



Keeping  
Children  
Safe

# Strategic Plan 2019-2022

We work with others to  
safeguard children





Keeping Children Safe was established in 2001 by a group of humanitarian relief and development charities in response to the growing realisation that children were being abused by aid and development workers in emergency camps in West Africa. Since then it has come to represent a commitment by organisations worldwide to protect children no matter where they are by developing and promoting a set of robust and comprehensive safeguarding standards that all organisations can and should follow.



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# Strategic Plan 2019-2022

Working together to protect the world's most at-risk children from abuse

## Vision

Keeping Children Safe's vision is for all children to have a safe and healthy development into adulthood.

## Mission

Keeping Children Safe's mission is to prevent the abuse of children by advocating for all organisations to adopt tough International Child Safeguarding Standards.

## General principles

The Standards are based on the following set of principles:

- All children have equal rights to protection from harm
- Everybody has a responsibility to support the protection of children
- Organisations have a duty of care to children with whom they work, are in contact with, or who are affected by their work and operations
- If organisations work with partners they have a responsibility to help partners meet the minimum requirements on protection
- All actions on child safeguarding are taken in the best interests of the child, which are paramount.

## The International Child Safeguarding Standards

### 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 and 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.

# Introduction

Every five minutes a child dies from violence. Every day, in every country, children are abused, beaten, raped and more. Too often, the abuser is someone the child knows and trusts. They may even work for an organisation that's meant to help children. A sports club, school, faith institution, aid organisation or peacekeeping force. But these people abuse their power and the child's trust.

Tragically, it's children in already desperate situations who are most at risk. It could be a refugee child fleeing conflict. A boy or girl living in poverty. A teenager living with a disability. Or a Roma child facing stigma and discrimination, children with few resources and no one to turn to for help.

These are children in the most vulnerable circumstances. Yet, too often, they have no way of reporting the abuse; no medical or psychosocial care and no access to justice. The organisations that fail to protect children

continue putting them at risk. Meanwhile, the abusers go unpunished and in some cases, unreported.

Almost every country in the world has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and in September 2015, world leaders promised to end violence against children by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. These targets cannot be achieved unless all institutions, including the most powerful, are held to account on their duty of care to the children they are trusted to serve.

**In conflicts and crises** across the world, humanitarian staff and peacekeeping personnel have subjected children to rape, trafficking, violence and abuse, demanding sex for the basics of survival – food, shelter, education and medicine.

**In sport**, children have been subjected to all forms of abuse and violence including undue pressure to achieve high performance, sexual harassment and assaults, to child labour and trafficking.

**In schools**, hundreds of millions of children are harassed and abused with girls being particularly at risk.

**In alternative care**, children have faced systematic rape and sexual abuse; exploitation, including trafficking; physical violence; and psychological harm including isolation, the denial of affection and humiliating discipline.

# Making organisations safe for children

Before Keeping Children Safe was established nearly two decades ago, there were no clear global standards to keep our children safe and no single, international, legal framework or justice system in which organisations could be held accountable for protecting children from abuse.

Today, it is widely recognised and accepted that all children have the right to be protected, regardless of where they live. So, we hold organisations to account by setting tough International Child Safeguarding Standards to keep children safe across the world. These standards call for all organisations to implement rigorous policies and procedures to protect children from abuse. That could mean training staff to understand appropriate language and behaviour. Encouraging teams to run background checks on new recruits. And helping families and communities to understand what they can do to support young people.

But preventing child abuse takes more than policies and procedures. It also requires leadership, accountability, and culture change. Implementing International Child Safeguarding Standards means listening to children and communities and transforming the entire culture of an organisation to put their rights, dignity and safety at the heart of every decision.

Today, as a result of our programmes, our extensive open source guidance and toolkits, and through our expanding network of members in over 120 countries, thousands of organisations are implementing the International Child Safeguarding Standards and millions of children worldwide are better protected from abuse.

**'Sometimes they just ask you to take your clothes off so they can take photographs. But sometimes they say you are their girlfriend. Those ones give more money and help. But if you get pregnant they find someone else.'**

13 year old girl



# Protecting children around the world



For over **17 years** Keeping Children Safe has worked to protect children from institutional abuse

Today we help **safeguard millions of children** in almost every country in the world

**Our international standards** help make sure children have someone to turn to if they are abused and help bring perpetrators to justice

**We work across all sectors** and with all types and sizes of organisation to end child abuse

We have **80 members** and counting, including some in the world's worst conflict and crisis zones

All our members are committed to putting **child safeguarding at the heart of all they do** and to using their networks and influence to ensure that others do the same



# There is still so much more to be done

In sector after sector, survivors and whistle blowers have exposed horrific child abuse, sometimes after decades of cover-ups and missed opportunities to act. This strategy sets out how Keeping Children Safe aims to mobilise the learning and expertise

from our decades of programmatic work and international network of members, to challenge and support even more organisations around the world to break that cycle and safeguard the children they are trusted to serve.

## Our Aims

Keeping Children Safe will continue to build our capacity as:

**A powerful global advocate** for ending institutional child abuse and protecting the rights and dignity of victims and survivors.

**The leading international convener** and supporter of organisations committed to upholding and championing International Child Safeguarding Standards.

**A trusted provider** of context specific, culturally sensitive, independent, quality-assured and open-source child safeguarding resources, information and training.

**A credible source** of rigorous agenda-setting research to drive effectiveness and innovation and build the evidence base on child safeguarding.

**'They say they will pay for the baby. Many don't but he did pay some money. But when he left the money stopped. Now I cannot go to school. I cannot afford to send my baby to school. What will happen to us?'**

Teenage girl

# Our strategic priorities

In 2019 - 2022, Keeping Children Safe will develop new research partnerships to build the evidence base on child safeguarding, including proactively investigating potential and emerging child safeguarding risks with the aim of identifying or even stopping abuses before they begin.

We will **establish a new independent committee** of child safeguarding experts to ensure rigorous scrutiny of the standards and programmatic work.

## Our strength continues to lie in the experience, expertise and global reach of our members

Together, **we will scale up our capacity strengthening programme** and invest in network support, including collaborating on new guidance, technical advice, opportunities for networking and sharing best practice, including sector and context specific support.

We will **build staff and network capacity** in each region and extend our services to the widest range of organisations, including small, resource-poor organisations.

We will **forge partnerships** with child rights and survivors' organisations to ensure children's rights and voices inform all that we do.

We will **step up our ground-breaking campaigns** to change the systems and confront the institutions that are failing to protect children from abuse.

We will continue to **work with international agencies** and governments to ensure that safeguarding remains high on their agendas.



'KCS technical advice and guidance has been invaluable to the development of our child protection policy and procedures as well as those of our local partners in Uganda.'

Sarah Morgan, Programme Manager at Opportunity International



## Strategic priority 1

# Prevent the abuse of children

To prevent the abuse of children, protect the rights and dignity of victims/survivors and help bring their abusers to justice, by advocating for all organisations to be held to account against tough international child safeguarding standards.

We will achieve this objective by:

- Developing partnerships with child rights and survivors' organisations to provide a platform for the voices of survivors and co-produce resources for children and communities to hold organisations to account on their responsibility to keep children safe
- Deploying interdisciplinary teams of experts to carry out rigorous investigations of gaps and failures in child safeguarding (within specific organisations, sectors, locations or concerning groups of children who are particularly at risk) with a focus on proactively identifying potential and emerging child safeguarding risks with the aim of stopping incidents before they begin
- Leading tenacious high-impact campaigns to raise the international profile of safeguarding, change the systems and confront the institutions that are failing to protect children from abusers. This means stepping up our Safeguarding Children in Conflict and Crisis campaign and leading new sector-specific campaigns including initiatives to address the power imbalances (race, (dis)ability, sex, faith, sexual orientation, and gender identity) that mean some children are at greater risk of abuse
- Challenging donors and investors to require that the organisations they fund, adopt and implement child-safeguarding standards.

### Key Performance Indicators

- Creation of partnerships with child rights and survivors' organisations
- Development of child friendly resources on safeguarding
- Changes in policy and practice as a result of investigations and campaigns
- Increase in the number of donors or investors requiring the organisations they fund to adopt the standards.

**'There is no crime that shakes us to our core like sexual assault. It is a deeply personal and emotionally traumatic crime. For many victims, the basic assumptions, beliefs and expectations they have about themselves, intimacy, safety, and the capacity to feel that their life is meaningful are shattered. There is not a day that goes by where you don't remember.'**

Robert Shilling, KCS Trustee, former Head of Crimes Against Children, INTEPOL and CSA Survivor



**'By working with Keeping Children Safe we are able to benchmark ourselves in the sector and gain considerable knowledge from the networks experiences.'**

Ignacio Packer, Secretary General, Terre des Hommes International Federation



**'Being able to access the KCS resources online to use in training our staff, supporting our partners and improving our programmes has been excellent.'**

Hannah Doornbos, Child Rights Adviser, Toybox

## Strategic priority 2

# Create child safeguarding best practices

To research, collate and create child safeguarding best practices; develop specialised knowledge and training; and integrate safeguarding across all types and sizes of organisations.

We will achieve this objective by:

- Establishing an independent committee of child safeguarding experts to ensure rigorous scrutiny of the standards and training, and advocate for rights and needs of children to be central to the development of broader initiatives to improve the safeguarding of people in vulnerable circumstances
- Ensuring training and technical advice is of high-quality, context-specific, and culturally sensitive and made available to the widest range of organisations, including small, resource-poor organisations. This will include, face to face training, training of trainers, online training and webinars, mentoring and peer to peer learning
- Creating partnerships with research institutions and partnerships to evaluate the impact and reach of our programmes, build the evidence base on child safeguarding, and identify emerging issues and areas for research
- Developing new child safeguarding resources based on new research and evidence from our programmes including: safeguarding and leadership, preventing online abuse, safeguarding disabled and LGBTI children, and on implementing a survivor-centred approach
- Translating resources into additional languages to better support local organisations and their partners.

### Key Performance Indicators

- Number of training sessions undertaken with organisations
- Number of open courses delivered
- Positive feedback from training evaluations
- New resources developed
- Creation of partnerships with research institutions
- Number of research outputs
- Number of resources translated into additional languages.

## Strategic priority 3

# Grow our international safeguarding network

To strengthen and grow KCS's international safeguarding network by recruiting and engaging organisations committed to upholding and championing International Child Safeguarding Standards.

We will achieve this objective by:

- Scaling up the recruitment of new NGO and Corporate members to the international child safeguarding network
- Increasing the range and quality of support services for members, including new guidance, technical advice, opportunities for networking and sharing best practices. This includes the online community of practice and webinar programme, the annual members conference, an international conference on safeguarding, and developing a range of open seminars/workshops and regional events to meet the needs of members
- Developing and extending regional and sector-specific networks to facilitate context-specific and culturally sensitive support to members
- Continuing the expansion and development of the certification scheme for members with oversight from the Independent Experts Committee.

### Key Performance Indicators

- Number of active NGO members recruited to the network
- Number of active Corporate members recruited to the network
- Engagement with the online community of practice
- Attendance at the annual members' meeting, international conference, and other events
- Engagement with regional networks
- Attendance at webinars
- Number of members achieving certification level 1 and 2
- Positive results from the member satisfaction survey.

**'We can't go back to school because everyone knows. The others, they won't come close to us. The teachers don't want us there. Everyone knows who has been with the peacekeepers.'**

Teenage girl



'At the end of the training, participants expressed their confidence that they are able to make necessary changes in the set-up of the programmes to minimise possible child safeguarding risks coming from inside, but also outside, of the programmes.'

Jan Folda, SOS Children's Villages International



# Your invitation to help us protect children from exploitation and abuse

Our work helps keep 134 million children safe in almost every country of the world. But we simply don't have enough funds to make sure every organisation working with children does all it can to protect them from harm. With your support, we can reach even more organisations, end exploitation and abuse, and ensure every child is safe. Please consider making a donation to support our work, or become a member.

## Membership benefits

- Free introductory webinar on child safeguarding, tailored to the needs of your organisation and staff
- Guidance on creating a child safeguarding policy and implementation plan, to meet International Child Safeguarding Standards
- Free webinars on specific safeguarding issues for all staff
- Ongoing coaching, mentoring and technical advice
- An online Child Safeguarding Community of Practice, with access to all webinars from previous sessions and learn from expert practitioners
- An invitation to join KCS's Annual Members' Conference
- A ten per cent discount on capacity building training and workshops for your organisation and/or local partner organisations.

## Membership levels

### Associate Member

Organisations working to strengthen their safeguarding measures.

### Full Member

Ideally, all Associate members will become Full members within three years of joining Keeping Children Safe. To support you on your journey we help you identify your strengths and weaknesses. We then provide technical support to develop your child safeguarding policy and implementing procedures.

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## To join or donate, contact us:



[www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk)



[info@keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](mailto:info@keepingchildrensafe.org.uk)



[www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk)



Tel: +44 (0)20 7250 8325



Keeping  
Children  
Safe

Keeping Children Safe

CAN Mezzanine

49-51 East Road

London N1 6AH

Tel: +44 (0)20 7250 8325

Email: [info@keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](mailto:info@keepingchildrensafe.org.uk)

[www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk](http://www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk)

