

Protection is possible. How an innovative operating model strengthened safeguarding for the Girls' Education Challenge.

Questions and Answers

The questions below were posed by participants during the webinar on 25th November 2021. Some questions were answered by the panellists. A summary of their responses are described here.

1. Please can you provide a link to the paper, I don't seem to have received it?

Protection is possible - paper (UKAid / Girls Education Challenge, 2021) - <https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/documents/protection-possible>

2. Who led on the impact evaluation of the model?

Protection is Possible is a learning paper rather than a formal evaluation paper. The author documented the safeguarding operating model used by the GEC, what worked well and what didn't work well. This information sits alongside data regarding meaningful compliance across implementing partners safeguarding journey, analysis of gaps and strengths in partners' frameworks and case management data. GEC implementing partners' stories are told in the paper as well to ensure that we gain diverse perspectives on the model. Protection is Possible also provides an extensive toolbox which includes monitoring tools, risk categorization guidance for education projects and safeguarding action plan examples and tracking tools which can be used for multiple projects.

3. This is an excellent paper and thanks for sharing it. I read about the case management system used (SHE) and would love to know more on this please - were there pro's and con's / challenges in use, did it help build trust, increase reporting etc?

The online reporting system is an incredibly powerful tool. The tool has separate case management forms for each categorized safeguarding concern and the GEC Safeguarding Team are able to set actions with deadlines and are alerted when these deadlines pass. It provides a platform to keep notes and we store communication regarding cases on the system as well. This provides opportunity to keep case management files in one location and to keep them safe. Within Protection is Possible, the case categories are shared, but the tools are not. We are considering writing a separate paper regarding case handling.

The tool did help to build trust and once implementing partners were used to the tool itself and the process of working with the GEC Safeguarding Team on case handling, we were able to work with partners more effectively and provide dedicated support. We were also able to use the tool for analysis of trends in cases which did have results regarding spotting patterns of abuse in some projects and working with the implementing partner to address those patterns.

4. What is the difference between safeguarding and protection? and when we use each of them? How did GEC conceptualize safeguarding and protection? What linkages were considered between protection and safeguarding?

We differentiate in the following way:

- Safeguarding: protecting staff, beneficiaries and members of community from harm perpetrated by aid-funded workers.
- Protection: protecting affected populations from harm perpetrated by the State and fellow citizens.

Within the GEC's safeguarding work, we additionally address VAC in Ministry of Education schools (where the project supports school or sends girls to the school, but doesn't have responsibility for the staff), as well as violence on the way to school. Our projects work with the MoE to support their efforts on addressing safeguarding concerns and support investigations where they can. They also map safe routes to school and put in place mitigation measures where they can. We consider this protection work rather than safeguarding, but with a heightened level of responsibility for follow up with regards to duty of care.

5. Does FCDO now anticipate that all of its new high risk programmes should be able to formally demonstrate compliance using this framework?

FCDO would not expect all new high-risk programmes to necessarily be able to formally demonstrate compliance right from the start of the programme, but they should aim to do so as soon as possible and in the meantime proactively manage the risks related to areas of the framework where they are not initially compliant. The GEC standard is specific to the GEC, but aligns with and builds on the six areas set out in FCDO's SEAH safeguarding due diligence standards.

6. How effective and trusted was the remote monitoring of Safeguarding? Do you think remote/online Safeguarding Assessments and monitoring can be adapted long term?

The monitoring was really effective and could be used for monitoring and due to lower costs may be used more frequently. It should be supplemented with in-person monitoring in the longer-term however.

7. How does meaningful compliance compare with the global audit/risk management compliance approach?

The GEC uses methods which the safeguarding world is familiar with – auditing, action plans and risk management all features. The difference with the GEC model is the depth of the reviews completed as well as the long-term, bespoke support that was provided to implementing partners. The results of this approach led to huge increases in meaningful compliance, across all GEC standards, over a relatively short space of time. The approach taken by the GEC safeguarding team combined with the impetus provided through the GEC's positionality as a Fund Manager, demonstrably worked across a diversity of development and humanitarian actors.