

**World Vision UK Written Submission to IDC on Sexual Exploitation in the Aid Sector
August 2020**

1. We welcome the opportunity to provide evidence to the International Development Select Committee inquiry into sexual exploitation in the aid sector. World Vision is the world's largest international children's charity. We are a Christian multi-mandated organisation implementing relief, development and advocacy activities for children, their families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice. We work in 100 countries to help improve the lives of millions of people worldwide.

Standards: Definitions

2. **Safeguarding**, is “Preventing, reporting and responding to harm or abuse of adult beneficiaries and any children by [the organisation’s] employees and affiliates”. Children and adults need safeguarding, and World Vision’s safeguarding policy protects both, with the recognition that children and adults may face distinct risks. Therefore, reporting and responding mechanisms need to take account of age, gender and other accessibility distinctions. For example, language and processes for reporting abuse must take account of girls’ and boys’ stage of development and concerns over who they can speak to safely.
3. Safeguarding is also distinct from (although overlapping with) broader protection. **Child protection** refers to “all efforts to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, exploitation, and other forms of violence against children”, which includes children who are outside of World Vision’s sphere of responsibility. While wider child protection concerns in communities should not be part of reporting requirements to donors, the existence of strong community-based protection systems is vital to the effective and sustainable prevention of and response to safeguarding concerns.
4. World Vision takes a systems approach to child protection throughout its programming and applauds DFID’s efforts to embed this within the department. However, much more needs to be done by the UK to fund systems strengthening programming wherever UKAid is targeted, and to encourage governments to strengthen their formal child protection system.
5. Safeguarding is meaningless in the absence of broader protection systems in the community. DFID have developed internal guidance documents on child safeguarding and on integrating a systems approach to child protection across all sectors of work. Both these documents must be embedded in the FCDO and used together in order to pioneer a systems strengthening approach to child protection, and to balance efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse in the aid sector.

**Safeguarding Good Practice:
DFID-funded IGATE-T Girls’ Education Programme**

6. As a child-focussed agency which works with vulnerable children, safeguarding is of the utmost importance to World Vision’s values. Our DFID-funded IGATE-T Girls’ Education programme shows key areas of expertise and best practice of safeguarding.
7. The project has recently been awarded an A++ in its annual review by DFID, partly due to new safeguarding measures. The review highlighted that ‘the project's [safeguarding] compliance level is 80% and is one of the strongest projects in the Southern Africa Cluster.’ As such, World Vision believes it presents valuable lessons that DFID should replicate in other projects.

8. World Vision UK signed the initial IGATE DFID grant agreement in 2017 to improve the literacy and overall education of over 70,000 marginalised girls in Zimbabwe as well as their transition into employment. The fund manager is PwC and World Vision implements the project with sub-partners World Vision Zimbabwe, CARE Zimbabwe, CARE International and the Open University.

Initial Changes

9. In 2018, following the UK Government's investigation into safeguarding in the international development sector, a new set of safeguarding standards were implemented in the project. These higher standards require the fund manager and WVUK to document, evidence and deliver a culture shift in how the implementation of the grant programme is undertaking these new standards. World Vision UK has coordinated all persons connected to the grant in the UK and in Zimbabwe to understand their safeguarding responsibilities and hold them accountable to the standards. We reached out to all sub-partners, downstream implementors, local and national government, Department of Social Welfare and local district agencies, informing them and training them in these changes.
10. Continual and repeated training in safeguarding is vital to maintaining the current standards. World Vision introduced safeguarding training with refresher sessions for volunteers, school staff and district focal points on the safeguarding standards.

Mechanisms for Reporting

11. World Vision Zimbabwe has contracted an independent organisation Deloitte which runs a Tip-Off Anonymous free hotline facility to report any inappropriate behaviour by anyone. This includes abuse, fraud, theft among others. The reports can be made by anyone whether a community member, stakeholder or employee. Everyone has the responsibility to report should they witness an incident. There are nine toll-free reporting platform numbers for Telone, Econet, Netone, Telecel, Free Fax, email address, and a free post facility to the call centre. The Deloitte posters are found in the areas where World Vision is operating. The posters are also written in the local languages Shona and Ndebele to ensure that all community members and staff are able to read and understand.
12. IGATE has its own hotline number available to the communities. This is advertised on the community posters alongside the other toll-free hotline numbers, such as the police and childline numbers. Communities are taught how to use the hotline and toll-free numbers during community sensitizations. These numbers continue to be shared in the WhatsApp platforms used by project staff to interact with communities during COVID-19 lockdowns.

Recording Incidents

13. The project set up and adopted a fund managers' online safeguarding system through which a designated safeguarding manager records all safeguarding concerns and incidents. Each month designated District Safeguarding Focal Points who are trained in safeguarding attend a monthly meeting to discuss concerns, cases and action points.

Dealing with Incidents

14. Cases are reported and investigated by a police department known as the Victim Friendly Unit, whose members are trained to handle survivor cases. This is done in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare. The IGATE project facilitates the processes by availing transport to stakeholders as they deal with the cases. The cases are dealt with as guided by the law, and the referral pathway.
15. The project also started the process of Case Conferencing. This is a process which brings together core district stakeholders who deal with child protection issues to build strategies on following-up reported cases and addressing any challenges which arise.

Survivor Support

16. Psychosocial support for survivors is offered at different levels by trained personnel. A multi-stakeholder approach is used in offering the survivor the essential support. As the survivor receives physical medical attention, he/she also receives psychosocial support from trained medical personnel.
17. The Social Welfare Probation Officer also offers the survivor mandatory psychosocial support. Where the case goes before a court of law, the Probation Officer offers pre-trial and Post Trial psychosocial support.

Increased Reporting and Resulting Funding Need

18. As a result of increased measures, we have seen an increase in the number of concerns raised through the various reporting mechanisms from girls and their communities. This marks a positive shift as it shows victims understand where to report incidents and feel confident in doing so, suggesting beneficiaries and communities are more likely to report incidents.

Funding for Safeguarding

19. DFID's additional measures have provided essential extra safeguards. However, no extra funding was provided to implement these measures. This required partners to devise, train, support, monitor and evaluate all new standards using existing resources.
20. UKAid implementers must be equipped to include high-quality safeguarding measures without detriment to the quality or reach of programmes. This includes adequate additional funding and replication of best practice examples, such as World Vision's IGATE programme: continual and repeated training in safeguarding; strengthening use of new and existing hotlines and reporting mechanisms; recording and dealing with issues of concern both internally and through community protection and justice systems; building victim confidence in the system and providing access to necessary support.

New Department: Opportunities and Recommendations for the FCDO

21. The merger of the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office presents opportunities to sustain and strengthen the leadership role the UK has played in addressing safeguarding issues in the aid sector.
22. Children, and their multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities, are a core part of DFID's safeguarding work. To lead by example in protecting and promoting the rights and wellbeing of children, the FCDO must also make this a cornerstone of its agenda.

Retain Integrity and Expertise

23. DFID is world renowned due to the long-term extensive expertise of its staff. The UK must avoid the decline in the integrity of aid and the exodus of skilled development staff seen in other mergers (for example in Australia).¹

Coordinated, Not Merged Agendas

24. Having the Safeguarding Unit, Modern Slavery Unit, Protecting Children Hub and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict (PSVI) teams as well as those focused more broadly on violence against women and girls and other human rights in the same department will create opportunities for improved cross-government coordination of these initiatives. However, these initiatives are not the same and should not be narrowed to make them so. Safeguarding is distinct from protection, and protection initiatives themselves must not be limited to focus only violence against women and girls.
25. The specific rights and needs of children must be recognised across these agendas, with coordinated action that embraces the synergies and distinctions between safeguarding and protection for the most vulnerable.

Maintaining the Importance of Safeguarding

26. The need for humanitarian and development will only grow in the wake of COVID-19. However, as difficult decisions are made on FCDO priorities, funding for safeguarding and protection systems strengthening must be sustained – and should be increased – as part of existing and future grants.

¹ Moore, Richard. 2019. "A Future-Focused Review Of The DFAT-Ausaid Integration". Dev Policy. <http://devpolicy.org/publications/reports/DFAT-AusAIDIntegrationReview-ShortVersion.pdf>.