



Lessons from the safeguarding mentorship programme in the RSH Africa Hub

10 Nov 2022

The questions below were asked by participants during the webinar on Lessons learnt from implementing RSH safeguarding mentorship programme in African Hub held on 10th November 2022.

Questions and Answers

1. Please elaborate more about the integration of safeguarding aspects in each of your staff member's job description.

Answer: On understanding that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility we engaged with the management, staff and volunteers to conduct step down training on safeguarding, introduce a new Code of Conduct, share RSH's website to improve their knowledge, understand concepts and skillsets required to strengthen safeguarding. Staff also completed the RSH's [e-learning](#) modules. We then reviewed the staff and volunteers' job descriptions and integrated safeguarding responsibilities in line with different roles. Click [here](#) for a sample of safeguarding roles for different positions that can be integrated into job descriptions.

2. What advice would you give to an organisation who is wondering whether to establish a safeguarding mentoring programme or to continue with the usual programme of training?

Answer: Mentoring support provides a relationship between the mentor and mentee (in this instance the staff of organisations undergoing the mentorship) which a one-off training does not provide. Mentoring offers a longer-term opportunity for capacity strengthening and sharing. The relationship between a mentor and mentee is critical to tackle safeguarding issues and address Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH). The relationship should allow for mentees to open up to the mentor for sharing and learning. In addition, people may quickly forget or not embed the learnings from one-off trainings, whereas with mentoring it is embedded in what they are doing and their actual work, which is a more sustainable approach.

3. How can one have access to participate in the RSH Mentorship Programme?

Answer: The African Hubs are coming to the end of their implementation phase, and thus the mentorship programme is no longer open to organisations. For civil society organisations (CSOs) in our MENA Hubs (Jordan, Syria and Yemen) and South Asia Hubs (Bangladesh and Pakistan), the mentorship programme will be shared through newsletters which you can sign up to. The newsletter will also share upcoming events. Click [here](#) to subscribe to the MENA newsletter, click [here](#) to subscribe to South Asia newsletter. To get connected on our global activities click [here](#) to subscribe to global newsletter.

4. Thanks for the great webinar! I'm curious what your experiences were regarding getting organisation Boards to support the programmes (if at all).

Answer: The Board of Trustees (BOT) is a critical structure of any corporate body. The BOT have a role to play in preventing SEAH to any person that relates with the organisation. The BOT involvement provides overall accountability to prevent SEAH in the organisation. They can set the tone of zero tolerance to inaction as well as offering another level of reporting channel if the management is not responsive. Training should be conducted for all BOTs to understand what safeguarding means and what their responsibilities are. A focal person is identified in the Board, but other board members still have safeguarding responsibilities. Headline updates on safeguarding activities should be given during board meetings. RSH has also developed a safeguarding [training package](#) for BOT, which can be adapted and used by organisations. The training package includes training slides, a facilitator's guide, participants' handbook, and BOT roles and responsibilities.

5. You mentioned to have expanded the good practices in safeguarding to many other CSOs. The mentorship being a 7-month programme, it is really incredible to expand the good practice beyond your organisation. Could you give us your experience as to how you succeeded in such a short time?

Answer: The mentoring programme ended in 2021. Tamaiko Community Development Initiative (TCDI) was one of the pioneer CSOs in Yobe State, Nigeria and have received requests from CSOs for coaching or seeking for clarification on safeguarding and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). TCDI has thus been sharing the knowledge gained during the mentorship when we receive such requests. We also refer such organisations to the [RSH website](#) for access to more safeguarding resources. We are also participating in the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and child protection sectors' coordination meetings and we are leveraging these kinds of windows to share knowledge and skills we acquired as an organisation.

6. One of the key challenges especially is reporting safeguarding concerns. This is due to the bureaucratic processes that characterise the civil service/government and as a result, the whistleblowers are easily identified and victimised. From your

experience, in case you have any government partner you are working with, how have you worked with the government partner especially on encouraging reporting safeguarding issues?

Answer: One of the major underlying principles while handling safeguarding concerns is confidentiality. This is essential to protect whistleblowers as well as victims from being retargeted.

Experience across the African hub has shown that capacity strengthening, awareness raising and community participation are essential for encouraging reporting of safeguarding issues. Government agencies can be targeted for advocacy visits on issues of reporting and confidentiality. Involvement of government representatives in activities of technical working groups or cluster meetings where such issues are discussed and relevant resources developed allows for increase in support.

7. The United Nations General Assembly recently approved a Resolution establishing November 18th as a day to Spotlight the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of children, how does RSH hope to commemorate this day?

Answer: RSH are promoting this through our social media channels. Click [here](#) for more details.

8. Thanks to the organisers and participants. Safeguarding is a must have for any organisation or community. My question: is it important to inform other organisations and associations about the preparation and implementation of the Safeguarding Document outside our office? If you have this experience, please share with us.

Answer: It is beneficial for organisations to share the safeguarding measures they have in place that are working. This may include effective safeguarding systems including mechanisms to raise awareness, training and sensitisation resources for personnel including community members, staff, volunteers, vendors, consultants and partners. This is for everyone to know the organisation's zero tolerance to inaction against SEAH and also how to report concerns when they happen.

9. Safeguarding is the issue for all of us. However, most of the organisations (government) never give it the required attention and focus. Do you plan to scale this up to such organisations, especially government?

Answer: RSH's primary focus is less-resourced CSOs. However, the online hub is open source and the resources there can be accessed and used by different organisations. It is important for organisations and governments to allocate budget for safeguarding and mainstream it in other existing programs.

In the Nigerian hub, such mainstreaming was done, when RSH supported At Risk Children's Project (ARC-P), which is a Federal Government of Nigeria's social protection initiative. RSH provided technical support to ARC-P to develop a national Safeguarding Policy for the programme and to facilitate a training of trainers for youth facilitators who will cascade the training and knowledge down to the target communities.

10. Could you please elaborate on how Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA) in the mentorship programming (acknowledging its broad tool for all safeguarding issues including SEA) is coordinated with other capacity assessments such as the UN harmonised PSEA capacity assessment that some CSOs and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been using to assess the capacity and make action for strengthening PSEA internal systems?

Answer: Most of the organisations who participated in the RSH mentorship programme have not partnered with UN and thus have not participated in the harmonised PSEA capacity assessment prior to the mentorship.

RSH mentors use the RSH [OCA tool](#) to self-assess their organisation's safeguarding capacity. A capacity development plan is developed with support from the assigned mentor for the 6-7 months of the mentorship programme.

Following the completion of the mentorship programme, we heard from organisations that they were able to better complete the PSEA assessment after working through the OCA with mentors. This provides an indication of the improved capacity from the mentorship programme.

11. Can I be included in the hub before closure?

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