Want to talk to children in Ethiopia about safeguarding?



Then, this guide is for you!



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Abbreviations

CBCM Community Based Complaints Mechanism

CSO Civil Society Organisations

GBV Gender Based Violence

NGO Non-Governmental Organisation

IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee

PSEA Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

RSH Resource and Support Hub

SEA Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

SEAH Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

UNCRC United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child



A few things to get you started

Who is this pocket guide for?

If the points below apply to you / your organisation, then this guide is for you:

Does your civil society organisation (CSO) or non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Ethiopia interact with children when programmes or services are being delivered?

Are you a CSO or NGO staff member who talks to community members, including children, about the programmes and services that you are delivering and how to make sure that they are safe?

This guide can be used by staff members in Ethiopia who will be sharing information with children about safeguarding. For example, this could be community engagement staff, a safeguarding focal point or child protection practitioners.

It is important that all staff members who use this guide and engage with children and community members have had safeguarding training.



What do you need to have in place before you start using this pocket guide?

Before you start, make sure that your organisation has the following in place:

- Safeguarding or PSEA policy
- Safeguarding Focal Point or equivalent
- All relevant staff have received safeguarding training
- Community-based reporting mechanisms are in place
- A map of existing local support services (which includes contact details etc.) and a referral plan in case you need to refer a victim / survivor
- One / some skilled staff available to work with victims / survivors, including children
- Access to / a list of trained investigators

For more information on the above, visit the **Ethiopia Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub** or contact us **here**.



What can this pocket guide do for you?

This guide provides information and guidance on how to talk to children about child safeguarding. We want to make sure that CSOs and NGOs in Ethiopia can explain to children what safeguarding means and what to expect from staff² and programmes. This includes what appropriate and inappropriate staff behaviour looks like and how children can report if they experience or see abuse or harm caused by CSOs and NGOs in Ethiopia.

This pocket guide adopts the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) definition of a child – a person under the age of 18. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has ratified important international and regional instruments like the UN Convention on the

This guide focuses on talking to children about abuse, including sexual exploitation, that is caused by CSOs, NGOs and their staff¹. It does not include talking about gender-based violence (GBV) or violence against children within society in general.

However, all CSOs and NGOs working with children should have reporting systems for children and should be able to receive reports from children on any type of abuse (including abuse that is caused by anyone within society).

Rights of the Child (CRC), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Aligned with the ratified conventions, the country has provided details of punishable crimes against children in the Revised Criminal Code of Ethiopia.

^{&#}x27;Staff refers to anyone who works for a CSO or NGO whether they are employees (full time or part-time), volunteers, contractors, interns, visitors, sub-contractors, affiliates, et cetera '2As above



Why this pocket guide?

CSO and NGO staff in Ethiopia have fed back that they find it difficult to talk to children about safeguarding, especially on particularly sensitive safeguarding issues such as sexual violence.

Abuse occurs not because of what a victim or survivor wore or how they were behaving. It does not occur because one needs to 'teach' a child a lesson. Abuse occurs because of the power imbalances and structures that enable a staff member to commit abuse or ill-planned programme or communications to cause harm.

For example:

- CSO staff³ can abuse the children
- Community members, including other children, can abuse the children in a programme setting, e.g. children are being supported to speak out on issues which families are uncomfortable with and react to; children are expected to participate together but are not supported on how to behave with one another whilst participating in programme activities
- Community or family members can abuse a child in response to issues brought up by CSO communications

^a CSO staff includes anyone engaged by a CSO whether employed or volunteer, contractors, visitors, gov't partners.



How to use this pocket guide?4

This pocket guide is broken into four sections:

 Why is it important to talk to children? This section discusses the importance of talking about safeguarding to children and also making sure you are prepared.

Core principles when talking to children about child safeguarding. This section contains the principles that need to be followed when talking to children.

 How to talk to children about child safeguarding. This section provides guidance on how to discuss child safeguarding with children. This includes guidance on words to ensure that you are effectively communicating the different forms of abuse to children, what the organisation is doing to keep them safe and to encourage them to raise concerns.

 How to spot signs of abuse and receive a disclosure. This section helps those talking to children to spot signs of abuse or receive a disclosure (which can be common when talking to children about abuse).

Tools and Resources at the end lists relevant resources and links where you can find additional information (most are in English).

⁴The pocket guide will be available in Amharic, Afaan Oromo, Tigrigna and Somali. These versions will have similar sections as the English version.



Why is it important to talk to children about child safeguarding?

Talking to children about child abuse and child safeguarding is important so that they know what is right and what is wrong and what to expect from CSOs

Children should be given information that is suitable for their age so that they understand it ("age-appropriate information").

The information shared can include:

- What is meant by abuse
- Who to speak to
- How to report concerns or incidents
- Ways they can get support services

Remember!

Every situation that involves child abuse is different and every child responds differently.

Do not begin talking to children unless your organisation is ready to receive disclosures, e.g. it has reporting mechanisms in place.

Do not ask staff to talk to children if they do not understand what abuse is, and what your organisation is doing to safeguard children.



Many adults are uncomfortable talking about issues of harm and abuse with children. In Ethiopia, cultural beliefs and practices can reinforce this. Sometimes, we fear that children cannot be trusted to positively handle information about abuse, sex and their reproductive health and so we avoid giving them the information they need as they grow into adulthood.

Evidence⁵ has shown that not giving children age-appropriate information as they grow through different developmental stages can affect them.

For example:

- Children may grow up not knowing about their bodies and boundaries or about child abuse and its different forms. This can increase their risk of abuse and exploitation.
- As children grow, their access to information expands irrespective of whether we talk to them about child safeguarding or not. They begin to learn about abuse from different sources. By not taking control and giving children age-appropriate and correct information, children may get wrong information elsewhere. This can make them more vulnerable and increase their inability to adequately respond if abuse does occur

5WHO Factsheet on Child Maltreatment: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/child-maltreatment



• In Ethiopia, there is a culture of silence and shame around child abuse -especially on sexual abuse. Some organisations may be reluctant to recognise child safeguarding issues and/or may not set up adequate reporting and response mechanisms. These factors may have contributed to the low number of reported cases of abuse⁶. By not talking to children about child safeguarding, we risk continuing the culture of silence and shame and children's risk of abuse and emboldens the abuser to continue with the abuse.

Caution!

In many parts of Africa when children start to reach puberty stage, girls and boys are usually kept apart. While this is a coping strategy to protect girls especially, and avoid abuse, this practice may promote exclusion. Also, it does not address the root cause of all forms of abuse: power imbalances between people and how this is used by one person against another to cause harm.

Care therefore needs to be taken so your programmes do not end up reinforcing this. Be mindful of how boys and girls interact and meet during your programmes. Ensure that your organisation is not reinforcing the negative belief that children (boys in particular) cannot be trusted when they reach puberty. However, also be mindful that discussing issues of abuse and safeguarding with children will often require separate groups for girls and boys so they feel free to discuss issues.

For more information, click **here** the RSH Ethiopia Safe Programming tip sheet.



Core principles for talking to children about child safeguarding

- Training. Make sure that the staff member who is leading the conversations has received safeguarding training.
 Ideally, this should have included information on engaging with children or child protection.
- Safe environment. Hold sessions in a place where there are no distractions and where children feel comfortable. Avoid situations with one adult and one child only.
- Confidentiality. Start by explaining what confidentiality is, setting ground rules of confidentiality, and respect for each other's opinions and views.
- Participation. Give space for children from different backgrounds (such as religion, ethnicity, disability) to discuss topics and share ideas in creative ways – if they wish to participate. This will help you better understand the child safeguarding risks in your setting.



How to talk to children about child safeguarding

When describing child safeguarding to children you need to use language and terms which the different groups of chil-

dren can understand. This is important because you will want children to:

- understand what child abuse is and all forms of child abuse
- understand the organisation's commitment to keeping them safe
- understand how to raise a concern or report if they, their friend or someone they know is being harmed

REMEMBER!

Child safeguarding looks beyond sexual forms of abuse. Child safeguarding considers all forms of harm, including physical harm, sexual abuse, exploitation, harassment, neglect, economic harm and other forms of harm and abuse against children.

It is critical that all staff know how to receive a disclosure of abuse from a child and what to do next with that information.

Remember!

Explaining child abuse, especially sexual abuse, to children can be difficult. Sometimes, depending on their age and development stage, children may find it hard to understand. Always remember the principles listed above when you have your conversations.

approachable, friendly and relaxed: Children feel relaxed when the adult speaking to them is also at ease, confident and friendly. Project confidence. friendliness and an easy when discussina manner child safeguarding with



children

3.1. How to describe an organisation's commitment to prevent harm and respond

Objective:

Children are curious to know who you are and why you are talking to them. It is better to start by explaining who you are and your organization's commitment.

We are called XX organisation. We work with [use as appropriate: men / women / communities / children / people with disabilities etc.] to make sure that there is [insert as appropriate: water / food / school / work opportunities etc.]. We will be working in this location for the next XX months / years. We work with another organisation that is called XX.

"Our organisation is here to help you. We want to make sure that all of our people are kind, treat you fairly and do not harm you or anyone in your community. We call this safeguarding and it means we want to keep you safe. There are a few things we are doing to keep you safe. Discussing this with you is one of those. We will also be speaking with your parents about wanting to keep you safe. We have trained our staff so they understand how to keep you safe and what to do if they are concerned about you."



3.2. How to describe the definitions of abuse with children

Objective: This section gives you various tips on the different ways you can start the conversation with different age groups.

There are a number of approaches you can take to describe abuse to children. A useful way to start discussions with children is to use a story or a participatory exercise that is suitable for the age group.

Some examples include:

- Drawing a body ("body mapping") and using that to talk through children's senses and personal risks and issues
- A puppet show or drama to highlight different situations and types of people
- Drawing a community or a space, e.g. school / programme location, and using that to talk about where children feel more / less safe and why

There are more resources on participation listed at the end of this guide.

For younger children, you can start by saying the following:

"Abuse comes in many forms. Abuse is when someone does something to hurt you or fails to do something and this leads to you being hurt. For example, if someone beats, hits, or slaps you, calls you bad names like stupid or useless, treats you badly because of who you are, these are all forms of abuse, and it is wrong". **OR**



You can list the categories of abuse and ask the children if they can identify behaviours for each category.

OR

In Ethiopia, some Amharic children's songs spread notions of child abduction and inappropriate (underage) relationships such as "beza bebega" and "etemete".

You can ask the children to sing the song and ask them to identify the inappropriate message. Explaining to children that these songs are inappropriate can help them understand and set boundaries.

Additional points that are useful to make:

"No one (apart from your mum / dad / caregiver) should touch or want to see your private parts. It is also wrong for them to ask you to see or touch theirs. No matter what anyone says, this is wrong".

If someone is asking you to do something that makes you uncomfortable, or you feel in your stomach that something is wrong, then most likely, it is wrong. You may also feel afraid and scared. This is your mind telling you something is wrong".

⁸Sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, physical, emotional, neglect



When talking about sexual abuse to older children (adolescents), you can say:

"You may have some questions about your body and your private parts. This is normal. You can talk to a doctor, teacher, community member, parents or a trusted adult that you feel safe with about questions that you may have."

You may know someone who wants to be a special friend to you: You may feel this person is very 'nice' to you and you don't want to make the person angry when they ask you to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable. When this happens, remember you have a choice, and it is okay to say no. If this person is a true friend, they will respect your choice and won't stop being your friend. Tell a parent or someone you trust if this person continues to ask you to do things you don't want or starts to make you feel afraid of them".

Emotional abuse can be subtle, sometimes children may not recognise it. To explain emotional abuse, say:

"If someone is calling you bad names for example that you are stupid or useless, or making you feel as if you cannot do anything right, this is wrong. If this happens, remember that this is a form of abuse. Do not believe the person. Tell the person that they are wrong and that you are not what they say you are and ask them to stop calling you names".



How to talk about what to do if children feel they are at risk of being abused

Children need to understand how to raise a concern with the organisation, and they also need to feel confident to do so. Ideally you will ask children how they would like to raise concerns with you (click here for a RSH resource on how to set up a community based complaints mechanism). If you have those mechanisms set up, you need to help children so they feel comfortable using them and raising concerns.

It is not your fault:

"No matter what you were told, who told you or what you think you did, abuse is never your fault, and you didn't deserve it. It is normal to feel upset, angry, afraid, and confused when someone hurts you. It is normal to doubt yourself. But don't blame yourself or worry what others think or if they will be angry with you. Even if you think you did something wrong or should have done things differently, that does not make it okay for someone to hurt you".

Feeling threatened:

"When someone hurts you, they can say things like "you are my friend, I like you. This is our little secret. Or they can say "If you are my friend, you will keep this a secret'. Other times, they may use threats like "if you tell anyone, your parents will no longer love you". They may also use excuses such as religion/culture like "it is my duty to train/teach you". Do not believe them! These are tricks and lies they tell you so they can continue hurting you and doing bad things to you".

⁹Adolescence Age and Stage. Understanding the golden threads that connect the adolescent girl experience worldwide. 2017



Immediate steps:

"It is okay to tell someone who is hurting you to stop and that you want to leave. If someone wants to touch or see your private parts or asks you to touch their own or is doing something you are uncomfortable with, you can tell them you want to go to the toilet or that you need to leave. You can also shout that you do not want to do what they are asking you to do, tell the person that you will report them to their organisation or a trusted adult. Try to run if you can or need to".

Sometimes, when an abuser wants to hurt you, they may start by talking about your body, they will say how you are beautiful, how they like you or how they want to be your special friend. Sometimes when they are walking by you, they may brush or touch your breast and say this is a mistake. If this happens, remember that this is wrong, and they want to hurt you. Tell them you do not like it and that you will report them. Get away from them and tell a trusted adult. Make sure that you are never alone with them and if they ask you to come meet them someplace, do not go (even if you are with a friend who wants to accompany you) but tell a trusted adult."

Raising the concern:

"Always report to someone you trust. This person could be your mum, dad, teacher or a staff member in our organisation". Tell children that a trusted adult does not necessarily mean a family member 10. "A trusted adult is someone whom you feel safe with and can tell anything. A trusted adult is someone you can talk to when you need help, this could be someone who has helped you before and/or someone who makes you feel safe".

¹⁰ Safe Secure Kids. Identifying a Trusted Adult. https://www.safesecurekids.org/sites/default/files/ SSK-Identifying%20Trusted%20Adults_VD.pdf



"If you report anyone who hurts you, you will not be in trouble. If you feel you will be in trouble if you report anyone who hurts you, find a trusted adult, ask to speak to the person in private and describe what happened in a way that makes you feel comfortable. It is important that the organisation of the abuser knows so that they can punish them so when you tell an adult, the adult will then be obliged to tell the organisation".

For children who have access to phones, especially children ages 15-17, you can give them a code word to share with their trusted adult and agree with the adult that it will only be used when they feel uncomfortable or in an unsafe situation and want to be picked up.

"If it is safe to do so, you can secretly send a text message or you can dial a trusted adult and put it on speaker. When you do, you can say the code word or if there is none, repeat the words 'no', 'stop it', also mention where you are so the person knows you are in trouble and can come help you".

Reporting a concern about another child:

"If you suspect another child is being hurt or abused by someone in the organisation, report this to a trusted adult. Sometimes, the child may be afraid or unable to say anything and if you report, you are helping him or her. You can also encourage the person to report. Don't tell your friends because they may not be able to keep it a secret or they may make fun of the person, and this will make the person even more sad and hurt. Keep it to yourself and trust that the adult will do the right thing."



What happens next:

"Once you report to an adult or the organisation, the organisation will keep the report confidential. They will try to understand the situation and make the necessary decision. This may include talking to you."

Closing the discussion:

"I know it is difficult to speak up when someone hurts or abuses you, you may be scared or afraid of what will happen. Remember you are not alone, and you have people who care about you. Always remember it is never your fault and whenever you report, someone will try to help you".

Remember!

The end is as important as the beginning. You shouldn't rush to exist and act. Stay calm! Thank the children for their participation and check/ask if they have any question for you or anything to say. It is advisable if you also give them contact details of you/the safeguarding focal or the organization's reporting mechanism.



How to spot signs of abuse and receive a disclosure

Objective: This is for you, as practitioner! This section provides you with tips to know when something is wrong, what to say and what not to say.

It is important that CSO staff are aware of child safeguarding risks and to know if an abuse has occurred. Often children will disclose abuse during discussions on abuse and safeguarding. Staff might also have concerns about children's behaviour or other signs which suggest the child is being abused. ¹¹

Tip:

Child safeguarding communications may be one-off or irregular.
Despite this, being aware of children's behaviour is crucial. Be aware of children's behaviour and always honour your instincts.

11Adapted from Child Abuse Help. Child Sexual Abuse Signs We Must Know. www.nneca.org.uk



Signs of abuse:

- Showing fear of a person or place that they previously didn't show. Where this happens, act immediately¹² even if the person is a 'trusted' adult among your staff
- Unexplainable money and/or gifts or talk about a new/secret friend
- New interest in sexual objects, pictures, use of sexual words that is out of character
- Sudden change in behaviour and/or personality, e.g. picking fights, becoming clingy, distracted, withdrawn or distant
- Unexplainable change in clothing and appearance,
 e.g. dressing more provocatively, or shabbily
- Pain when going to the bathroom
- Unexplained injury on the body, swollen eye(s), marks on the back, leg, hands etc
- Becoming withdrawn, keeping to themselves, and not wanting to play with their friends
- Always seeking for approval, no longer sure of themselves, doubting themselves and/or not able to make simple decisions for themselves

If you discuss signs of abuse with children, share the signs and see if they have any other examples to add. Encourage children to report if they notice signs of abuse in other children, including in younger children.

¹²How to respond (what to say and do) to a safeguarding report is discussed in section three



If you receive a disclosure of abuse whilst speaking to children on abuse and safeguarding:

DO Do Not

Provide a safe place. Always discuss an abuse incident with a child where there will be no disruptions and in a space that is comfortable and confidential. If a child approaches you in a place where you know there will likely be disruptions, explain to the child the reason why you need to move to somewhere else.

For example, say:

"thank you for telling me this. I take what you are telling me very seriously and would like to give you my complete attention. And so, I want us to move to (mention the place). Is this okay with you?"

Deny that the abuse has occurred. This is a common reaction when listening to a child tell you an abuse has occurred in your organisation. Respect the child by listening to what they have to say.

For example, say:

"thank you for telling me this. You are very brave to be able to tell me. I believe you and will take this very seriously."

Provide reassurance, be supportive and non-judgemental.

For example, say:

"thank you for telling me. I believe what you have told me and will do my best to help you".

Communicate shock, fear, or horror about anything disclosed even if what you are hearing is horrifying. If you do, the child will pick on this. You need to always project confidence and support.



DO Do Not Listen carefully and don't Interrogate the child. This is a normal reaction, in make assumptions. our eagerness, we sometimes It is important that you listen start asking a lot of questions. more than talk at this stage. Avoid doing this as it may Allow the child to set the confuse the child and make it pace and use words and harder for them to recount the language they are comfortincident. able with Also, they should only be asked questions by a safeguarding focal point or other service professional. Avoid asking the child to share their story more times than needed. Do not rush the child and don't assume you know what Limit your questions to getting the he/she is about to say. facts you need. Make promises. Never promise that For example, say: you won't tell anyone what has been "what happened? When did it disclosed to you. happen? Where did it happen? Who Instead say: did it? How do you know them?" "thank you for telling me this" These questions are enough for you then proceed to tell the child what to get the information needed to will happen next and who you need move things to the next step. to talk to. This way, the child trusts vou more and can understand what Always remember to document, this happens next. will avoid you having to ask the child to repeat what has already been

After the conversation with the child and you have documented what has been said, you will need to act immediately and report through your organisation's reporting process.



said.

Tools and Resources

Child safeguarding and safeguarding Save the Children:

https://www.savethechildren.net/sites/www.savethechildren.net/files/SCI_HR_POL_Child%20Safeguarding%20External%20Policy_EN.docx.pdf

UNICEF Child Protection:

https://www.unicef.org/protection

Ethiopia Resource and Support Hub: Keeping Children Safe- Basics of Safeguarding.

https://ethiopia.safeguardingsupporthub.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/KCS%20Standards%202%20Pager%20AK.pdf

For basic information on safeguarding in Ethiopia, see here:

https://ethiopia.safeguardingsupporthub.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/KCS%20Standards%202%20Pager%20AK.pdf

For information on how to design safe programmes in Ethiopia, read here:

https://ethiopia.safeguardingsupporthub.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/RSH%20Safeguarding%20Journey%20Intro%20Slides-compressed.pdf

How to receive reports from children Child Help. Handling Disclosure:

https://www.childhelp.org/story-resource-center/handling-child-abuse-disclosures/



Responding to Abuse:

https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/multimedia/responding-re-port-sexual-exploitation-abuse-or-sexual-harassment-nigeria

Referring cases to support services

Addressing SRGBV in Ethiopia:

https://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/media/1366/file/Addressing%20SRGBV%20in%20Ethiopia:%20A%20scoping%20study%20of%20policy%20and%20practice%20to%20reduce%20gender-based%20violence.pdf

Case handling flow chart:

https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/multimedia/case-handling-flow-chart-nigeria

Consent and confidentiality:

https://safeguardingsupporthub.org/multimedia/consent-and-confidentiality-nigeria

Child participation

Save the children, participatory action toolkit:

https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/child-and-youth-friendly-participatory-action-researc h-toolkit

Save the children, basic requirements for meaningful children's participation:

https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/nine-basic-requirements-meaningful-and-ethical-childrens-participation



Save the children, children's participation in the analysis, planning and design of programmes:

https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/childrens-participation-analysis-planning-and-design-program mes-guide-save-children-staff

Principles of communicating with children

Save the Children's Resource Centre. Communicating with Children: Principles and Practices to Nurture, Inspire, Excite, Educate and Heal. 2011:

https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/communica-

ting-children-principles-and-practices-nurture-inspire-excit e-educate-and-heal

Talking to children about abuse Stop it Now! The scope of child sexual abuse:

https://www.stopitnow.org/faq/the-scope-of-child-sexual-abuse-definition-and-fact-sheet

Tips for talking with children about child abuse:

https://ovc.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh226/files/pubs/helpseries/pdfs/CATipSheet.pdf

Ethiopia PSEA guidelines:

https://ethiopia.safeguardingsupporthub.org/sites/default/files/2021-06/3.1.1_PSEA_IASC%20Six%20Core%20Principles_A5_English.pdf

Social and Behaviour Change to Address Violence Against Children. UNICEF, 2020:

https://www.unicef.org/media/97721/file



Signs of abuse in children

How to know if a child has been abused:

https://www.stopitnow.org/sites/default/files//documents/files/warning_signs_child_behaviors_1.pdf

How to identify abusers:

https://www.rainn.org/articles/child-sexual-abuse

Disability and inclusivity

Disability-inclusive child safeguarding guidelines:

https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/19086/pd-f/dis-ability_inclusive_child_safeguarding_guidelines_able_child_africa_save_the_children_2021_-seah.pdf

Community-based complaints mechanisms

How to Design and Manage Community-based Complaints Mechanisms (CBCM) | Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub (safeguardingsupporthub.org)

Reporting and referral services in Ethiopia

Report (SEA aid sector)	World Food Programme (WFP) hotline: 6063 for call and 6065 for SMS	Monday to Thursday: 8:30 - 17:00 Friday: 8:30 - 13:30	Amharic
Access counselling support	Setaweet's Alegnta hotline: 6388	Monday to Friday: 9:00 - 12:00 14:00 - 17:00	Amharic
Access reproductive health services and counselling support	Marie Stopes Internation- al hotline: 8044	Monday to Friday: 9:00 - 12:00 14:00 - 17:00	Many languages, including Tigrigna



Communicating with children About Safeguarding In Ethiopia



