

Global Faith and Child Safeguarding Summit 2021: an inter-faith event

Interactive summary

A big thank you to the summit sponsors

As an independent not-for-profit, we depend on the generous support given by people and organisations. With your help, we can prevent child abuse by closing safeguarding gaps in organisations around the world, help make sure children have someone to turn to if they are abused, train more staff to prevent abuse, help stop abusers and bring them to justice, and empower children and families to understand child abuse in organisations and what needs to be done to stop it.

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Muslim Hands

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Between 8 and 11 November 2021, Keeping Children Safe hosted the first ever global inter-faith summit on faith and child safeguarding.

The event gathered professionals, activists, researchers and policy makers from different faiths and regions to share and discuss challenges, best practices and opportunities for child safeguarding in faith-based and faith-inspired organisations.

Almost 2,000 people around the globe attended the 75 talks and panels over three days and everyday more people register to view the recording of the conference online.

We created this resource summarising the content of the event so that many more can have access to it in this different format. What is more, we expect to translate this content into French and Spanish to help more organisations put safeguarding at the heart of everything they do. Both the summit and this document are free to access.

I am happy to announce that the second edition of the Faith and Child Safeguarding Summit will take place in 2022 and that this event will be completely in Spanish. *Espero darle la bienvenida allí.*

Sarah Blakemore
Keeping Children Safe
CEO

The complete Faith and Child
Safeguarding Summit 2021
is available online on-demand
for free! [↗](#)

Requires registration.

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Valentina Mirabolano

[Keeping Children Safe](#)

Research and Advocacy Manager



Since the launch of the Child Safeguarding Standards in 2002, there has been a growing recognition that, as well as risks to children from staff and associates, inappropriately designed programmes and poor operational management can also create risks to children.

Keeping Children Safe (KCS) represents a commitment by those working in this sector to ensure that their organisations 'do no harm' and that they meet the responsibilities set out in the UNCRC to protect children from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. Drawing on the knowledge and experience of experts, KCS developed the Standards, which was supported by a comprehensive toolkit for implementation.

Paulo Sergio Pinheiro, the independent expert for the UN Study on Violence Against Children, acknowledged the importance of the toolkit: 'It offers an excellent opportunity not only for the improvement of the quality and professionalism of those working with children, but most importantly, it will help to achieve a greater impact for children.'

From publication, thousands of organisations and professionals worldwide have used it. The increasing demand for the toolkit reflects the growing recognition by organisations, which work with, impact on, or come into contact with children, that they have a responsibility to keep them safe.

The [KCS International Child Safeguarding Standards](#) outline the key elements required to keep children safe and their requirements.

Standard 1: Policy

The organisation develops a policy that describes how it is committed to preventing and responding appropriately to, harm to children.

Standard 2: People

The organisation places clear responsibilities and expectations on its staff /associates and supports them to understand and act in line with these.

Standard 3: Procedures

The organisation creates a child-safe environment through implementing child safeguarding procedures that are applied across the organisation.

Standard 4: Accountability

The organisation monitors and reviews its safeguarding measures.

As a result of implementing the Standards:

- Children are protected. No standards can offer complete protection for children but following these minimises the risk of harm.

- Organisation staff and associates are protected, It will be clear how they are expected to behave with children and what to do if there are concerns.
- The organisation is protected as it makes clear its commitment to keeping children safe, helping them to move towards best practice in this area.

There are enormous variations in local practice and circumstances but experience in applying the Standards in different contexts demonstrates that they do not need changing or diluting because of cultural or contextual differences. Nor do practices that are harmful to children have to be tolerated or condoned.

Organisations should discuss how best to apply the Standards in the local context, what behaviour they should demand of their own staff and partners and how they want to be credible as child-safe organisations.

Resources

[Free self-assessment tool](#)

[Child Safeguarding Toolkit \(PowerPoint\)](#)

[Understanding Child Safeguarding](#)

[Implementing Child Safeguarding](#)

[Management of Child Safeguarding Allegations](#)

[Victims and Survivors Programme](#)

Child protection is everyone's responsibility: our journey to equip an entire organisation to keep children safe



Chloe Banks
Mother's Choice
Manager Safe Families and Child Protection

- Building policies, developing trainings and workshops, signing a code of conduct
- Monitoring and measuring changed knowledge and attitudes
- Influencing our partners and wider society.

Mother's Choice is a Certified Member of Keeping Children Safe.

We achieved the highest level of [certification](#) in 2021. It confirms that we are implementing a comprehensive child safeguarding framework based on the International Child Safeguarding Standards:

- Our policy describes our commitment to preventing and responding appropriately to harm to children
- Our people have clear responsibilities and expectations, and we follow safe recruitment practices
- Our procedures reflect our child-safe environment at every level of our organisation
- Our accountability is reflected through monitoring and review of our safeguarding measures.

Resources

[Introduction to child protection](#)

[Introductory videos to child protection at Mother's Choice](#)

[Staff and volunteer code of conduct and signing statement](#)

All resources are available in Chinese (Cantonese) at info@motherschoice.org.

Barriers to reporting abuse within Muslim faith institutes

Rahmanara Chowdhury
Markfield Institute of Higher Education
Course Lead for Islam and Pastoral Care and Head of the Centre for the Study of Wellbeing

Farooq Mulla
Imam and Chaplain

Belinda Winder
Nicholas Blagden
Nottingham Trent University



Victims experienced various forms of abuse including sexual, physical, psychological and spiritual.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was applied to the data and a number of themes elicited. For the purposes of this paper, the focus was limited to a brief overview of the impact of such abuse and barriers to reporting abuse within faith institutions.

The impact of abuse within a faith context, and whilst victims were children, was profound. Victims exhibited a myriad of immediate, short- term and long-term trauma symptoms. As a result of such symptoms, they often faced further isolation coupled with the isolation caused by the abuse itself. For example, bed wetting resulted in avoiding social contact. As children, victims were unable to fully comprehend the abuse and therefore the impact became prolonged and cumulative.

The most profound impact was on their faith identity, often resulting in victims distancing themselves from their faith before commencing a difficult journey towards reclaiming their faith identity within adulthood.

In attempting to seek support, victims met with barriers at numerous levels. These included in relation to the abuse itself; within the institution and religious leadership context; at a family level; and within a community context. Victims were often ignored, blamed, shamed into silence, or made to feel as though the abuse was their fault.

Why is child protection (child safeguarding) important?

At Mother's Choice, we believe child protection is everyone's responsibility. It is everything we do to prevent and respond to child abuse. Each member of our team has an important role to play as we create safe, child friendly environments where every child is respected, protected and heard.

How did we break down our child safeguarding journey into action steps?

- Understanding the need to prioritise child safeguarding and, gaining buy-in from leadership and board
- Investing internal resources (staff, training hours, resources)
- Measuring baseline child protection knowledge and attitudes to understand strengths and gaps across teams
- Change management process – Creating ownership for every individual to play a role

One on level religious leaders were placed on a pedestal making it difficult for ordinary congregation members to believe that they could carry out such abuse. On another level, individuals with religious authority mis-used religious text and beliefs to impose silence and guilt onto victims and further colluded with perpetrators to maintain the silence. Furthermore, statutory forms of support were felt to be failing victims due to the high criteria for successful prosecutions.

Faith Institutions are recommended to ensure the adoption of good governance, both in practice and theory. Transparency and accountability were identified as being critical within this. Community members were encouraged to exercise the power they hold to question dubious practices and lack of transparency.

Co-creating a safeguarding culture: networking on prevention and child rights protection in Marist ministries



Raimon Novell

[Maristes](#)

Child Safeguarding Coordinator (Catalonia)



Maristes are experiencing a change of institutional culture that is driving us to working non-stop in the process of prevention and protection of children's rights in all the levels of our educational works. We are immersed in a process of the cultural co-creation of safeguarding from the work on the net. And we are very conscious that children and youth rights are one of the essential pillars of our mission.

The cultural change of our institution is focused on considering the children and the young people as legal subjects, not as objects we should protect. The boys, girls and teenagers are the protagonists of their growth and their vital project. They are people with their own ideas and expectations, with their own points of view, and with their social civil and political rights, who participate and contribute to this change. Empowering them must be another step in the creation of the safeguarding policy. This cultural change moves us to work in a network, in our own Marist network and online with other institutions and entities of our environment who share the same objectives.

In the Marist world, on the one hand, we have a European network and an international network because we are present in 81 countries in the world; on the other hand, in the local environment, with all the schools and social workers with the training of professionals and working with the materials on the protection of children (3-18 years old). Beyond the Marist world, we work with other public or private entities, organisations, and institutions from whose experience we may learn and we can also enrich them with ours: some examples are Keeping Children Safe, the Spanish Agency for Normalization (UNE), UNICEF, EDUCO, Porticus Iberia; these are entities that also work in order to co-create the way of changing the culture of the Catholic organisations.

The Marist institutional commitment (as stated in the General Chapter in Medellín, 2017) is in line with the Catholic Church commitment. We answer to the four transformations asked by the Pope in His letter to the people (2018): respect the children's rights; proceed from protect the credibility and reputation of the institution to deal with the reports of abuses with responsibility and transparency; put victims at the centre and make a commitment to create safe environments both from the psychological and emotional point of view as from the physical one.

As main conclusions, we state that the change of culture needs to consider the children and the young people as legal subjects of rights and participants of the safeguarding policies. We align ourselves with the international standards of protection and we make a firm commitment.

We work in a network, the bigger the better, in order to co-create the safeguarding culture, bearing in mind that the victims are always at the centre.

This process entails a style change of the old way of doing, a change of attitude and to have a critical look at our organisational culture in order to understand what is happening in our institution and to work in a proactive way to offer much a better environment than in the past.

Resources

[Maristes Catalunya – Drets dels Infants](#)

[Marist Bicentenary: Gratitude, Forgiveness, Commitment – Message of Br. Emili Turú, Superior General](#)

[Carta del Sant Pare Francesc al Poble de Déu – Letter of His Holiness to the People of God \(2018\), Francis, vatican.va](#)

Certification programme: churches that protect



Carmen Álvarez
[Viva Latin America and Caribbean](#)
 Director



According to the latest reports, domestic violence increased between 50 to 70 per cent during the weeks of lockdown. This figure is an indicator of a society that has lost its ability to establish peaceful relationships. That is why it is necessary to create and facilitate safe spaces that promote a culture of peace and fair relationships, which allows boys and girls to fully develop their God-given potential. We want the Christian church to be a protagonist in the protection of children and adolescents, interested in eliminating the risks of harm to the integrity of children and adolescents in their context.

The certification programme includes three key sectors of the population to create conditions of protection: those who directly care for children; children themselves; community, family, church and school. This does not exclude the involvement of other different social actors to create sustainable protection spaces.

The protection certification programme includes three key components:

Protects – Development of Protection Policies for churches that work directly with children and

adolescents in different programmes such as Sunday schools, camps, clubs, summer schools, etc. It is aimed at church leaders and decision makers and those who work directly with them in order to build capacity to prevent and deal appropriately with cases of abuse, through the implementation of norms and procedures that are in line with the law both national and international, and to the ethical values of the Christian life.

Let's protect ourselves – Development of skills for self-protection and protection of peers to avoid and identify situations of risk of abuse. It is expected to develop containment pillars and self-protection mechanisms.

Protect – Work with the community, the schools and the families, in order to become guarantors of the protection of children and work to change the social perception about abuse and its role in prevention.

At the end of the process, we expect that each certified entity has: a protection officer, a protection committee, a protection policy, a policy implementation plan, a code of conduct.

Results to date: nine countries in the region, 17,313 adults involved and trained, 694 churches and 117 facilitators.

Please get in touch with Isaac Saldívar at i.saldivar@viva.org for more information on the Certification of Churches that Protect.

Viva has consultative status with the United Nations (UN) Committee on Economics, Social and Cultural Rights.

Munetsi Zowa
Villages of Hope Africa
Senior Pastor, Centre Director and Board Chair

Faith leaders and practitioners are seen as responsive, caring and committed to the issue of social justice.

Most faiths do have education platforms, rapport with children and the trust of children as advantages. It is these advantages that need to be used positively to buttress and speak into matters of child safeguarding. Given the negative child abuse incidences that have plagued some of the faiths, it will help to amplify the voices of faiths in child safeguarding matters.

Every faith works with children in some way - most faiths are passionate about indoctrinating children. Every faith works within the context of a community and has the attention and respect of some people in that community. This places faith in a key place in the issues of child safeguarding. Not just the safety of those children that are a part of the faith but every child within the community where the faith exists and serves.

Faith movements and organisations can do more by having a proactive culture of safeguarding that prioritises children's safety. Faith communities that take issues of children safeguarding seriously are a blessing to the child within the faith community and society at large.

Faith-based organisations need to amplify their voice matters of child safeguarding. Every child has a right to safety. Where we serve, we always say that *every child is everyone's child*.

The general motivation of every faith makes people favourably disposed to them.

Within the faiths We know that most faiths have a great passion for discipleship. Having the same passion for safeguarding as we do the passion for discipleship will ensure those children being served within are kept safe. This can be done by ensuring that tenets of faith are augmented with local policy, charters and other statutory instruments that uphold and speak to children's rights and safety.

Beyond our faiths To the outside world, there is a need to become a moral voice challenging some oppressive and dehumanising practices that exist in some sections of society.

Our voice can be amplified by:

Policy
Having internal child safeguarding policies and adhering to policies that exist within other legal frameworks I believe helps each faith reach those outside our faith.

Practice
People need to see a practical example of child safeguarding. People will respect a faith that is demonstrating in practice what it teaches.

Presence
Being available to participate in issues to do with child safeguarding regardless of who is championing them.

Passion
Treating issues of safety with the same passion as we do other matters of our faith.

Promote
Ensuring the voice of the children is heard in matters of their safety.

Resources
[Villages of Hope Child Protection Policy](#)
[UNICEF Children in Islam: their care, upbringing and protection](#)

Responding with RAHMA: removing roadblocks for Muslim survivors of sexual violence



Navila Rashid
HEART
Co-founder and Co-executive Director

Nadiah Mohajir
HEART
Outreach and Community Engagement Manager



This guide will provide a public health understanding of sexual violence, discuss barriers survivors may face disclosing their experiences, and finally share a three-tier framework to addressing and preventing sexual violence developed by HEART.

Key takeaways

- Gender-based violence is a form of power-based violence that includes spiritual, emotional, physical, digital, financial and sexual violence that one person commits against another.
- Spiritual abuse is the misuse of religious teachings to gain power and control over an individual.
- Sexual violence is any unwanted, non-consensual sexual act.

- Child sexual abuse is any sexual act between a minor (usually defined as an individual under 17 years of age) and an adult due to the age-based power differential between the persons.
- A public health approach to effectively addressing power-based violence, such as sexual violence, teaches us that we need to look beyond the individual harmed and instead shift the focus to addressing the root causes of violence, which typically are perpetuated at the institutional and structural levels (rape culture, islamophobia, racism and so on).
- Holding simultaneity: binaries of ‘heroes’ and ‘monsters’ can lead us to think in terms of either /or, but in reality, those who do good can also cause harm.
- No quick fix: recognise that power-based violence is a deep-seated issue and requires an ongoing commitment and practice; there is no quick fix.

Barriers to Reporting for Children Survivors:

- Children survivors have to disclose sexual abuse to seven different people before they are believed.
- Shame and fear, lack of access to language to talk about their bodies, harmful narratives about protecting family honour are some of the barriers to disclosure.
- Mandatory reporting in the United States.
- Certain people are required by federal and state laws to report specific harms to the police or child protective services. They are typically above the age of 18 and work in healthcare, social work and so on.

- Who is a mandated reporter varies by states. If you reside or work outside the United States, we encourage you to check out your countries’ respective guidelines.
- Mandated reporting has certain limitations, including enabling a system of surveillance and an environment of fear that can further cause harm in our communities, specifically in communities of colour.

RAHMA, AMANAH and ADALAH frameworks help us address harm in a trauma-informed way and hold organisations accountable to seek justice and prevent further harm.

To respond to and prevent sexual violence, we need to work at every level to create change. HEART has developed a three-pronged framework that works to address sexual violence at three levels: individual (Respond with RAHMA), communal (Fulfill your AMANAH) and institutional (Lead with ADALAH). Using these frameworks together can ultimately create communities that reduce barriers to reporting, respond to victims in a compassionate and non-judgemental way, and create mechanisms for accountability and prevention. Moreover, these frameworks are not meant to be used in one moment in time, but rather as a continuous, ongoing exercise.

Respond with RAHMA – Level of intervention: individual, in partnership with survivors. Who: everyone. Purpose: crisis intervention, one-on-one support. Ultimate goal: connect person.

Fulfill your AMANAH – Level of intervention: community. Who: community members, organisational and religious leaders, social services professionals in partnership with survivors and professionals. Purpose: community

prevention and education. Ultimate goal: determine avenues of accountability.

Lead with ADALAH – Level of intervention: institutional. Who: leadership in partnership with trained professionals and survivors. Purpose: accountability. Ultimate goal: build victim-centric spaces.

HEART – This project is supported by Grant No. 2017-UD-AX-0006, awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, 'Grants for Outreach and Services to Underserved Populations program', US Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

Resources

[Barriers to disclosure](#)

[Barriers to disclosure 2](#)

[Responding with RAHMA: removing roadblocks for Muslim survivors of sexual violence](#)

[Fulfilling your AMANAH: framework](#)

[Leading with ADALAH](#)

[RAHMA-AMANAH-ADALAH frameworks](#)

[Let's talk about sex: the Muslim parent's guide to 'the talk' with their kids](#)

[Talking to kids about sexual violence](#)

Safeguarding in faith-based organisations: benefits, challenges and shared learnings



Kirsten Mullin
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[InterAction](#)
Programme Associate

Many of the interviewees felt that their organisation's values help to provide staff with a framework through which they can understand the essential role safeguarding plays in the organisation's mission

- Safeguarding needs to go beyond compliance. Safeguarding staff cannot be solely responsible for safeguarding within an organisation. Rather, it must be mainstreamed and integrated throughout the organisation to be successful. Ultimately, organisational culture change is necessary to prevent Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEAH)
- Collaboration is essential. Safeguarding is a responsibility of all INGOs, and all organisations are learning and growing on this issue. To advance as a sector, we must commit to sharing learning and resources between organisations.

In this talk, Kirsten Mullin presented on the findings of InterAction's case study: [Safeguarding in faith-based organisations: benefits, challenges and shared learnings](#).

The case study examined how organisational values and culture in faith-based organisations informs an organisation's safeguarding approach. Five InterAction Members participated in the case study: [Islamic Relief USA](#), [World Vision US](#), [Habitat for Humanity International](#), [Food for the Hungry](#), and [Episcopal Relief and Development](#).

The study interviewed safeguarding staff from the five participating organisations on topics relating to organisational values, culture, integration of faith into safeguarding activities, work with institutional partners and challenges.

Key takeaways from the case study include:

- Utilise your organisational values to enhance your safeguarding efforts.

About the From Pledge to Action Project

In March 2018, InterAction launched its [CEO Pledge](#) on preventing sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment by and of NGO staff. The Pledge contains 16 commitments by CEOs of InterAction member organisations and partners to commit to policies and practices to prevent and respond to SEAH in their organisations. InterAction's from Pledge to Action Project works with InterAction Members to operationalise these commitments.

Panel: A conversation about conversion therapy

Jayne Ozanne
Joe Hyman
Glenn Miles
Catherine Bewley

Hyman, as a survivor of conversion practices himself, pointed out that when he experienced it, it was called 'reparative therapy' and that many organisations offer it hidden behind very unclear branding or different names.

What is the impact on children?

Hyman shared his experience within the Jewish community, experiencing conversion practices between the ages of 17-19. He identified the lies he was told of why he was gay as the building blocks of the talking therapy he experienced and admitted that at first he felt it was positive to have a space where he could share without perceived judgement – but it went downhill from there: he started to feel alone, depressed, utter sadness and not being able to experience any joy at any time because he was constantly asking himself 'is that gay?'. He pointed out that talking therapy is seen sometimes as less harmful because it looks and sounds like therapy but increasingly, he was losing a sense of who he was, and it reprogrammed his mind to see memories and experiences negatively. He reflected that it was an experience that still impacts his life today and by which he still feels hurt, having also affected his studies and life progression, stopping him from moving forward and accepting himself. When in reality all he needed was support to accept who he was.

Ozanne in turn shared her experience as a survivor of conversion practices in a religious setting for 20 years. Practices that led her to the hospital in two occasions, fighting for her life. She explained that generally, there are three phases: Silence, Church Prayer Ministry and Specialised Deliverance and Healing Ministry.

The purpose of the panel is to understand the practice called 'conversion therapy' in different faith settings through the voices of survivors and to discuss best practice, challenges, and experiences in protecting against and responding to harmful practices based on discrimination. This summary includes some of the key points made during the conversation.

What is conversion therapy?

Ozanne started by offering a definition of 'conversion therapy' as *any practice that seeks to change, 'cure' or suppress a person's sexual orientation or gender identity*, an umbrella term that can include talking therapies, prayer, hypnosis, aversion therapy (for example, electronic shock treatment), deliverance ministry, 'corrective rape' therapy. Ozanne stressed that all are equally harmful and pointed out that the term conversion therapy is a misnomer, and legally it is preferred to use the term 'conversion practices.' In trying to define it, she recommended to include all forms (medical, psychological, psychiatric, cultural, and religious practices); cover sexual orientation and gender identity and have a change focus.

Panel: A conversation about conversion therapy

Miles shared his own personal story as a survivor of conversion practices and referred to how out of the three organisations that he contacted two have now acknowledged that what they did was wrong. He explained that conversion practices impacted his relationship with God, with peers, with his family and led to depression and anxiety.

Bewley recalled that what happens to children has life-long impacts and effects across their lives in all respects and referred to the importance of naming and seeing what is going on in terms of conversion practices, which are not named and recognised as other adverse experiences are, which makes young people very isolated.

Ozanne shared her research on [Faith and Sexuality](#) (2018) and some of the findings, which include: some people are forced to attempt to change, over half were 18 or under, religious beliefs or homophobia are some of the main reasons to do it voluntarily, the main person sought for advice was a religious leader, nearly half had to leave their religious groups and two thirds did not feel they moved on to leave a happy life, significant impacts on mental health with over two thirds having suicidal thoughts and a one third attempted suicide as a result.

What can we do to safeguard children and support survivors? Miles recommended that organisations review their safeguarding policies, what it says about sexuality and discrimination, about spiritual abuse and how seriously the organisation would take if someone were found to be counselling children to pray the gay away. He explained the importance of interviewing staff and new recruits, especially those who

have direct contact with children and suggested asking: what is your biblical understanding of sexuality? What is your primary consideration when working with LGBTQI+ children /youth? Is it that God can help them to become 'straight' /'normal'? are they people who would choose to affirm people in their faith and sexuality? Miles also suggested that a conversion therapy survivor can be helped by listening to them and taking them seriously – he pointed out that conversion therapy has been described as a form of torture by the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims and that if they are ready to hear it they can be assured that God loves them and always did, and reassure them that happiness and satisfaction as an LGBTQI+ person is very possible. And lastly refer to specialist help. Ozanne also suggested affirming their faith and who they are, breaking the isolation and connecting with affirming faith groups and boost their confidence.

Bewley commented that at Gallop they see cases of conversion practices across all faiths and in different spiritual groups. For them, there are two key things: recognising this is an issue and responding. She urged all professionals to become more knowledgeable and versatile in dealing with conversion practices to be able to identify it and in turn, act. It is very easy not to see the risks and potential harm children are experiencing without a proper framework and awareness of indicators and signs, as there are with other types of abuse. When it comes to response, Gallop works from a multiagency response, with proper risk assessment, considering the impact, listening from the young person's point of view and what they would like, and putting it very firmly in their safeguarding framework.

Panel: A conversation about conversion therapy

Bewley pointed out the benefits in linking with LGBTQI+ faith organisations and LGBTQI+ organisations and referred to a video for professionals on how to respond to LGBTQI+ identity and abuse linked to witchcraft and spirit possession. Watch the video [here](#).

The panel finalised with final remarks from the panelists and a video from the [Global Interfaith Commission](#) on LGBTQI+ lives, with senior religious leaders who together are trying to have these conversations with their religious groups and support the ban of conversion practices. Watch the video [here](#).

Panelists

[Jayne Ozanne](#)

Is a well-known gay evangelical who works to ensure full inclusion of all LGBTQI+ people of faith, particularly in the Church. She was appointed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to be a founding member of the Archbishops' Council for the Church of England (1999-2004). In 2009, after years of personal struggle as an evangelical Christian trying to reconcile her faith with her sexuality, she came out as gay to her friends and family. Her story is documented in her memoir, *Just Love*. In 2014, she decided to become more publicly engaged with the sexuality debate within the Church and in 2015, she was elected back onto the Church of England's General Synod. She has since been heavily involved in campaigning for equal rights for the LGBTQI+ community, notably tabling a Private Members Motion in July 2017, that led to the General Synod condemning Conversion Therapy and calling on the government to ban it. In 2019, she was invited to be a founding member of the government's LGBT Advisory Panel.

[Joe Hyman](#)

Is a conversion therapy survivor and Jewish LGBTQI+ activist in the UK.

[Glenn Miles](#)

PhD (Swansea Uni), PGCE-PCET (Trinity St. David's), FHEA, ACIEA, MSc. (UCL-CICH) RN-A and RN-C (KCL-Florence Nightingale Faculty), RN (BoN, California, USA), Dip Biblical, Cross-cultural and Pastoral Studies (ANCC), Cert Trop. Med. (LSHTM) has been working on issues around children at risk and vulnerable young adults for the past 25 years. Miles is a child health nurse who has 25 years' experience of working in Southeast Asia. He has pioneered three international NGOs in Cambodia. He started and finalised the Chab Dai Longitudinal Butterfly research project from 2009 to 2012. He led a series of research interviews with boys, men and transgender in Cambodia, Thailand and the Philippines. He developed the toolkits *Good Touch Bad Touch* and *Youth Against Pornography*. He teaches /supervises graduate level Holistic Child Development in the Philippines and Ethiopia.

[Catherine Bewley](#)

Is the Head of Sexual Violence and Young People's Services at Galop, the UK's LGBTQI+ anti-abuse organisation. Galop runs services for LGBTQI+ people experiencing hate crime, domestic abuse and sexual violence and has recently opened the UK's Conversion Therapy Helpline to support LGBTQI+ people who have or are experiencing conversion practices. She has over 35 years' experience in the voluntary sector and led the development of Galop's work with survivors of sexual violence and young people for the last 12 years. She is the Designated Safeguarding Lead across Galop and heads Galop's advocacy and support work with LGBTQI+ children facing violence and abuse. She is co-Chair of London's Rape Reference Group, the independent advisory group to the Metropolitan Police Service.

Live Q&A panels and other talks

Here is a list of some the talks and Q&A panels held during this date of the event that have not been included in this summary:

- [Developing a safeguarding policy at Muslim Hands](#)
A talk by Arpana Das, Muslim Hands
- [A message by Fr. Hans Zollner](#)
A talk by Hans Zollner, Pontifical Gregorian University
- [Faith and safeguarding children: what can be done on both grassroots and institutional levels?](#)
A talk by Dana Humaid, Interfaith Alliance for Safer Communities
- [Faith, human rights and child safeguarding](#)
A talk by Rosa Freedman, Reading University
- [Q&A](#) with Chloe Banks – Mother's Choice, Sarah Blakemore and Valentina Mirabolano – Keeping Children Safe, and Arpana Das – Muslim Hands
- [Q&A](#) with Rahmanara Chowdhury – Markfield Institute of Higher Education, and Farooq Mulla
- [Q&A](#) with Carmen Alvarez – Viva Latin America and Caribbean and Raimon Novell – Maristes
- [Q&A](#) with Kirsten Mullin – InterAction, Navila Rashid – HEART and Munetsi Zowa – Villages of Hope Africa



9 November 2021

Child safeguarding: ending Online Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Philippines. Be SMART. Be SAFE.



Katerina O Veneracion
Philippine Children's Ministries Network
Project Coordinator



In child protection, the Online Sexual Exploitation of Children (OSEC) has emerged as one of the pressing issues for children in our society. As the COVID-19 pandemic hit the Philippines, there was a drastic increase in OSEC cases. The situation proved that children are the most vulnerable in society, with a rising number of cases of violence -sexual abuse and exploitation against children- during the quarantine period in the Philippines. From 1 March to 24 May 2020 – in the early weeks of the lockdown – the Department of Justice (DOJ) reported 202,605 cases of OSEC, or a 265 per cent increase compared with the same period the previous year. Social networking giant Facebook also found 279,166 images of child sexual abuse and similar content on its site from March to May 2020.

What exactly is OSEC?

It is the production, for online publication, of visual depictions (for example, photos, videos, live streaming) of the sexual abuse or exploitation of a minor for a third party who is not in the physical presence of the victim, in exchange for compensation. This is a violation

of Republic Act 9208 or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2003. Child rights agencies advocating the end of OSEC in communities like the Philippine Children Ministries Network (PCMN) and the International Justice Mission (IJM) Philippines have been working together to provide intervention programs focused on prevention, rescue, and restoration. The work in OSEC should be a one-nation approach, it requires all sectors of the community to end OSEC.

Why is OSEC prominent in the Philippines?

Due to the high number of cases of sexual abuse in communities thus, resulting to OSEC cases. In the community, there are signs or red flags that may indicate that a child is a victim of OSEC. That is why it is important to create a safer home for a child. Teach children to be SMART and SAFE.

Prevention is always better than cure. That is why the prevention measures being done at home, and in the community are important. When in doubt, report. Whenever you see red flags of OSEC, and you are unsure, there is no harm in reporting.

It is crucial to teach your child to be SMART and SAFE. It is important that they can protect themselves from people that mean harm. Always safeguard your children and be the salt and light of the world!

Stay **Safe**.
Don't **Meet**.
Don't **Accept**.
Don't **Rely**.
Tell someone you trust.

Security.
Accessibility.
Family and friends.
Empowerment.

Why, when, what and how to do risk assessments



Vijaya Baskar
Keeping Children Safe
Senior Child Safeguarding Adviser

- Children into the design, delivery and
- Evaluation of programmes, operations and activities which involve or impact upon children.

Points to remember while conducting risk assessments:

- Be specific, as much as possible, while doing risk assessments. This would provide more clarity and help everyone to understand
- Check – If the proposed mitigation controls would address the root cause of the identified risk?
- Analyse – Why and how the proposed mitigation control will be effective in addressing the risk?
- Analyse – Is it feasible to implement the mitigation control? If yes, can it be sustained?
- Analyse – If your organisation would require any additional resources (financial, human resources or other resources) to implement the proposed mitigation controls?

Resources

- Free self-assessment tool
- Child Safeguarding Toolkit (PowerPoint)
- Understanding Child Safeguarding
- Implementing Child Safeguarding
- Management of Child Safeguarding
- Allegations
- Victims and Survivors Programme

Why is it important to do risk assessments?

A risk assessment of organisation's operations, programmes and project activities can help the organisation:

- Identify possible /potential risk to children understand the level of risk
- Help to integrate strategies to mitigate risk to

Exploring a different lens for safeguarding in faith communities



Tina Campbell
Jesuit Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES)
Assistant Coordinator

social origins of abuse. In this way, we effectively promote a culture that safeguards all vulnerable persons, especially minors'.

The project started with a Global Safeguarding Survey of 80 Provinces. It uses what it defines the Triple A approach to facilitate assessment of the stage where each Province is regarding safeguarding. The Triple A Approach is: Awakening, Awareness and Action. The PCCP believes that accompaniment of those working in safeguarding is most important and we remain mindful of cultural challenges in safeguarding.

It is important to consider the possibility that safeguarding is viewed through a different lens. If the lens is focussed on Child Protection, or sexual abuse, or the past or minimisation it is possible that it becomes a narrow lens. Sometimes the focus might be on abuse happening elsewhere not just in faith communities. Victims are sometimes regarded as 'out of focus' and regarded as difficult or demanding. There is also a narrow lens which leads to 'othering' of victims, as if a victim is not a whole person.

In recent years there have been several Inquiries into non recent (historical) abuse. Reports in the process and outcomes, in Australia and Ireland for example, might lead one to imagine that abuse was a past issue. In England and Wales, there is currently an Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. Significant reports have been written about both the Catholic and Anglican Church which have exposed cover-ups, horrendous systematic abuse and poor treatment of victims. In Scotland, the Child Abuse Inquiry is still exposing non-recent abuse in orphanages and other residential settings for children, dating back some 100 years.

I am the Assistant Coordinator of the Promotion of a Consistent Culture of Protection (PCCP). I also work as a Safeguarding Consultant. My background is in education and psychotherapy. I have worked for 21 years in Safeguarding for the Catholic Church in Scotland and continue now in a global post with the Society of Jesus (Jesuits). I am remotely working from home in Scotland at present, with a PCCP base in Rome.

The PCCP is located within the Secretariat for Social Justice and Ecology (SJES) in Rome, Italy. It is placed in this context because safeguarding is regarded by the Jesuits as a justice issue.

Fundamental to the work of the PCCP is the 2nd Universal Apostolic Preference which states: 'We commit ourselves to help eliminate abuses inside and outside the Church, seeking to ensure that victims are heard and properly helped, that justice is done, and that harm is healed. This commitment includes the adoption of clear policies for the prevention of abuse, the ongoing formation of those who are committed to mission and serious efforts to identify the

The lens which looks at victims and acknowledges their pain is crucial for a robust safeguarding approach in our faith communities. Victims can often feel excluded by the Church and yet some seek to return to having a faith relationship and a sense of belonging to their community. Pope Francis (who is also a Jesuit) has reached out to victims and reminded the Church and the world of their pain. Placing the primacy of the dignity of the person at the heart of safeguarding we should consider how that might impact amongst our faith communities as we work collaboratively for the protection of the most vulnerable and the desire to prevent abuse.

Rings of protection: scripture as a safeguarding mandate and model



Chiseche Mibenge
[Episcopal Relief & Development](#)
Director, Gender Initiatives

Abiy Seifu
Episcopal Relief & Development
Senior Program Officer

Robert Sihubwa
Church of the Province of Central Africa Parish
Priest and Youth and Children's Coordinator



The panel was moderated jointly by Chiseche Mibenge and Abiy Seifu, colleagues within Episcopal Relief & Development's international programme team. Abiy and Chiseche facilitated a dialogue with a friend and programme partner, Robert (Bob) Sihubwa, a Parish Priest in Lusaka Diocese (Zambia) and a Youth and Children's Coordinator for the Church of the Province of Central Africa¹. The panel was inspired by Matthew 18:6, which unequivocally states the wages of exploitation and abuse of children.

¹ The Church of the Province of Central Africa is part of the Anglican Communion and includes 15 dioceses in Botswana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

'If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea.'

In order to centre a child /youth perspective in the dialogue around safeguarding, the panellists opened with a personal reflection on their childhood memories of feeling safe and feeling insecure or threatened in their faith communities. Bob and Abiy spoke about their first separation from their mothers in Sunday School and at First Communion, respectively, and Chiseche recalled the first time she understood her priest's opposition to women's equality. Bob demonstrated the power of faith leaders to provide a moral and institutional impetus for positive safeguarding culture and practice through the application of scripture. He deftly made high-level policy and guidelines from the Church of the Province of Central Africa legible and accessible to lay persons that are, alongside governments, church and school administrators responsible for safeguarding children.

Bob drew from Exodus 2: 1-10, the story of the Levite woman that bore a son that was sentenced to death by Pharaoh. The infant, a Hebrew child, was rescued from the waters of the Nile by Pharaoh's own daughter. She named him Moses, *'Because,'* she said, *'I drew him out of the water.'*

Bob spoke about the most basic needs of the persecuted Hebrew child that the family met with their meagre resources: nutrition, love, shelter, prayer and protection from Pharaoh's agents. He pointed out that even Moses' sister, herself a child, was entrusted with guarding the basket. His reflection ascended from the nursing mother

Child safeguarding: a child's perspective

to neighbours that respond to the cries of an unknown child, to Pharoah – representing the State infrastructure. Bob speaks about Pharoah's transformation, as he ultimately provides the Hebrew boy with all of government structures of protection. And finally, the reflection describes God's elevation of the status of a child to his very status.

The child is the standard for entry to heaven, and this alone should inspire safeguarding policy and practice as a spiritual and material imperative.

The [Q&A](#) brought the panelists into discussion with Sergio Bersaglio, the Executive Director of Villages of Hope (VOH) Africa whose extensive work with faith leaders in Zambia brought many shared experiences as well as knowledge exchange between VOH, Episcopal Relief & Development and the Lusaka Diocese (Zambia).

Sergio Bersaglio
[Villages of Hope Africa](#)
 Executive Director



When it comes to child safeguarding, it is essential to listen to children's perspectives. Villages of Hope (VOH) Africa interviewed fifteen children from three of our centres. During the interview, the children shared their experiences with child safeguarding and the impact VOH Africa's Child Safeguarding Policy has on their lives. The children also shared what makes them feel unsafe and safe.

We learned from the children that a child safeguarding policy creates an environment that makes them feel safe. This safety has a direct impact on their confidence and overall wellbeing. This gives them the courage to speak out about any concerns.

Training is essential for a child safeguarding policy to be effective. The VOH children spoke about their training and how it has helped them feel safe at their centre. Child safeguarding training contributes to a positive relationship between children and staff. If children feel unsafe, they need to know who to take their concerns to and what to expect after reporting their concerns.

All this leads to a cooperative effort by staff and children in ensuring our centres are safe places for children.

When the children spoke about what makes them feel unsafe, there were two recurring themes. The first was living in a community that is lacking in child safeguarding awareness. Organisations working with children should raise awareness on child safeguarding in communities. The second was when they were around other children who bullied or teased them. Words are as harmful to children as actions. Organisations working with children need to train staff and caregivers on how to deal with bullying among children. This will help children feel safer, even when bullying occurs. A code of conduct for children helps reduce negative interactions.

Children feel safer when they know the organisation caring for them is concerned for their safety. In addition, children have a greater sense of security when they know the child safeguarding officer and the members of the child safeguarding team personally. Having the right people in these positions is vital. They need to be people who are accessible to children and trustworthy. Children respect staff and caregivers who have their best interests at heart.

In addition to the children, we interviewed a former student who is now the headteacher of a VOH centre. She spoke about her memories of when VOH first introduced their child safeguarding policy in 2004. She said that at first, the children were not sure if the staff would hear their concerns. However, over time, they came to trust the leadership and policies.

As the person responsible for implementing a child safeguarding policy at a VOH centre,

she is confident it makes the centre a safe place for children and contributes to their development. This headteacher's testimony illustrates that child safeguarding impacts a child for life.

As a faith-based organisation, we are called to love God and love each other as we love ourselves. VOH children and staff understand that child safeguarding is a way of loving others; as love grows, so does the safety of children.

Panel: Youth empowerment in faith-based organisations: training and empowering children and youth on safeguarding

Kira Blumer
Nancy Maguire
Art Nel L Bencolado
Maaria Mahmood



In this panel, youth leaders and experienced professionals discussed what it means to empower and incorporate the voices of youth in the creation of safe and accountable faith-based organisations and places of worship, including the wide range of faith-associated activities like youth movements, camps, education institutions, and more.

Main takeaways

Talk about safeguarding with the youth in your programmes, normalise it as part of the culture, and use youth-centered language that is accessible. Include them in the process whenever possible; youth can give feedback on the policy, complaints procedure and code of conduct.

Youth should be at the centre of decision-making processes, and should be surrounded by diverse staff and volunteers. Youth need to feel seen and represented in order for a space to be truly safe and welcoming.

Youth communities should be understood like an ant colony; everyone has a role to play in creating a safe, respectful environment.

Youth are a critical piece of the community, not just staff and adults. Run capacity building sessions for youth. Make them your partners by educating them about these topics and empowering them to act. Training for youth can include knowledge of their individual rights, what to expect from the adults in their lives, and how to report an incident. It is important to also include leadership and life skills to ensure that youth can truly partner with you in managing complex situations. Leadership skills, public speaking, training on how to offer peer support and what safeguarding looks like in a youth-led environment are crucial.

When speaking with youth about safeguarding issues, redefine certain topics within their context. Creating a safe environment for peers necessitates a discussion about consent, relationships, harassment and abuse between youth, helping them understand how things may manifest between peers as well as with adults.

The informal youth sector is often unregulated or managed by volunteers who do not have the same training and capacity as paid staff. It is vital to ensure they receive excellent training in safeguarding and that they receive the support they need to handle challenging situations.

In addition to standard items in a safeguarding policy like child abuse, forced marriage, and neglect, it is important to add topics like bullying, healthy and safe relationships and how to support youth from racialised backgrounds. Cultural competency when handling disclosures or referring on to government services is vital for the creation of a truly safe space for all members. Learning about the youth in your care and their individual or cultural needs without making assumptions will allow you to tailor your

response appropriately. And on that topic, one should never make assumptions about gender identity or sexual orientation of participants. It is important to understand their social and cultural expectations from a generational perspective as well, and to enter all discussions with an open mind in order to create a safe and inclusive space.

Last, consider including safeguarding on your feedback forms. Ask your participants whether they felt safe throughout and if there is anything you could have done differently. This open dialogue will allow you to learn and adapt to the needs of your members.

Moderator

Kira Blumer

Is the CEO of [Tzedek](#). Her work centres around two core aspects: supporting local NGOs in Ghana and India through partner-led, sustainable development to help women and youth lift themselves and their communities out of extreme poverty and harnessing the UK Jewish community's commitment to equity and social justice. She is also the Designated Safeguarding Trustee at a leading UK Jewish youth movement. Kira lives in London, UK.

She is originally from Calgary, Canada, where she had the pleasure of working with Alberta's Jewish youth, cultivating and supporting young leaders. Kira has held numerous lay positions in the nonprofit sector, advising on youth development and community engagement.

Panelists

Nancy Maguire

Is a qualified social worker with over fifteen years of experience working with children and young people globally. Nancy leads the child and youth participation programme at international NGO [Lumos](#), as well as providing technical support to Changing the Way We Care. She has a particular expertise on inclusive participation – ensuring that children and youth with disabilities are included in participation initiatives.

Art Nel L Bencolado

Is the National President of the youth organisation [PCMN Youth for Safety](#), which is supervised by the Philippine Children's Ministries Network. In March 2021, he represented Thailand under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the Asia World Model United Nations. He was elected to the Youth Council holding Committee on Education and Culture in their barangay. He works to raise awareness and continue to amplify voices to End Online Sexual Exploitation of Children.

Maaria Mahmood

Is the Director of [Muslim Youth Helpline](#), which is a 20-year-old listening service providing emotional support to young people nationally in the UK. The service operates four platforms: phone, webchat, email and WhatsApp, where service users can find a safe space to be heard. Previously, Maaria worked in Dubai, UAE in Strategic Communications, managing a bilateral relations project spanning India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Maaria is a strategic communication professional with substantial experience within the international development industry.

Live Q&A panels and other talks

Here is a list of some the talks and Q&A panels held during this date of the event that have not been included in this summary:

- [Deenagers: safeguarding Muslim youth from exploitation](#)
A talk by Raymond Douglas, Socio Logical Ltd
- [Children must be safeguarded in communities from child marriage: the critical role of faith leader](#)
A talk by Liza Halder, Compassion International Bangladesh
- [Safeguarding practices: an approach to child safeguarding addressing socio-cultural norms and faiths](#)
A talk by Nazia Raza, Muslim Hands
- [Creating and maintaining safer, healthier cultures: a framework for action](#)
A talk by Justin Humphreys, thirtyone:eight
- [Understanding grooming behavior and enhancing educators knowledge](#)
A talk by Rahel Bayar, The Bayar Group
- [Q&A](#) with Raymond Douglas – Socio Logical Ltd and Katerina O Veneracion – Philippine Children's Ministries Network
- [Q&A](#) with Vijay Baskar – Keeping Children Safe, Liza Halder – Compassion International Bangladesh and Nazia Raza – Muslim Hands
- [Q&A](#) with Rahel Bayar – The Bayar Group, Tina Campbell – Jesuit Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat and Justin Humphreys – thirtyone:eight
- [Q&A](#) with Sergio Bersaglio – Villages of Hope Africa, Chiseche Mibenge and Abiy Seifu – Episcopal Relief & Development and Robert Sihubwa – Church of the Province of Central Africa

10 November 2021



Child to child safeguarding in the safety of a faith-based network of practice



Miriam Friday

[Viva Africa](#)

Director

Faith Kembabazi

[Children at Risk Action Network \(CRANE\)](#)

Director



Viva and CRANE's [Child Ambassador](#) model teaches children their rights in the safety of a faith-based network. It gives them space to grow in their understanding and leadership. If a child understands how adults should behave and what to do if they ever feel uncomfortable, then they are well placed to look out for each other.

In a country like Uganda where 56 per cent of the population are children, defending their rights is extremely important. [UNICEF reports that three in four young adults in Uganda experienced violence during their childhood.](#) The Child Ambassador model gives children a voice for speaking out against child abuse. Over the last 10 years, we have trained over 100,000 Child Ambassadors to defend their rights, helping them to be a part of the solution.

Child Ambassadors are elected by their peers from organisations and churches. Many creative methods are used to teach them, like dance, drama, music, games and discussions. Their learning and confidence grow as they learn how to be ambassadors. They learn life skills, like leadership, keeping themselves safe, looking after others, promoting the holistic wellbeing of their peers and holding adults in positions of authority to account for the protection of vulnerable children. Once the Child Ambassadors are trained, they go back to their communities to lead local Safe Clubs.

The school or organisation appoints an adult Mentor to support the Child Ambassadors to take action in their community. Child Ambassadors have taken their friends to report cases of abusive parents to the police and their cases have been taken seriously. A key part of the Child Ambassador programme is to work concurrently with local community leaders and parents to help them to know how to parent their children positively.

If the church leaders teach parents about the value and protection of children and give them practical ways to do parenting, then things begin to change. Churches work with schools, organisations, local leaders, police, children and parents to form Child Protection Committees. These increase community awareness of violence and abuse of children, teach children how to keep safe, how to report abuse and then coordinate the reporting process. The church becomes the manager of the child protection committee. The committees meet regularly to discuss cases. CRANE links the groups to police, prosecution, and local councillors to ensure strong links exist between the community and authorities.

Here are some ideas of what you might start to do to establish a Child Ambassador programme:

- Find like-minded people in your community and talk about how and when you can engage children. Who can help you design some fun activities to help children to learn?
- Select community mentors. Screen and train them in how to work with children. Set up some basic systems for reporting and accountability.
- Create a safe environment for children to learn, talk and ask questions. Talk to the children about their rights and responsibilities. Support them as they seek to set up peer groups.
- Find someone who understands the law and the scriptures, and help to plan some roundtable discussions of local leaders and start talking about what you can do together. Meet the local religious leaders and ask them what their scriptures say about how children should be treated.

Resources

[Justice and advocacy – Keeping Children Safe Child Ambassadors](#)

[Being a Child Ambassador has built the inner me](#)

Practical application of safeguarding policies and generational challenges



Kira Blumer
Tzedek
CEO

- Decreased stigma around talking about mental health
- Generational differences in how parents understand these issues
- Religious communities often rely on young staff /volunteers to serve as youth workers for religious schools, camps and movements. These bring a powerful relatability for the kids in our care, but pose some unique challenges.



Kids /teens will always see their youth leaders at religious camp or programming as important role models, which means we are often on the front lines of safeguarding and disclosures for situations that occur outside our care, while also being responsible for providing a secure environment in our own institutions.

This double role features a lot in youth work and adds to the importance of getting our safeguarding procedures in order.

Trends among youth in 2021:

- Increased problems surrounding social media, body image, cyber-bullying and self-harm
- Increased number of mental health challenges, already on the rise long before the pandemic, now further exacerbated by it
- Schools struggling to implement their usual screening for safeguarding concerns due to the pandemic
- Kids and teens want to disclose these concerns

Challenges with young staff /volunteers:

- Younger staff sometimes struggle with distance and boundaries. They see part of the role as being accessible and available to youth
- Technology and social media make it very hard to manage professional separation
- Relationships that move into digital spaces (follows on social media, texting) challenge our understanding of safeguarding process and norms. If in person, an adult is forbidden from being in a room alone with a child, how does that translate to an online venue – FaceTime, Zoom and WhatsApp? Are online one on one chats the equivalent to being alone with someone? How do we monitor these conversations to protect the kids and the adults involved?

Some things to consider when writing your safeguarding policy:

- Have a practical safeguarding policy that acknowledges your specific circumstance. If it is not a living document that reflects your organisation, values and reality, it is not fit for purpose.

- How have you built safeguards into common modes of communication like texting or messaging on social media?
- Have a procedure for handling the sending / receiving inappropriate content by phone.
- What is your policy on using personal devices for contacting youth? Including, taking photos at events on a mobile phone?
- Do you have events that involve sleeping away from home? If so, what are your rules about staff entering the participant rooms?
- Personal relationships that begin outside or are brought in, like young volunteers attending the same school as participants or being family friends can really complicate professional boundaries. Are you training them to understand their responsibility as an adult and role model?
- What if a teen needs alone time with an adult to disclose a concern? It is important to create that space as trusted adults, but it is equally important to protect everyone by having the right process in place. Insisting on procedures like that you should speak to the child with the doors open, in a room with windows and notify another adult of the conversation taking place, can be lifesaving for an organisation should accusations, true or false, be made about a situation involving an adult.

Recommended training

- Healthy relationship and consent training for youth, staff or volunteers helps to build a culture of respect and a community with shared language around important issues. For example, my colleague arranged a session by JWA for camp staff last summer: aimed to

help them create a culture of consent at camp; recognise signs and behaviours that can lead to that lead to a harmful culture.

- Scenario training for staff: ensure that they have rehearsed scenarios before they arise, so they have the reflexes needed to manage difficult situations.
- Pair behaviour management training with safeguarding training for a holistic perspective on how to interact with youth: piloted by my colleague and found to be very successful. If staff do not have control over the kids and are not empowered to manage the group, it is hard to create safe spaces for everyone.

Key takeaways

- Familiarise yourself with broader youth trends whether you think it applies to your group or not. It is important to know what is happening in their ecosystem to plan appropriate safeguards and train your staff and volunteers to watch for issues that may present more subtly in some groups.
- Be honest about your organisation’s strengths and weaknesses, write policies and procedures that will support your specific needs and circumstances.
- Policies fall flat without real process and training to support a culture of safeguarding. Working directly with the youth in your care to create healthy environments is a crucial part of the process.
- Safeguarding involves honest, difficult conversations. Faith communities are not immune to these issues and it is our responsibility to do everything in our power to keep our kids safe.

Barriers to reporting abuse in religious communities in England and Wales: lessons from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse

Nick Donaldson

[Strengthening Faith Institutions](#)

Lead Consultant



The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) was established under the Inquiries Act on 12 March 2015 to look at the extent to which institutions in England and Wales have discharged their duty to protect children from sexual abuse.

Three of IICSA's 15 investigations are focused on religious organisations and settings:

- the [Anglican Church investigation](#) (2020)
- the [Roman Catholic Church investigation](#) (2020)
- the [Child Protection and Religious Organisations and Settings 'CPIROS' investigation](#) (2021).

The CPIROS investigation considered religious organisations and settings not part of the Anglican or Roman Catholic investigation, including Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Jewish, Sikh and non-trinitarian Christian groups. It focused on places of worship and religious supplementary schools.

All three investigations were critical of safeguarding practice in a number of religious institutions in England and Wales and all described barriers to reporting abuse: both externally within religious institutions and externally to statutory agencies. The CPIROS investigation summarises them in its [section C](#).

Barriers to reporting child sexual abuse in religious organisations identified by IICSA

Victim-blaming shame and honour – Victims, particularly women, being blamed for the abuse they receive /sexual abuse as a source of 'shame' for the victim /a link being drawn between the 'sexual purity' of an individual and their (or their family or community's) 'honour'.

Approaches to discussions of sex, sexuality, and sexual abuse – The lack of discussion and in some cases even vocabulary – to discuss these topics in some religious communities.

The use of religious texts and beliefs – The use of sacred texts to control and coerce, to silence and to prevent disclosure.

Abuse of power by religious leaders – The use of the significant power and authority held by religious leaders to perpetrate abuse and to reject challenge.

Gender disparity – Positions of spiritual and religious leadership in religious organisations, as well as senior lay positions, being occupied solely or predominantly by men, making it less likely that women feel able to disclose abuse.

Distrust of external agencies – Mistrust or fear of the involvement of the government body in

the religious organisation or people's personal lives, resulting in reduced disclosure to statutory agencies.

Fear of external reporting and reputational damage – Fear of damaging the reputation of the religious organisation, the individuals associated with it, or the wider religion or specific religious community through external involvement.

The desire to manage allegations internally – Various religious organisations encourage victims to report matters internally rather than to external bodies. The religious institution then decides if such reports are to be disclosed further.

Forgiveness – Forgiveness is a central tenet of many religious organisations. 'Pressure may be placed on victims and survivors to forgive their abusers, which may operate as a significant barrier to the disclosure of abuse... Placing pressure on individuals to forgive may also prevent any disclosures from being properly dealt with'.

Questions posed as part of the presentation:

To what extent might my religious community / setting put up each barrier to reporting?

If a victim experienced abuse in my religious community /setting, how accessible, supportive and effective would we be?

Can faith cause barriers to safeguarding?



Alexander Dressler
Keeping Children Safe
Head of Capacity Building

you is admirable, but asking a survivor to forgive a perpetrator of, for example, a sexual assault, may all too often cause more harm than good. The needs of the survivor have to come first.

Resources

- [Free self-assessment tool](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Toolkit \(PowerPoint\)](#)
- [Understanding Child Safeguarding](#)
- [Implementing Child Safeguarding](#)
- [Management of Child Safeguarding Allegations](#)
- [Victims and Survivors Programme](#)

Can our faith at times impede our safeguarding responsibilities?

Based on years of work with faith-based organisations, Dressler examined real-life cases where well-meaning persons caused more harm than good. All in the name of their faith.

Dressler identified three problem areas:

- Our basic belief in the goodness of human beings, especially those of our own faith
- Interpretations of sacred scriptures, which seem to offer a justification for abusive practices, such as corporal punishment
- The 'doctrine' of forgiveness.

The belief in the goodness of human beings, especially faith leaders, has too often resulted in survivors of abuse not being believed, by religious authorities, by law enforcement, or even by their families. Some interpretations of sacred scripture, such as 'spare the rod, spoil the child' has served as excuses for harming children. Forgiving people who have harmed

Community-driven approaches to implementing child safeguarding measures in faith communities in Zambia: lessons learned



Martin Kapenda
Tehila Zambia
Lead Director

Hannah Fairs-Billam
Tehila Zambia
Programmes Director and Technical Lead

The church is part of the non-formal child protection system in Zambia.

Engaging the church meaningfully can help to strengthen the linkages between the non-formal (family, communities, pastors, elders, headmen) and formal system (police, social welfare, health, NGO's and magistrates). There is a tendency in Zambia to rely on non-formal mechanisms to address concerns of child protection, involving negotiation between parties involved and promote a level of secrecy. This is in conflict with the formal system which requires transparency around reporting child abuse to the necessary authorities.

It is critical to engage the church on child protection issues.

Being an integral and respected part of the Zambian society, churches are positioned to influence and strengthen social norms. There are specific risk factors for children within church such as a tendency to elevate the 'man of God' or pastor, patriarchy, beliefs of forgiveness and repentance and the familiarity in the church community (unknown adults referred to as a child's 'aunt' or 'uncle'). Verses in the bible can be misinterpreted, for example, 'Spare the rod, spoil the child'. Churches can be engaged on issues of child protection by referring to bible verses around God's view of children and His heart for protecting them. Using biblical rather than secular language to describe the same concept can provide relevance and connection. For example, the term 'justice' which is mentioned over 600 times in the Bible, can be used to explain the concept of 'children's rights'.

A community-driven approach with churches can help to strengthen the linkages between non-formal and formal child protection mechanisms.

Churches will take ownership and responsibility for the children it serves, local resources will be used, community leaders in full support, children involved, power dynamics addressed, diversity celebrated, an openness to external training and resources and a focus on building linkages with other parts of the child protection system. Using a facilitator, learner model rather than being an 'external expert', Tehila have developed the Safe Places Pathway for churches which promotes community ownership and a sense of collective responsibility.

There are challenges for NGO's when adopting an authentic community-driven approach.

Donor dependency requires results within a specific timescale and yet an authentic

community-driven approaches typically take time to see measurable impact. International standards, particularly around reporting child abuse may not make sense or seem irrelevant to local people. This will not protect children and can lead to tick-box exercises driven by compliance (Munroe, 2020). A paternalistic approach and using images of crisis to raise money can ignore the entrepreneurs within the community and perpetuate the idea of communities being unable to act as agents of social change (Thompson, 2017). A 'children's rights' approach is individualistic and may conflict in a collectivist society (Canavera et al., 2016). Social work in Africa is embedded in Western individualistic methods, which may conflict with local mechanisms of protection. The concept of 'best interests' may look different in different contexts.

Integrating child safeguarding throughout the child sponsorship programme

Stefan Yordanov

[Keeping Children Safe](#)

Capacity Building Programme Manager



Child safeguarding is the responsibility that organisations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any concerns the organisation has about children's safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities.

Child sponsorship has been implemented by a number of faith-based organisations for many years. At the core of child sponsorship is the opportunity it presents to build a relationship between a child and a sponsor who is keen to support an organisation's work. Maintaining a relationship between an adult and a child is complex and presents risks to children's safety.

Although the majority of those wishing to sponsor a child do so with the best of intentions, child sponsorship does attract people who see child sponsorship as an opportunity to develop an inappropriate relationship with a child.

Sponsors wishing to develop inappropriate relationships with children will look for

opportunities to do so. In certain circumstances this constitutes 'grooming'.

This could involve sending inappropriate and offensive material to children, promising support to the child or family, attempting to make contact with, or make visits to, children who the organisation does not know about and is not managing, and potentially trying to 'adopt' the child with exploitative intent.

Sponsors who do sponsor with the best interests of a child in mind, do not always understand the potential risks for children and may themselves act in inappropriate ways.

Organisations implementing child sponsorship programmes should already be working to a child safeguarding policy and procedures which provide a foundation for designing, implementing and monitoring child safeguarding in child sponsorship.

Key takeaways

The risks of the child sponsorship programme need to be managed in the same way as other organisational activities that impact on, or create contact with, children. Potential risks of the child sponsorship programme would ideally be assessed at the design stage and the programme designed to include safety strategies which minimise or address the risks.

Organisations already implementing child sponsorship programmes will need to assess whether their current risk management measures reflect the risks, minimum requirements and good practice, and decide whether additional safety strategies are necessary.

The most effective way of monitoring the sponsorship programme is to discuss with both children and sponsors their experience of the programme and whether they have concerns about the safety of the sponsorship programme.

Resources

[Free self-assessment tool](#)

[Child Safeguarding Toolkit \(PowerPoint\)](#)

[Understanding Child Safeguarding](#)

[Implementing Child Safeguarding](#)

[Management of Child Safeguarding Allegations](#)

[Victims and Survivors Programme](#)

A commitment to child safeguarding: implementing a plan for your organisation



Matt Parker
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[HopeCo](#)
CEO



Abuse happens in all types of organisations – and all organisations must be committed to protecting children. Is your organisation Complacent, focused on Compliance or Committed to safeguarding children?

Complacent – Denies that abuse could happen; few policies or procedures; inadequate response to problems.

Compliance – Policies inadequately implemented; focus is on reacting, not prevention; staff struggle to know how to respond.

Committed – Policies inadequately implemented; proactive in preventing abuse; focus is on reacting, not prevention; clear policies and procedures; staff struggle to know how to respond; excellent training /risk management.

All organisations working with children face risks in the area of safeguarding. Confront this reality!

Your risks must be identified and prioritised, with actions to address these implemented in response. Develop a risk register and review / update it regularly. Stay on top of emerging needs and challenges! Develop and implement a clear safeguarding plan for your organisation: Keeping Children Safe provides an excellent [framework](#):

Policy – Make your commitment to safeguarding clear. Define different types of abuse. Describe approach to dealing with allegations. Clarify the responsibilities of your board, leadership, staff, volunteers, partners. Share the policy widely and train people in implementing it. Review it often. And learn from others!

Procedures – Keep child safety at the forefront of your planning processes. Carry out ongoing risk assessments. Have clear processes for dealing with problems. Constantly monitor children's interactions with others. In your publicity, only share information and images that are appropriate.

People – Make expectations of your people clear. Have everyone sign a code of conduct. Have a rigorous recruitment process. Provide ongoing training to staff and children. Monitor visitors and partners.

Accountability – Regularly audit your programs. Clearly define everyone's roles. Ensure effective processes for internal and external reporting. Get advice, support, and guidance from others!

Build a culture of excellence in safeguarding:

- It starts with your leadership
- Needs a clear vision – compelling, consistent, continuous
- Often involves a change in mindset – it takes time!
- Requires strong communication, collaboration and learning
- Can be disruptive and create tension at times
- Is continuous – a pursuit of 'uniquely better'.

In summary:

- Ask yourself: are you complacent, compliance focused, or committed?
- Identify your risks and address these
- Develop a clear plan and implement it
- Build a culture of excellence.

Safeguarding: a holistic systems approach

Elysia Nisan

[World Vision International](#)

Global Director of Safeguarding

Bill Forbes

World Vision International

Global Lead, Child Protection and Participation



World Vision's holistic approach to safeguarding includes strategy, planning, learning and action around the full spectrum of investments in our work. The health of our safeguarding system can be assessed based on key indicators in each of the primary areas of: prevention, reporting, response, learning and sharing.

Each of the areas of activity in safeguarding and can be used as a 'scorecard' to ensure that plans, advances, and investments are distributed appropriately across departments, offices and global safeguarding /Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) roles.

— Please refer to the image on page 56.

The larger bubble represents larger required investment, with the greatest weight needing to be on prevention efforts. While incident management also demands significant resources,

we need to ensure strong culture building and compliance activities. Otherwise, the 'urgent' demands of incident management can leave the 'important' activities in prevention under-supported.

Continuous improvement is how our sector will mature in its safeguarding efforts. We cannot be satisfied with the status quo: communities, families and children demand more from us. We must be humble and reflective, using our faith-based values as a lens to assess our advances and ongoing gaps.

We have found that by using this graphic and approach to evaluate budgeting, annual plans, field-based activities and strategy – we leave no stone unturned. We make decisions from a place of knowledge and discernment, recognising that we cannot do everything at once, but that where we will not invest this year, we can be strategic in our plans for the following year.

We hope this approach can inspire thinking in other agencies. The graphic above may not be appropriate for every type of agency, but the approach itself of thinking through every point that safeguarding touches can shine the light on areas that might have been forgotten in previous strategies for safeguarding.

Moving from a perpetrating faith community to a healing faith community: how quickly things change and yet...

Gerard J. McGlone
Georgetown University
Senior Research Fellow, Berkley Center for Religion & World Affairs

Katherine Marshall
Georgetown University
Professor of the Practice and Senior Fellow, Berkley Center for Religion & World Affairs

Jennifer Wortham
Harvard University
Religion, Spirituality and Forgiveness Research Associate

gender, sexuality and seemed most concerned about protecting the reputation of the institution rather than listening and believing the survivors. In contrast, healing faith communities systemically honour and actively listen to survivors as an ordinary and consistent practice, are transparent and open, accompany the families and the survivors during and after the allegation is made public, and most notably adapt and change as circumstances and data become known. Cultural systemic transformation becomes the goal and objective in these communities. They view the problem not just to be a 'bad apple', but they view the whole situation systemically as a 'bad apple in a bad barrel.'

Key takeaway

A healing faith community does not just happen. It is hard work that never ends. It demands a watching vigilance. It begins and ends in the most sacred and ancient spiritual act: listening. Listening allows a survivor to be believed, shatters the silence, denial and secrecy. It begins a communal transformation into a culture of safety and protection. A new faith-based sacred mission is to tell the story! Religions are often accused as being part of the problem, here they can also be viewed as key agents towards solutions in their faith communities and in society in general.

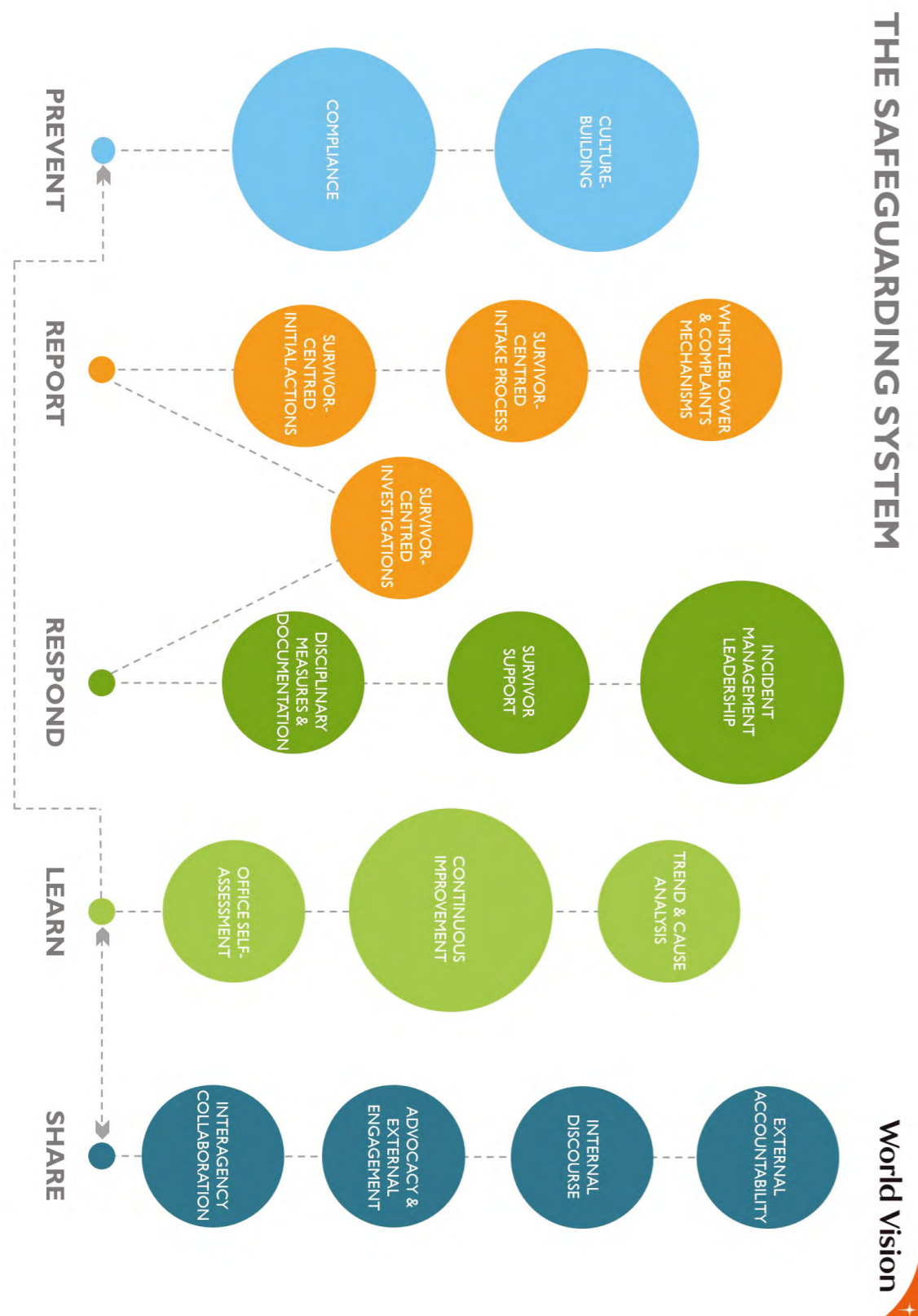
Resources

[Lifting up the Voices of Female Survivors](#)

[Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors: Dynamics of a Survivors' Perspective](#)

[TEDxGeorgetown talk: Finding the Words... Transforming Trauma](#)

This presentation highlights both the dimensions and dynamics of a 'perpetrating faith community' and also the dynamics of a healing faith community. It attempts to incorporate more recent data in the Sauvé Report, new changes in the Roman Catholic code of canon law, and the qualitative data of recent events highlighting male and female survivors' stories held at Georgetown University. The perpetrating faith community often mirrors the sexual assault perpetrators' actions, beliefs, and harm. Like the offender, the faith community has systemically acted to silence survivors and their families, responses are typically kept secret, act from distorted and unhealthy beliefs about



Talking about child sexual abuse in the Orthodox Jewish community



Katelyn Brewer

[Darkness to light](#)

President and Chief Executive Officer



It is clear that community leadership is key when protecting kids in the Orthodox Jewish community. This conversation features great perspectives on institutional leadership from [Rabbi Avremi Zippel](#), [Debbie Fox, LCSW](#), and [Rochel Leah Bernstein](#). Each of these advocates are passionate about developing a community of prevention from the Temple to schools, to the corporate sector.

Most importantly, each advocate emphasises we must believe survivors. Fox offers that prevention has to start in the family, because abuse has ripple effects starting in the family and spreading into the larger community. 'We have to empower parents to have conversations and be the go-to person,' says Fox. She clarifies that it is the parent's responsibility to have clear conversations about sex and boundaries. [We have to equip parents with the tools they need to do this.](#)

Rabbi Zippel, a survivor, dean of school, and parent himself, talks about the power of disclosure and the many ways it can affect survivors. He advises parents and Rabbis to

teach kids that they should not feel guilty for being abused or disclosing abuse. One of the greatest concerns for children in the Jewish Community, he suggests, is that disclosing could tear their family apart. We have to teach children that if they disclose, '[The children] are not doing anything to their abuser; the abuser is experiencing the consequences of their actions.'

He calls on Rabbis to make their stance on abuse very clear to their whole community. 'If you don't believe that children who have been sexually abused are tarnished, get up on your pulpit and say as much. Don't leave it to vague specifics... call it for what it is. Children who have gone through these experiences should bear no guilt, should bear no shame, they are not tarnished, they are not sinful, they are absolutely beautiful and wholesome in the eyes of God. And if that's what you really believe, call a spade a spade and get out there and say as much. Short of that, you leave kids to their anxieties and their worst fears.'

Bernstein agrees that the community needs to be taught to rally around survivors. 'We need to create support and safe havens for families so that they know they won't be cut off from their communities.' Ultimately, protecting Orthodox Jewish kids comes down to raising awareness, removing the shame for children and providing whatever resources necessary for community institutions to support survivors. At the end of the day, Fox says, 'it is your responsibility to stand for children and not predators.'

This series contains descriptions of adult subject matter, including child sexual abuse. It may not be suitable for everyone; viewer discretion is advised. If you need support after watching, please reach out to 866-FOR-LIGHT (only available in the US) for confidential support and resources.

Panel: Reporting and investigating safeguarding concerns

Alexander Dressler

Leonora Borg

Tim Ross

Manny Waks



In this panel moderated by Alexander Dressler, Tim Ross, Leonora Borg and Manny Waks covered the key aspects of reporting and investigating safeguarding concerns in faith-based organisations and religious institutions. They specifically looked at current good practice, barriers to reporting, taking a survivor centred approach, and issues around creating and implementing reporting and investigation systems that are transparent and effective

Leonora Borg pointed out that prevention and response are both key elements of a child safeguarding system. You need to consider children, young people and adults at risk. It is important to ensure a survivor-centred approach, which includes deciding when a child can make informed decisions and what role the parent /carer has in deciding the approach

The most significant challenges and barriers to reporting and investigating a concern within a faith institution include:

- Reporting: lack of clear, easy-to-use procedures

- Lack of capacity and /or knowledge to handle the disclosure in line with best practice
- Investigating: lack of national expertise and capacity
- Lack of support from leadership
- In some cases: positions of trust and opportunities for grooming not addressed in the safeguarding policy
- In some cases: fear of reprisal.

She explained that these challenges can be overcome through supportive and knowledgeable leadership, robust policies and implementation guidance, easy to use reporting procedures, access to additional support and participatory safeguarding approaches.

Manny Waks stated that we first need to define 'reporting' and 'investigating' ...reporting to whom and investigating by whom – generally police, though there may be exceptions. Community members, especially victims and their families, must have confidence in the system. Perpetrators also need to realise that they can't offend with impunity. Until now, communities and institutions have put their institutions above all else – it is important for the community, again with emphasis on the victim and their family, to see that the victim /survivor is at the core of the response, and that their interest and needs will be the overriding factor that will be considered. Consider cultural practises /stigma, barriers related to faith, fear of reputational risks, reporting abuse by a faith leader /donor /person in a position of power.

While there are similar reasons for why institutions cover up abuse and so on, there are unique reasons in the Jewish community. Waks mainly focused on: conflicts of interest, Mesirah, Lashon Hara, and the fear of anti-semitism. In answer to the question, what is good practice to prevent and take action to avoid conflict of interest in reporting /investigation processes, Waks cited professionalism, proper governance, transparency, accountability and external experts.

Tim Ross focused on the importance of culture, a survivor centred approach and appropriate management of persons of concern.

He mentioned that in Australia there has been a culture reckoning as they had a five-year Royal Commission on child sexual abuse, where about 60 per cent of the cases were in faith-based institutions and the vast majority in churches. He stressed that there is still a failure to believe people when they and recognised a perverse optimism in this area, where people will try to look at the situation through the most positive lens, discounting the likelihood that it happened, its impact and the likelihood that it is going to happen again. He mentioned that victim blaming is still very persistent and there will almost always be a focus on the negative impact on the alleged perpetrator, their family and reputation if the allegation is untrue instead of on the victim /survivor.

Ross then referred to 'clericalism', a belief that someone is ordained is only accountable to God. In some denominations, he shared, it can be a 'boys' club' and there can be a mentality of protecting their own and see outsiders as the troublemakers. Ross argued that capacity is a

key element, but there can be limitations due to budgetary constraints and being heavily reliant on volunteers meaning that investigations will be carried out by people who may not be qualified enough to carry out trauma informed and appropriate processes.

In his jurisdiction, when there is a report, they inform the police who will state whether the church can also carry out their own investigation process. In this process, a person is always innocent until proven guilty, however on risk management you should take a 'guilty until proven innocent' approach in the sense of developing risk management measures around the alleged perpetrator involvement in the community. Managing a person of concern can be difficult if that person managed to cultivate support in the community through grooming and manipulation. Therefore, education and consistent awareness raising is key, so people will develop a healthy state of vigilance and practice safety.

Moderator

Alexander Dressler

Established Keeping Children Safe's Capacity Building programme in 2011. He possess a wide range of experience in child safeguarding, child rights, investigating child safeguarding concerns and auditing child safeguarding procedures. He has designed and facilitated workshops for hundreds of organisations serving millions of children in Africa, Asia, Europe, North, Central and South America. In partnership with UNICEF, and to promote greater collaboration around child protection, he facilitated workshops in four regions of Nigeria for senior officials from the courts, police, education, prisons and the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

He has also audited the child safeguarding procedures of organisations in nearly a dozen countries. He has more than 30 years of experience in international development and relief. Alex was a regional organisation development delegate for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, assigned to support Red Cross Societies in Mexico, the Caribbean and Central America. Before that, he was a regional resource development delegate for Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic. More recently, Alex was the director of the Consortium for Street Children. While the director, he was asked by the government of Tanzania to help develop a national strategy for vulnerable children.

Panelists

Leonora Borg

Has 20 years of experience in safeguarding and child protection support across the private, public and third sectors, in the UK and internationally. This includes direct work with children and young people; boards and trustees; governments and statutory agencies; businesses and sporting bodies. Leonora has worked with vulnerable groups, including street-connected children and children with disabilities. She specializes in reviewing, developing and implementing safeguarding and protection strategy, policy, processes and organisational structures, involving children and young people in creating effective safeguarding and child protection processes, monitoring and evaluation. Leonora is a Senior Associate with Maestral International and works closely with Changing the Way We Care (CTWWC), a global initiative launched in 2018 designed to promote safe, nurturing family care for children, demonstrate care reform and influence others towards family care.

Tim Ross

Is qualified as a legal practitioner in Australia but kicked off his career in the UK financial markets, enjoying

London life. On moving back to Australia, his focus was on retail consumer disputes in the financial sector until he felt called to something he sees as a little more meaningful... Tim is now the Professional Standards manager for the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand. This is a Protestant church that incorporates 422 congregations, 86 schools, 59 childcare centres and 22 aged care centres, amongst other ministries. His responsibilities can vary significantly from day to day. They can involve policy, education, risk management, ad hoc advice on safety, complaints handling, redress for survivors and stakeholder management. He feels strongly about raising awareness around sexual abuse, especially where children are concerned.

Manny Waks

Is an advocate and public speaker, currently working on global consultancy projects addressing the issue of child sexual abuse. Manny is a sought-after speaker and consultant who has presented internationally in various settings on several topics such as his personal and professional journey, child protection, effecting change, public advocacy and leadership. In 2011, Manny disclosed publicly his personal experience of child sexual abuse and subsequently undertook extensive work as a victims' advocate. In 2012, he established Tzedek, an Australia-based support and advocacy group for Jewish victims /survivors of child sexual abuse and was its inaugural president. Manny is currently CEO of VoiCSA, an Israel-based organisation that addresses the issue of child sexual abuse in the global Jewish community. Manny successfully advocated for a Royal Commission public hearing into Australian Jewish institutions that were implicated in multiple cases of child sexual abuse, cover-ups as well as intimidation of victims and their families. This public hearing was a watershed moment for the Australian Jewish community with the impact reverberating globally, catalysing ground-breaking and ongoing changes within the Jewish community worldwide.

Live Q&A panels and other talks

Here is a list of some the talks and Q&A panels held during this date of the event that have not been included in this summary:

- [How to build a safeguarding culture using a systems-based approach](#)
A talk by Andrew Azzopardi, Vatican Safeguarding Taskforce
- [It takes a village: investigating child abuse in Muslim educational environments](#)
A talk by Alia Salem, Facing Abuse in Community Environments
- [Religious values, children's rights and child safeguarding: embracing the ethical imperative to safeguard children](#)
A talk by Rebeca Ríos-Kohn, Arigatou International
- [Ending sexual abuse of children by United Nations personnel: the role of faith-based organisations](#)
A talk by Jane Connors, United Nations
- [Q&A](#) with Andrew Azzopardi – Vatican Safeguarding Taskforce, Miriam Friday – Viva Africa and Faith Kembabazi – Children at Risk Action Network
- [Q&A](#) with Kira Blumer – Tzedek, Nick Donaldson – Strengthening Faith Institutions and Alexander Dressler – Keeping Children Safe
- [Q&A](#) with Katelyn Brewer – Darkness to Light, Hannah Fairs-Billam and Martin Kapenda – Tehila and Tehila Zambia and Stefan Yordanov – Keeping Children Safe
- [Q&A](#) with Bill Forbes – World Vision International, Matt Parker – HopeCo and Alia Salem – Facing Abuse in Community Environments



11 November 2021

How churches can better prevent and respond to child sexual abuse

Tim Ross

[Lutheran Church of Australia](#)

Churchwide Office Manager of the Professional Standards Department



Churches are particularly vulnerable when it comes to child sex offenders. The majority, about 90 per cent (research might vary but over 80 per cent is definite), of child sexual abuse is perpetrated by someone well known to the victim's family – including siblings, relatives or close, trusted friends. The offenders statistically are almost always male (over 90 per cent), but females have been known to offend as well.

Broadly, there are two types of child sex offenders: the preferential offender and the situational offender. A preferential offender is the true paedophile: he has an innate sexual preference for children. As it is so intrinsic, many do not believe they are doing anything wrong. They can tend to make key decisions in their life based mainly or solely on gaining access to children: where they live, where they work, who they socialise with and where they attend church. The situational offender does not have paedophilia and is not as obsessive as the preferential offender. They can tend to look for, or randomly take advantage of, opportunities. They are not usually systematic groomers as

preferential offenders. However, some are still known to engage in grooming¹. Although they are likely to have fewer victims, they may still offend on a high number of occasions. Rehabilitation is more probable than with preferential offenders, they can still be dangerous.

Child sex offenders prepare children by building relationships of trust with them, and their parents /primary carers. Offenders will also build trust with community groups, like churches. Quite often they will start with the community, then work through to the parents and then the child. Since churches are welcoming environments, we are often very vulnerable to grooming.

When a church is committed to a child-safe environment, it is a lot harder for a groomer to gain control of the situation. This is achieved by:

- **Being aware** – The more people within a church community that engage in safe church awareness training the better. There will be an increased level of healthy awareness and people are going to be able to look out for indicators of grooming.
- **Being alert** – Having a strong, well-developed child safety culture in your church will allow your children to feel safe and protected but will also send a very strong message to a groomer that your church will be on the lookout for grooming. Ensure that you clearly publicise this strong culture in your bulletin, through posters and through practice (such as, not leaving children alone). It is important to encourage the practice of always having more

¹ Grooming is the process of selecting and preparing children for sexual abuse.

Responding to safeguarding concerns: the importance of a survivor centred response

Esther John

[AsiaCMS](#)

Safeguarding Manager



Child safeguarding is one of the preventive measures that can be adopted by any institution or organisation. Whilst institutions adopt such preventive mechanisms, it is also imperative that incidents that are reported, are managed and responded to, with the best interest of the child¹ at its core.

According to UNCRC Article 3, it is essential that the principle of the best interest of the child is adopted in all aspects of child safeguarding. Furthermore, international standards of safeguarding emphasises on integrating a survivor centred approach² within organisation when responding to safeguarding concerns.

Impact of abuse, violence, and exploitation on children

Incidents of child abuse, violence and exploitation on children causes short-term and long-term impacts on a child's wellbeing

and may impact an individual throughout adult life if remains unaddressed. A child's physical, emotional, psychological, social and spiritual wellbeing is impacted by such incidents. Some of the specific effects of child abuse, violence and exploitation are biological and physical changes, anxiety, depression, lower academic performance, aggressive behaviour or withdrawal, suicidal thoughts and tendencies, difficulties in engaging in meaningful relationships. Inevitably, incidents of abuse, violence and exploitation impact the wellbeing of the family as well. In instances where safeguarding incidents are not handled in the proper manner, the child can be re-traumatised and revictimised.

Survivor centered approach

A person who has been exploited and abused is generally referred to as a victim or survivor³. A survivor centred approach upholds the dignity and respect of the survivor and provides the right to choose, to privacy and confidentiality, to non-discrimination and to information⁴. Based on these principals, the following best practices can be adhered to while handling the incident.

- Listen to the child giving them space to explain their story
- Trust the child expressing trust with statements such as 'I believe you'

³ Unicef.org. 2021, [Caring for Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse](#)
⁴ Bond. 2021. [UK NGO safeguarding definitions and reporting mechanisms](#)

than one adult with a child during any child-related church programme, so it will be highly unusual for a child to be isolated with one adult (including online)

- **Acting** – If you are noticing suspicious activity, do not 'let it go', act on it straight away
- **Reporting** – A suspicion of child sexual abuse must be reported to the authorities (police and local child protection department). Often there is a legal obligation to do it. Even if not, there is always an ethical obligation. Your church hierarchy should also be made aware, so there are three reports to be made
- **Managing 'persons of concern'** – A church should have a robust procedure in place, to provide for the management of 'persons of concern'. The procedure should set out in detail how the relevant risk will be assessed. It may be concluded the level of risk is such that it is not safe for the person of concern to attend church and instead he or she should be cared for offsite. If it is safe for him or her to attend, there must be a commensurate risk management plan.

Resources

In Australia, there has been a major independent national inquiry known as a 'Royal Commission', into the sexual abuse of children.

[Royal Commission's final report](#)

[The 10 Australian principles for child safe organisations](#)

¹ Ohchr.org 2021. [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)

² Un.org 2021, [UN Victim Assistance Protocol](#)

- Ensure that your response will not be discriminative, judgmental, or shifting blame to the child
- Assure the child that it is not his /her fault
- Do not panic, show your own emotions or discuss your perspectives on the matter
- Assure confidentiality and clearly explain to the child who would need to be involved in the process and why
- Obtain consent from the child about the next steps. Take time and explain every step and the reason behind it
- Do not make promises that you will not be able to keep
- Ask the child what he /she wants to do as the next steps
- Let the child know a 'go-to-person' within the organisation.

Best practices with the family

- Explain to the family that it is not the child's fault
- Provide information on the next steps which would need to be taken
- Ensure that the child is not separated from the family without a valid reason
- Involve the child and family in the decision-making process, especially if a legal process is required
- Explain the role of the organisation and how the organisation will assist the family.

Support services

The United Nations protocol on the provision of assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse recommends the assistance and support required for survivors as: safety and protection; medical care; psycho-social support; material needs; legal services.

When a survivor centred approach is implemented in institutions and organisations, the outcome would be a sense of justice and improved mental health and healing. This would in turn positively impact the wellbeing of the child and therefore the family. The results would prevent the child from growing up to be another perpetrator in the future.

Shame and silence: recognizing spiritual abuse

Lameesah Soeker

[People Eradicating Abuse in Community Environments \(PEACE\)](#)

Founder and Executive Director



PEACE was established in Cape Town, South Africa in 2021 with the support and inspiration of our sister organisation, Facing Abuse in Community Environments (FACE). Our organisation was formed to create a framework by which to address the leadership accountability gap in our community.

Our scope of investigation is sexual abuse, physical abuse, financial abuse and spiritual abuse:

Sexual abuse, also referred to as molestation, is abusive sexual behaviour by one person upon another. It is often perpetrated using force or by taking advantage of another.

Physical abuse is any intentional act causing injury or trauma to another person by way of bodily contact.

Financial abuse is the illegal or unauthorised use of a person's or institution's property donations, money, investments or valuables for one's personal gain.

Spiritual abuse is any kind of psychological, physical or sexual abuse that takes place within a religious context. Some people apply the term only to manipulations that damage a person's relationship with God or his /herself. Spiritual abuse can take place between: intimate partners; parent and child; in organisations; religious leader and follower.

Narcissistic behaviour is usually at the root of spiritual abuse. Victims that try to report abuse usually end up being invalidated, isolated, slandered, fearful and in most cases suicidal.

Policies and procedures that can be implemented to avoid spiritual abuse:

- Hiring policies – Criminal and background checks on all employees, volunteers or anyone that has access to the premises of the organisation or the children.
- Maximising visibility – Setting up premises so that children are visible at all times.
- Knowing all participants – Making sure information on each child is correctly recorded and stored.
- Dismissal procedures – Making sure children are handed over safely to guardians.
- Defining interaction boundaries – Specifying safe touch and what is not allowed.

- Maintaining policies off premises.
- Extra precaution in high-risk areas or events.
- Training employees.
- Protocols for responding.
- Protecting children from known risks – People who were already accused or convicted of abuse.

Policies need to be accessible and communicated clearly. Drafting institutional policies, writing letters, pickets and pledges does not solve our problem alone.

Our communities are not equipped to deal with the reality that religious leaders are capable of immoral behaviour. Manipulators will always find a way around the rules and for this reason we believe that education is key.

Resources

[In Shaykh's Clothing website](#)

[Preventing abuse in Christian organisations that serve youth: ten policies to create safer environments – by Shira Berkovits](#)

Safeguarding against extremism

Assan Ali

[The Commonwealth Secretariat](#)
Capacity Building Officer Countering Violent Extremism



The Commonwealth Secretariat's Countering Violent Extremism strategy draws upon the Commonwealth Charter, specifically the goals of Democracy, Human Rights, International Peace and Security, Tolerance, Respect and Understanding, Rule of Law, Good Governance, Sustainable Development, Gender Equality, Importance of Youth and the Role of Civil Society.

The strategy continues to closely track the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and the Global Sustainable Development Goals (in particular SDG16), which seeks to 'promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels'.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Unit works with member countries to develop, define and understand the phenomenon of violent extremism as it relates to their specific context, and then to strategise, plan and act accordingly.

For the Commonwealth Secretariat, Safeguarding refers to the actions that individuals and institutions take to protect a person's right to live in safety, free from abuse. Many countries of the Commonwealth consider recruitment of minors and vulnerable adults into violent extremism to be a form of grooming, coercion and /or abuse that needs to be safeguarded against.

Research has found that it is not possible to create a profile of children at risk of radicalisation as there is a high degree of complexity. The NSPCC, the UK's leading children's charity, state that [anyone can be radicalised regardless of background](#). This can take place in a number of ways including groomed online, groomed by family members, exposed to violent, anti-social, extremist imagery. Safeguarding policies should make explicit that protection from radicalisation and extremist narratives is a safeguarding issue. Exposure of children to extremist ideology can hinder their social development and educational attainment alongside posing a very real risk that they could support or partake in an act of violence. Radicalisation of young people can be compared to grooming for sexual exploitation.

As part of its fulfilment of the mandate given by Commonwealth Heads of Government in 2015, and reaffirmed in 2018, The Commonwealth Secretariat continued to work with its member states on programmes aimed at building resilience to violent extremism.

Resources

[Assan Ali's presentation slides \(download\)](#)

Measuring child safeguarding performance through monitoring



Juan Diego Oquendo
[Keeping Children Safe](#)
Senior Child Safeguarding Advisor



If organisations are implementing child safeguarding measures, but they do not monitor them, everything they are doing remains as an anecdote. The [KCS International Child Safeguarding Standards](#) have been designed to be monitored, hence Standard 4: Accountability. From prevention to response, all the actions must be accounted for through a trail of paperwork and reports, which can include internal audits and certification schemes.

This talk discusses the importance of monitoring, how to measure if the implementation of a policy is being successful, what we mean by success and how to build S.M.A.R.T. indicators (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-based).

Accountability Standard

The organisation has in place measures and mechanisms for monitoring and review of safeguarding measures, and to ensure both upward and downward accountability in relation to child safeguarding.

- Implementation of child safeguarding policies and procedures is regularly monitored.
- Progress, performance and lessons learned are reported to key stakeholders and included in organisations’ annual reports.
- Learning from practical case experience informs policy review and changes to child safeguarding measures.
- Policies and practices are reviewed at regular intervals and formally evaluated by an external evaluator /auditor every three years.

Active monitoring, before things go wrong, involves regular checking to ensure that Standards are being implemented and safeguards are working. This can be done in several ways including surveys with staff and associates on how the Standards are being met, how effective they are and what needs improving.

Reactive monitoring, after near misses or when things go wrong, involves learning from mistakes. Good case management can provide a valuable insight into why the abuse took place and whether the organisation could have done anything to prevent it.

Key takeaway

The monitoring of a child safeguarding policy must be embedded from the implementation plan, and for each activity the organisation carries out, there must be an indicator of success, ways to prove the goal has been achieved and a deadline.

If an organisation does not monitor what they do to safeguard children, everything will remain as an anecdote and they will not be able to demonstrate what they are doing. Creating a culture of monitoring will help organisations achieve proper evaluations that can show results and changes in the way they safeguard children.

Resources

- [Free self-assessment tool](#)
- [Child Safeguarding Toolkit \(PowerPoint\)](#)
- [Understanding Child Safeguarding](#)
- [Implementing Child Safeguarding](#)
- [Management of Child Safeguarding Allegations](#)
- [Victims and Survivors Programme](#)

Protection in crises:
safeguarding in humanitarian
contexts



Nagulan Nesiah

Episcopal Relief & Development
Senior Program Officer for Disaster Response
and Risk Reduction

'Abuse often occurs and continues because of the unequal power relationship between the abuser and their victim.' — *Safe Church Commission Guidelines*

Mandy Marshall

Anglican Communion Office
Director for Gender Justice

'So, when we're talking about humanitarian context, safeguarding goes a lot around saving lives, alleviating suffering and maintaining human dignity after disasters. So, for children and vulnerable adults, how do we alleviate that suffering? How do we ensure that they are safe? That their dignity is secured, and that they are receiving the help and the support and the care, that they need? The reason safeguarding is important is to offer insurance and safety to children and vulnerable adults that come into our care.' — *Mandy Marshall*

Daniella Flamenco Gomez

Episcopal Anglican Church of El Salvador
Director of the Integrated Health Program

Manuel Ernesto

Anglican Church of Mozambique and Angola
Bishop of the Diocese of Nampula (Mozambique)

As a church that seeks to be a mission driven church in context of cyclical humanitarian crises, we have learned that beneath the surface of tangible and immediate needs of food, water, shelter and medical items, there are dire needs of safeguarding for children and vulnerable members of the community.'
— *Manuel Ernesto*

Ethel George

Anglican Church of Melanesia
Women's Desk Officer

'Disasters often affect women and girls more severely than men and boys due to gender inequalities caused by wrong societal norms and beliefs. Women and girls who are already suffering from some forms of violence and abuse in good times, face more violence and other forms of injustices in times of disasters.'
— *Ethel George*

In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, the ensuing chaos and disruption could expose vulnerable children and marginalised populations for abuse. In this webinar, a panel of global practitioners provided their experiences, challenges and good practices on safeguarding in humanitarian contexts.



'We always remind the communities that any person can potentially become an abuser, so they can't trust anyone who comes, whether they represent an institution that provides help, such as a church, the Red Cross, the police, soldiers, or our program. Therefore, we set an example by not seeing children without a responsible adult.'
— *Daniella Flamenco Gomez*

Resources

[The Anglican Communion Safe Church Commission](#)

[Domestic Abuse and COVID-19: How Churches Can Respond](#)

Working with communities
to strengthen safeguarding
practices



Bushra Rehman

Islamic Relief Worldwide
Safeguarding Project Coordinator

Ahmad AlAghawani

Islamic Relief Jordan
Safeguarding Focal Point, Child Protection

Issa Bamba

Islamic Relief Mali
Protection, Inclusion and Safeguarding Coordinator &
Channels of Hope Facilitator and Project Coordinator

Milgo Keinan

Islamic Relief Somalia
Protection and Inclusion Officer and Safeguarding
Focal Somalia

throughout Islamic Relief country offices to ensure a primary focus on capacity building and strengthening community engagement.

The project involved establishing Community Hope Action teams (CHATs), loosely based on the Channels of Hope methodology initiated by World Vision.

Community Hope Action teams (CHATs) consist of community members with diverse representation. Their main purpose is to support IR in relaying safeguarding messages to communities, to reveal any preferences that communities may have in sharing concerns and to ensure that IR is appropriately responding to the priorities of the highest risk.

Islamic Relief Jordan has established two Community Hope Action teams in Mafraq, Jordan. They received training on Safeguarding and supported IR Jordan in developing a referral pathway. They support IR Jordan in raising awareness amongst target communities through faith leaders who are considered influential. Establishing CHAT's has also provided IR Jordan the opportunity to discuss harmful practises with faith leaders, and by extension, the target communities in a sensitive manner, such as early-forced marriage.

Islamic Relief Mali has acquired strong experience through its implementation of the Channels of Hope (CoH) methodology which involved the establishment of CHAT's focused on child safeguarding and child protection. Positive practises include setting up a platform for 10 community faith-leaders to advocate for child safeguarding and protection, as well

10 faith leaders delivering child safeguarding and protection messages during Friday prayer sermons.

Islamic Relief Somalia has established one CHAT in a field office which consists of both male and female community members, as well as faith leaders. For IR Somalia, faith leaders have supported IR Somalia in delivering messages around safeguarding to the community which were anchored in Islamic practices. In addition, safeguarding training was delivered to the Community Hope Action teams and included topics such as prevention against sexual exploitation and abuse.

Field offices have demonstrated that working via CHATs to strengthen community engagement, and particularly engaging with faith leaders, strengthens the approach to awareness raising on safeguarding.

In an effort to try and commit more resources to safeguarding and to build the capacities of Islamic Relief (IR) country offices, Islamic Relief Worldwide has acquired funding from Islamic Relief Canada in order to develop a project that would holistically embed safeguarding across multiple organisational functions.

The project entitled 'Sustainable and Inclusive approaches to Safeguarding in emergency contexts' is about adopting an approach

Safeguarding Toolbox:
the experience of making
safeguarding a priority



Beth Bradford
Changing The Way We Care (CTWWC)
Technical Director



Across the world, over one billion children (between two to seven years old) have experienced physical, sexual, emotional violence or neglect in the past year ([World Health Organisation](#)). Stressful and traumatic events, such as abuse, neglect or being witness to violence are strongly related to the development of children, and prevalence of a wide range of health and psychosocial problems. Legally, organisations are often obliged to report concerns and disclosures in accordance with the national legislative requirements of the country. Beyond that, there is also a moral responsibility to act on concerns. Organisations supporting children and young people in alternative care, or otherwise separated from their parents, need to consider the specific risks and vulnerabilities of their beneficiaries, and tailor their staffing, policies, procedures and training accordingly.

CTWWC's commitment to bold and high-quality child protection and safeguarding began with an initiative-wide, donor compliance required review of current protection and safeguarding policies, followed by harmonisation of policies and procedures across the consortium.

This process resulted in an organisational risk assessment tool, which helps to identify the safeguarding gaps and challenges in the initiative by looking at policy, people, procedures, accountability and programming. A [Safeguarding Toolbox](#) was then put together to equip our teams and partners to best address safeguarding and take on child protection overall. Safeguarding leads were identified at all levels of the initiative and in each country where we work. In a cycle of continuous quality improvement, CTWWC builds capacity through training of trainers and partners, reviewing cases and providing technical support. Learning from implementation has led CTWWC to re-assess policies and procedures and make adjustments.

Keeping children and adults safe from harm is everyone's responsibility! Building capacity begins with the right people, strong policies and procedures, established and easy processes for reporting, ensuring that everyone receives and understands the information and has the knowledge and the skills to practice. The [CTWWC Safeguarding Toolbox](#) includes examples of policies and procedures, templates for tools, training materials, job aids and additional resources. Look for it online soon!

Tips for a strong safeguarding policy:

- Always prioritise the safety and well-being of children and adults at risk
- Think about contact points and specific vulnerabilities
- Focus on both proactive safeguarding and response to concerns and disclosures
- Have a named designated safeguarding lead

- Make policies practical, easy to understand and effective
- Align with national legislation and international best practices
- Include children in the development of the policy
- Set an open, transparent safeguarding environment
- Have a children's version of the policy and Code of Conduct.

Changing The Way We CareSM is a USAID Global Development Alliance funded by USAID, the MacArthur Foundation and the GHR Foundation, and implemented by Catholic Relief Services and Maestral International along with other key partners such as national governments, Lumos Foundation, Better Care Network and Faith to Action. CTWWC's vision is to be a bold global initiative designed to promote safe, nurturing family care for children, including reforming national systems of care for children, strengthening families, family reunification and preventing child-family separation, which can have harmful, long-term consequences, development of alternative family-based care and influencing others to build momentum towards a tipping point of change for children.

LGBTQI+ children and youth Safeguarding: challenges of providing safeguarding for LGBTQI+ children and youth in faith based organisations



Glenn Miles
drglennmiles@gmail.com



The child protection /safeguarding policy of many Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) and churches will say that all children should be treated equally irrespective of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, refugee status, socioeconomic status and so on, but when it comes to sexuality this is often left out. If FBOs and churches /mosques /temples are honest, it is because of the mixed responses of their membership to LGBTQI+ issues and the potential disruption it could cause from members.

A number of churches and FBOs have tried to 'convert' LGBTQI+ to being straight, suggesting that their religion and religious texts believe that it is not right to be in a homosexual relationship. Some FBOs and churches /mosques /temples have even provided intense counselling to young people called 'conversion therapy' which is a form of spiritual abuse.

Although in some places this has been banned and is now not allowed, in other situations it is still used and even encouraged. This leads to deep shaming of children and young people and internalised conflict where they may believe that

they are inherently wrong. In some cases, this has even led to suicide. The reality for many LGBTQI+ children and young people is that they can experience some very real challenges in / outside the faith-based communities:

- Rejection from families – May be thrown out of their home
- Rejection from teachers – Stigma, violence, grade discrimination
- Bullying by peers, including sexual harassment and violence
- Sexual harassment /violence and discrimination from employers
- Stigma and violence from police
- Difficulty accessing social /health services due to stigma and discrimination
- Confusion about their feelings, identity and pronouns; need for space and freedom to explore (and be respected in the process)
- Rejection, from those who should be supporting them, can lead to suicide
- Imprisonment and even execution of people who express their sexuality, in some countries.

Faith-based organisations must:

- Listen to youth on their thoughts and feelings. Be willing to learn. Do not impose views.
- Whatever you think you believe, be kind and open to learn
- Have clear policies against bullying LGBTQI+, including recording incidents and monitoring strategies
- Provide teaching to young people on human sexuality. A range of Christian views should be taught, as well as a range of perspectives from other faiths and world views.

- Give staff training on understanding and working non-discriminatorily with LGBTQI+ youth
- Pastoral care of young people who identify as LGBTQI+ ensuring those who do this are not homophobic or in favour of conversion therapy.

Panel: Faith as enabler to raise awareness and promote safeguarding in communities

Tina Campbell
Alessandra Campo
Munisha
Neelam Fida



There was a very rich dialogue and exchange of ideas. Panellists discussed the links between faiths and child safeguarding, focusing on the responsibility of faith organisations to internally develop and implement robust child safeguarding measures and the role they play in promoting safe and protecting environments for children within their places of worship, other faith-based organisations and their communities.

In our discussion we explored the links between faith and child safeguarding for the three panellists who represented the Muslim, and Buddhist communities and the Catholic Church. There was some identification of what might hinder faith-based organisations in working in safeguarding. Further identifying what each might recognise as distinctive about safeguarding in faith-based organisations compared to the humanitarian context. The importance of the ethical imperatives of faith institutions to safeguard children was a common theme, and finally, the role of faith in raising awareness and the promotion of good safeguarding practice.

The emphasis on the care of children was shared across the traditions of each panellist, the ethical values in common, held a focus on service together with a duty to protect the young and vulnerable. Whilst there is an inherent duty for parents and guardians to care for and protect children, this extends to the whole community. The faith community context can and should be a place of unwavering trust, yet the same context is where abuse and harm has taken place and regrettably still does. The depth of trust and expectations placed on faith leaders can impact on the ability of victims to speak.

In some cultural contexts, children should be given more of a voice, and be enabled to speak about what concerns them and they should be heard. The importance of cultural sensitivity was a thread throughout our discussion. Imposing 'a western style' of safeguarding in some parts of the world might put children at more risk. However, the necessity to address and overcome barriers to reporting was also recognised as being very important.

At times the ethical code might negatively result in a lack of appropriate action in the face of abuse and harm, this was discussed particularly in relation to the concept of forgiveness. This can be misused, almost to condone the harm, if it can then be forgiven without any accountability. However, when ethical codes are more explicit in safeguarding, our safeguarding policies can be embedded within them. The spiritual dimensions of faith-based organisations can be important too considering what we are called to do and this can further help to inform policies.

There was a consistent agreement that we had much in common and also ways in which faith-based organisations could work together in safeguarding. This awareness of a shared responsibility would offer new learning, too. A good example was that together we could explore how children and women are regarded across faiths.

Moderator

Tina Campbell

Has worked in safeguarding for the Catholic Church for more than 20 years. She currently holds an international safeguarding post with the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) within the Secretariat for Social Justice and Ecology in Rome. Her first degree was in Theology and she taught for 18 years whilst also qualifying in psychotherapy and clinical supervision.

Moving to Scotland in 2000, Tina used this opportunity to leave teaching and focus on a management post in counselling and psychotherapy. In this context she has met with many victims of sexual abuse. Tina also became a Safeguarding Adviser and Trainer for a Diocese in Scotland. She held these two posts until 2013, when she was successfully appointed as the National Safeguarding Coordinator for the Episcopal Conference of Scotland. This consisted of working across eight dioceses and with more than 60 religious congregations. In this post she designed and delivered formation for seminarians preparing for ministry, wrote and contributed to policies whilst delivering training in many different contexts.

Her current role with the Society of Jesus includes resourcing, supporting and accompanying key personnel with their safeguarding responsibilities in 80 provinces

across the world. Tina has delivered presentations on safeguarding at an international level. She is also a Safeguarding Consultant for the independent review of safeguarding policies and implementation. Tina has a MSc in psychotherapy and several further post graduate qualifications. She regards the areas of theology and psychotherapy as integral to her safeguarding role.

Tina is a visiting teacher for the Diploma and Licentiate in Safeguarding Course at the Centre for Child Protection (now the Institute of Anthropology Human Dignity and Care) at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy. She is a core member of the International Safeguarding Conference Steering Group in Rome. Tina is a member of the Jesuit Advisory Council for Mission and Apostolate for the Jesuit British Province.

Panelists

Alessandra Campo

Native of Rome, Italy, Alessandra is the Office and Network Coordinator of the [Institute of Anthropology Interdisciplinary Studies on Human Dignity and Care \(IADC\)](#), Pontifical Gregorian University. She received her Ph.D. in Philosophy from La Sapienza University (Rome) and studied at the Humboldt in Berlin. After having collaborated in research and didactics at La Sapienza's Faculty of Philosophy, she gained expertise in the field of training for third sector organisations, public relations, and cultural events management.

Munisha

Is a member of the [Triratna Buddhist Order in Sweden](#) where she helps to run Triratna's Stockholm centre. In her day job, she works as Triratna's Safeguarding officer advising Triratna's centres and retreat centres in Europe on preventing harm to children and adults.

Neelam Fida

Is the Global Child Protection and Inclusion Advisor and Safeguarding Lead for [Islamic Relief Worldwide](#) (IRW). Neelam has led on diversifying IRW’s child protection work, with a particular focus on developing IR’s faith sensitive and inclusive approaches to its programming approach for children of all abilities. In addition to this, Neelam has developed IRW’s Safeguarding framework, by leading on strategy, capacity development and systems-based approach to mainstream and embed safeguarding throughout IRW operations.

Panel: Enhancing child safeguarding in faith communities through child participation: multi-faith perspective across regions

- Vera Leal
- Silvia Mazzarelli
- Guillermo Niño Fernández
- Zam Obed
- Azam Sahih de Matin
- Opor Srisuwan

Mazzarelli highlighted that since 2017, the members and partners of the GNRC have been working to honour those commitments and that the panel discussion was the opportunity to share some of the most promising and interesting practices.

Child safeguarding and child participation are two sides of the same coin; they are closely related to each other and cannot be separated. Faith actors can play significant roles in safeguarding children and all faith traditions also offer critical perspectives on the importance of meaningful child participation. Yet, unfortunately, the practical application of child participation in many faith communities is still weak and more efforts are needed to ensure children’s voices are really heard. Children need to be involved in more meaningful ways, recognising their agency and their inherent right to participate. In other words, more comprehensive and child-centred approaches are needed, approaches that link child safeguarding to child participation.

The five panelists, members and partners of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC) in Africa, Latin America and Southeast Asia, explored challenges and opportunities to create religious spaces that are age-appropriate and child friendly, and equip children to stand up and break the silence on their own abuse, while also working with faith leaders, families, and caregivers. They shared their experiences on the practical application of child participation and implications on violence prevention and response, in Muslim, Christian and Buddhist communities.

This multireligious panel discussion highlighted how child participation should be considered a central pillar of child safeguarding, to be supported and enhanced within faith spaces.

The panel started with a few introductory remarks by Silvia Mazzarelli who recalled two of the 10 commitments of the Panama Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Children, adopted by more than 500 faith leaders during the Fifth Forum of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC Forum, Panama City, May 2017):

- Listen to children with empathy and respect, welcome their wisdom and gifts, and continue to work side-by-side to address violence against them
- Ensure that our religious places are safe for all children.

Opor Srisuwan shared initial findings from a unique research study on child protection in Buddhist communities, including Monastic and Dhamma schools in Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos and Thailand. Pastor Guillermo Niño and Esmeralda Garrido shared the experience of incorporating child safeguarding policies and codes of conduct in 84 Christian Methodist Churches in Mexico; Zam Obed reflected on the topic from a Muslim perspective and shared her experience working in faith communities in Kenya, while Azam Sahih de Matin, talked about the practical application of child safeguarding and child participation in Bahá'í Communities across Latin America, particularly in Peru.

Vera Leal closed the panel, highlighting the following takeaways:

Child Safeguarding is enhanced when faith actors and faith communities start seeing children holistically, as human beings with a mind, a heart and a soul, that can contribute to building safe communities, where children are actively engaged allowing for their social, emotional and spiritual nurturing. It is only when children feel acknowledged, appreciated, and safe that they are encouraged to be themselves, share their opinions, and feel empowered to speak up and respond when affected by violence.

Child safeguarding is promoted through the establishment of trusting, genuine, respectful, and caring relationships between children and adults. Children's participation is, therefore, a critical mechanism for protecting children from violence.

Children and faith communities should not be disconnected from the larger community as violence occurring in the home and community will translate and permeate all the environments children are in. This is particularly relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic that has prompted the rise of hate speech, xenophobia, discrimination, and exclusion. Faith communities have a key role not only in addressing these challenges, but also in creating safe spaces where children can critically think about them and contribute to positively transform them.

The practices and experiences shared during the panel discussion have shown that child participation demands conscious adults who are ready and aware of the influence of their actions, behaviours, and attitudes and that strive to become role models building horizontal relations with children. It also entails the awareness and challenging of violent attitudes and behaviours that are normalised in all settings – and that have a negative long-lasting impact on children and on how they relate and see themselves and others and on their safety. By denormalising violence through children's active engagement, we pave ways to prevent and protect them, keeping them safe.

Moderator

Vera Leal

Is currently the Ethics Education Senior Program Officer at [Arigatou International](#) Geneva, in charge of coordinating Ethics Education programs that foster intercultural and interfaith learning for inclusive societies. She also coordinates the Child and Youth safeguarding and participation for children in Arigatou International. Prior to her commitment to Arigatou International, Vera has been Secretary General of the International Catholic Movement for Children and worked with various organisations in training in citizenship education and positive parenting. She graduated in Psychology and has a Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resources Management with a specialisation in training management.

Silvia Mazzarelli

Is an international development professional, passionate about human rights and a strong believer in the power of collective action to bring about transformative change. She has worked in the LAC region since 2006, specialising in rights-based programming and influencing, with a focus on children's rights, child protection and gender equality. Through her work she has actively supported civil society coalitions, youth networks and multi-stakeholder initiatives, and has facilitated the creation and development of interfaith networks for the rights and well-being of children.

She currently works for Arigatou International, serving as the Regional Coordinator of the Global Network of Religions for Children (GNRC). In the past, she was the Regional Head of Child Rights Policy and Programming at Plan International's Regional Office for the Americas. She has an academic background in international relations and international crime and justice. Originally from Italy, she has worked in Ecuador, Guatemala, Dominican Republic and is currently based in Panama.

Panelists

Guillermo Niño Fernández

Is an itinerant priest of the [Methodist Church of Mexico](#). He has 16 years experience as a pastor and he is currently finishing his master's studies in Biblical Sciences. He is a member of the GNRC in Mexico, along with other members of the GNRC he has trained children, caregivers, and ministers of worship on prevention of violence and child sexual abuse. He is currently coordinating the child sexual abuse and prevention protocol for 84 Methodist Churches in Mexico.

Zam Obed

Mother to three and many children too, Zam works with [Childslife-Kenya](#). She has been an affiliate of Arigatou International since 2013, completing several programs in all the four areas of Arigatou programs: Ethic Education, End Child Poverty, GNRC and Prayer and Action.

Azam Sahih de Matin

Is member of the Bahá'í Community in Peru. She holds a master's degree in Social Development from the University Nur of Santa Cruz Bolivia, she is facilitator in Education in Virtues, teacher of Moral Education and Member of the National Network of Facilitators of Peru. She gives lectures on education for human development based on virtues, interpersonal relationships and healthy family life, in different local and national institutions. She was President of the Interconfessional Network of Women of Faith and Spirituality of Peru, 2013-2016.

She is the founder of the Institute of Education in Virtues for Human Development (EDUDES), where she designs and executes training programs aimed at young people, boys and girls, mothers and fathers, teachers, among others.

Opor Srisuwan

Is currently working with [International Network of Engaged Buddhists \(INEB\)](#) as a project coordinator of Assessing Child Protection in Buddhist Communities Including Monastic and Dhamma Schools In Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, and Women Empowerment in Southeast Asia projects.

She had been involved in the Human Rights and Child Rights field as a volunteer and employee since 2006. She is interested in Child Rights, Peace Education, Gender Equality, Indigenous and Refugee's empowerment.

She graduated with a Master of Arts in Political Science, Major in Global Politics from Ateneo de Manila University, the Philippines and Master of Arts in Peace Education from University for Peace, Costa Rica.

Live Q&A panels and other talks

Here is a list of some the talks and Q&A panels held during this date of the event that have not been included in this summary:

- [Q&A](#) with Esther John – AsiaCMS, Tim Ross – Lutheran Church of Australia, and Lameesah Soeker – People Eradicating Abuse in Community Environments
- [Q&A](#) with Assan Ali – The Commonwealth Secretariat, Glenn Miles, Bushra Rehman – Islamic Relief Worldwide and Rebeca Ríos-Kohn – Arigatou International
- [Q&A](#) with Gerard J. McGlone – Georgetown University, Jane Connors – United Nations, Rosa Freedman – Reading University and Beatrice Mumbi – Jesuits Conference of Africa and Madagascar
- [Q&A](#) with Beth Bradford – Changing The Way We Care, Manuel Ernesto – Anglican Church of Mozambique and Angola, Daniella Flamenco Gomez – Episcopal Church of El Salvador, Mandy Marshall – Anglican Communion Office, Nagulan Nesiah – Episcopal Relief & Development and Juan Diego Oquendo – Keeping Children Safe.

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