco OR Ifni OR Mozambique OR Myanmar OR Myanma OR Burma OR Namibia OR Nepal OR Antilles OR "New Caledonia" OR Nicaragua OR Niger OR Nigeria OR "Mariana Islands" OR Oman OR Muscat OR Pakistan OR Palau OR Palestine OR Panama OR Paraguay OR Peru OR Philippines OR Philipines OR Phillipines OR Phillippines OR "Puerto Rico" OR Rwanda OR Ruanda OR "Saint Kitts" OR "St Kitts" OR Nevis OR "Saint Lucia" OR "St Lucia" OR "Saint Vincent" OR "St Vincent" OR "Grenadines" OR "Samoa" OR "Samoan Islands" OR "Navigator Island" OR "Navigator Islands" OR "Sao Tome" OR "Saudi Arabia" OR Senegal OR Seychelles OR "Sierra Leone" OR "Sri Lanka" OR "Solomon Islands" OR Somalia OR Sudan OR Suriname OR Surinam OR Swaziland OR Syria OR Tajikistan OR Tadzhikistan OR Tadjikistan OR Tadzhik OR Tanzania OR Thailand OR Togo OR "Togolese Republic" OR Tonga OR Trinidad OR Tobago OR Tunisia OR Turkey OR Turkmenistan OR Turkmen OR Uganda OR Ukraine OR Uruguay OR Uzbekistan OR Uzbek OR Vanuatu OR "New Hebrides" OR Venezuela OR Vietnam OR "Viet Nam" OR "West Bank" OR Yemen OR Zambia OR Zimbabwe OR Jamahiriya OR Jamahiryria OR Libia OR Mocambique OR Principe OR Syrian OR "Indian Ocean" OR Melanesia OR "Western Sahara"	researcher safety researcher responsib* research ethics research conduct research integrity research methods methodological fieldwork reflection

2. Databases Searched and Results Obtained

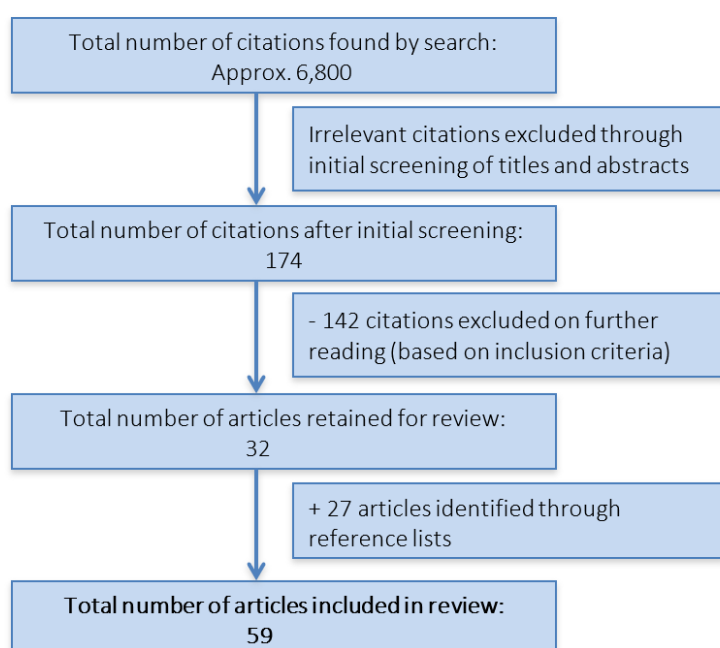Literature review: Number of citations resulting from search strategies by database

Database	Total citations retrieved	Citations included after screening	Citations included in review
Anthrosource	459	22	6
Web of Science	830	69	14
Eldis	1,391	20	0
IBSS	499	39	11
BLDS	611	6	1
Global Health	1,607	7	0
Hand-searched journals	1,502	11	3
Other articles	-	-	27
Total	**6,899**	**174**	**62** **Excluding duplicates: 59**

Note: These figures have not been filtered to take duplicate into account.

Media review: Number of citations resulting from search strategies by database

Database	Citations retained for review
Nexis	35
The Guardian	8
Devex	1
Reliefweb	0
Charity Today	0
Third Sector	0
Times Higher Education	1
Total	**45**

3. Literature screening and selection process

Total number of citations found by search:
Approx. 6,800

Irrelevant citations excluded through initial screening of titles and abstracts

Total number of citations after initial screening:
174

- 142 citations excluded on further reading (based on inclusion criteria)

Total number of articles retained for review:
32

+ 27 articles identified through reference lists

Total number of articles included in review:
59

Appendix B: Survey questions

Survey for researchers

Q1 - Are you a:

       a.   Member of faculty based in UK based institution
       b.   PhD or post-doc based in UK institution
       c.   Member of faculty in non-UK based institution
       d.   Phd or post-doc in non-UK based institution
       e.   Freelance or independent researcher
       f.   Other

Q2 - In your view, to what extent is safeguarding in international development research addressed as part of research procedures and guidelines in your current or most recent institution?

Q3 - In your view, to what extent is safeguarding in international development research addressed as part of research procedures and guidelines from your current or most recent research funder?

Q4 - Have you received any training or guidance on safeguarding as part of your international development research?

Q5 - How or from whom did you receive guidance and/or training about safeguarding procedures and policies?

Q6 - In your view, where do the key uncertainties and/or challenges lie regarding safeguarding when conducting research in international development contexts? Please give brief details. (These might include but are not restricted to: - awareness of context-specific safeguarding risks and resources - agreeing and implementing common standards and procedures across partner organisations and contexts - providing appropriate training - deciding and implementing appropriate reporting and response procedures)

Q7 - In your view, how clear are roles and responsibilities currently for safeguarding in international development research?

Q8 - In your view, what realistic steps could be taken to strengthen safeguarding in international development research? When answering, please consider the different scales and levels of research (these might span from large-scale multi-agency research collaborations to small-scale practitioner research with a single agency).

Q9 - We will be conducting a small number of on-line follow-up interviews to gain a fuller understanding of views and challenges in this area. Would you be willing to participate in an on-line interview about your perceptions of safeguarding in international development research?

Survey for Research Organisations

Q1 - What policies does your organisation have to cover safeguarding in international development research?

If these are available on-line, please provide a link. If not, we would be grateful if you could indicate if there is any way of obtaining them.

Q2 - Which roles (if any) within your organisation would have responsibility for oversight and/or response to safeguarding issues in international development research? There may be more than one person, given the scope of safeguarding.

Q3 - In your organisation, is there currently dedicated training on safeguarding that would apply to international development research?

 Q4 - Who receives this training, and when?

Q5 - If there is training, is it evaluated?

Q6 - Are any specific measures in place within your organisation to address barriers to reporting / whistleblowing in international development research?

Q7 - If incidents relevant to safeguarding occur in international development research in which researchers here are involved, are there processes in place for the organisation to log, review and learn from them?

Q8 - Approximately how many times has the organisation been alerted to potential safeguarding concerns in international development research in which it has been involved? (We are not asking for details, only an estimate of prevalence in the institutional experience.)

Q9 - Where your organisation's staff work in collaboration with other organisations in international development research, how are safeguarding expectations handled?

Q10 - In your view, what are the current strengths in your organisation's approach to safeguarding in international development research?

Q11 - In your view, what are the key challenges for your organisation regarding safeguarding in international development research?

Q12 - What realistic steps could be taken to provide support for strengthening safeguarding in international development research (either in your organisation or by others)?

Q13 - We will be conducting a small number of on-line follow-up interviews to gain a fuller understanding of views and challenges in this area. Would you be willing to participate in an on-line interview about your perceptions of safeguarding in international development research?

Appendix C: Policies reviewed

Bangor University	Terre des Hommes
Bristol University	University of Bath
Brunel University	University of Birmingham
Cardiff University	University of Cambridge
Child Fund	University of Central Lancashire
Christian Aid	University College London
Durham University	University of East Anglia
Goldsmiths University	University of Edinburgh
Imperial College London	University of Exeter
Institute of Development Studies	University of Glasgow
King's College London	University of Greenwich
Liverpool John Moores University	University of Huddersfield
Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine	University of Kent
London School of Economics	University of Leeds

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine	University of Leicester
Loughborough University	University of Liverpool
Newcastle University	University of Manchester
Northumbria University, Newcastle	University of Nottingham
Open University	University of Portsmouth
Overseas Development Institute	University of Reading
Oxfam	University of Salford
Oxford University	University of Sheffield
Plan International	University of Southampton
Queen Margaret's University London	University of Ulster
Queens University Belfast	University of Warwick
Save the Children	University of York
School of Oriental and African Studies	War Child

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