

Safeguarding Policy

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**Creating Safer Space:
Strengthening Civilian Protection Amidst
Violent Conflict**



**CREATING
SAFER SPACE**
STRENGTHENING CIVILIAN PROTECTION
AMIDST VIOLENT CONFLICT

Safeguarding Policy

Creating Safer Space: Strengthening Civilian Protection Amidst Violent Conflict

The *Creating Safer Space* network has a duty to safeguard our researchers, participants, and wider communities from harm. Harm can take many different forms, including sexual exploitation, bullying, and physical violence.

The research supported by the *Creating Safer Space* network aims to enhance the protection of civilians in the context of conflict. We recognize that we are working with communities that are particularly vulnerable to harm from violent conflict, and that we must take special care to ensure that our work does not exacerbate the risk of such harm.

This Safeguarding Policy sets out the measures that the *Creating Safer Space* network will take to protect our researchers, participants, and wider communities from different kinds of harm. This policy will be monitored and revised in light of new challenges, opportunities or risks that arise throughout the lifespan of the Network Plus.

UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR) definition of Safeguarding:

“Safeguarding is defined as taking all reasonable means to prevent harm from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

The scope of our safeguarding activity covers any sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment of research participants, communities and research staff, plus any broader forms of violence, exploitation and abuse relevant to research such as bullying, psychological abuse and/or physical violence.”¹

Scope

All individuals and organisations directly involved in the *Creating Safer Space* network must uphold this Safeguarding Policy, including:

- The core management team of *Creating Safer Space* (including investigators and project staff);
- Project Partners and members of the Advisory Board;
- Recipients of *Creating Safer Space* grants, their organisations, and staff employed on their projects.

Members of the network will adhere to this policy in carrying out any *Creating Safer Space* research or related activities (including team meetings, training workshops, and dissemination events). Members of the network will also adhere to their own organisations' safeguarding policies. Please contact the management team at creating-safer-space@aber.ac.uk if you believe there may be a conflict between this policy and your own organisation's policy, and we will cooperate to find an appropriate solution.

Principles and Approaches

All members of the network will endeavour to follow the below principles and approaches, which are primarily based on the [Safeguarding Guidance](#) provided by the UK Collaborative on International Development Research (UKCDR):

1. We will try to **anticipate** potential harm. We will seek to identify risks to researchers, participants, and communities in the context of all our work, from research to training to engagement activities. We will do this by working collaboratively with diverse partners and advisors to gather information on the potential harms that our activities can inadvertently create or exacerbate. We will seek to learn about the researchers', participants', and communities' own ideas about the risk of harm, and we will be sensitive to how inequalities and differences around gender, class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, disability, and religion can affect vulnerability to harm.¹
2. We will try to **mitigate** the risk of harm. We will seek to develop reasonable measures to mitigate the risk of harm, in a way that is proportionate, contextually sensitive, appropriate to the nature of the research, and based on researchers', participants', and communities' own ideas about how to mitigate risk.²
3. We will seek to **address** any harm that does occur. We will try to ensure that there are effective processes for reporting, investigating, and providing meaningful redress for harm.³

¹ UKCDR, *Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research* (2020), p. 4, available at {<https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/170420-UKCDR-Guidance-for-Safeguarding-in-International-Development-Research.pdf>} accessed 12/02/2021.

² Ibid, p. 4; Orr, David et al., *Safeguarding in International Development Research - Evidence Review*, (2019), p. 6, available at {https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/20190603-UKCDR-Evidence-Review_updated.pdf} accessed 12/02/2021.

³ UKCDR, *Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research*, p 4.

4. We will ensure that the **rights of victims / survivors and whistle-blowers** are at the heart of our responses and processes.⁴
5. We recognize that safeguarding is a shared responsibility between different organisations within the network, and we will seek to **work together** to join up our safeguarding practices and efforts, while recognizing that different approaches will be appropriate in different parts of the world.⁵
6. We will consider **equity and fairness** in all our work. We will seek to ensure that responsibilities and rewards from participating in the network are clearly identified and fairly shared.⁶
7. We will consider and seek to address **power imbalances** in our work, especially between researchers and research participants, between senior and early career researchers, between male and female researchers and participants, and between North and South.⁷
8. We will familiarize ourselves with, and adhere to, the [Global Code of Conduct](#) for research in resource-poor settings.⁸
9. We will **learn from similar projects**, especially *Changing the Story*, which has developed a range of [learning resources](#) on safeguarding.⁹

Specific Responsibilities

CORE MANAGEMENT TEAM	GRANT HOLDERS
- To inform those within their responsibility of this Safeguarding Policy. - To prepare plans for how participants will be safeguarded in the course of their activities (such as training workshops or networking activities), and to implement those plans. - To support grant holders in developing appropriate approaches to safeguarding. - To manage a centralised form of redress.	- To inform those within their responsibility about this Safeguarding Policy. - To prepare plans for how researchers and research participants will be safeguarded in the course of and after the research, and to implement these plans. - To provide regular reports on potential risks of harm, and how these will be mitigated, to the <i>Creating Safer Space</i> core management team. - To ensure research participants are aware of processes for when harm has occurred.

⁴ UKCDR, *Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research*, p. 5.

⁵ Orr, David et al., *Safeguarding in International Development Research - Evidence Review*, p. 6.

⁶ UKCDR, *Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research*, p. 5.

⁷ Orr, David et al., *Safeguarding in International Development Research - Evidence Review*, p. 6; 12-17.

⁸ Trust Consortium, *Global Code of Conduct for Research in Resource-Poor Settings* (2018), available at https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/coc_research-resource-poor-settings_en.pdf

⁹ Changing the Story, *Safeguarding Resources* (2021), available at <https://changingthestory.leeds.ac.uk/resources/related-projects/safeguarding-project/safeguarding-resources/> Accessed 10/09/2021.

Safeguarding Risks

Each *Creating Safer Space* research project and network activity will bring different safeguarding risks, and members of the network will do their best to identify, mitigate, and address the specific harms that may occur within their own areas of responsibility. Here are some examples of risks that may occur:

For research participants and communities

- Research participants in conflict regions may be targeted by armed actors, if they have provided researchers with incriminating information, or if they are believed to have done so.¹⁰
- Research participants may be at risk of re-traumatisation, if researchers ask questions that bring back traumatic memories.¹¹
- Research participants may feel compelled to participate in a research project in order to access services, for example if services are provided by non-governmental organisations that also support the research project.¹²
- Research participants may find that private information they share with researchers becomes known within the community, for example if local translators are unaware of confidentiality requirements.¹³

For researchers and project staff

- Researchers who investigate sensitive political subjects in conflict areas may be targeted by armed actors or authorities.¹⁴
- Researchers may be sexually abused or harassed by other members of the research team, or while undertaking fieldwork in insecure environments.¹⁵
- Early career researchers may be exploited, for example if senior researchers make misleading promises in regard to future support or co-authorship of publications, in order to encourage them to work without fair pay.¹⁶
- Fieldworkers may come across emotionally challenging situations which exposes them to death, grief and violence, and may lack access to emotional support or guidance on how to support victims/survivors.¹⁷
- Research staff can be harmed by institutional processes, for example if salaries are not paid on time or if upfront payments have to be made for research expenses.¹⁸

Relation to other policies and procedures

Most organisations around the world have a variety of policies and procedures in place to safeguard their own employees and others from harm. All members of the network must adhere to their own organisations' internal processes, including in respect to:

- **Research Ethics:** There is a close relationship between safeguarding and research ethics. Existing research ethics frameworks address many but not all aspects of safeguarding. All

¹⁰ Orr, David et al., *Safeguarding in International Development Research - Evidence Review*, p. 16.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 16; UKCDR, *Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research*, p. 9.

¹² Orr, David et al., *Safeguarding in International Development Research - Evidence Review*, p. 16.

¹³ UKCDR, *Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research*, p. 9.

¹⁴ Orr, David et al., *Safeguarding in International Development Research - Evidence Review*, p. 13-14.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 12; 20-21.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 16.

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 14-15; 42.

¹⁸ UKCDR, *Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research*, p. 11.

Creating Safer Space research projects must undergo research ethics approval, normally at the organisation that is leading on the specific research project.

- **Privacy and Data Protection:** All research carried out by *Creating Safer Space* must protect personal data and research data. A data management plan is required for all research projects.
- **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion:** All *Creating Safer Space* activities and research must give consideration to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- **Finances and Payments:** All *Creating Safer Space* members must familiarize themselves with applicable financial and payment procedures, to prevent unintentional financial harm or insecurity. The *Creating Safer Space* core management team must seek to develop financial processes that reduce the risk of financial harm.
- **Human Resources and Recruitment:** Recruitment of staff should be fair and open, without unlawful or unjust discrimination.
- **Risk Assessments:** Risk assessments must be undertaken in line with your own organisations' guidelines, and going beyond these if necessary. Risk assessments must be carried out before undertaking any research in conflict areas.
- **Health and Safety:** The Health and Safety policies of your own organisation must be adhered to, going beyond these where necessary.

Safeguarding Procedure

This section describes the procedures for reporting any risk of harm or seeking redress for actual harm that occurs as a result of *Creating Safer Space* activities.

In the first instance, if possible and appropriate under the circumstances, please report any actual or potential harm to the person or organisation most immediately responsible for the activity that is causing such harm.

- **Research Participants:** Safeguarding concerns should be reported to the team leading on the project, or to the Lead Organisation responsible for the project. Participant Consent Forms will always provide contact details for the project team, and may also provide further information about any safeguarding procedures that apply to the project.
- **Participants in other *Creating Safer Space* activities:** Safeguarding concerns arising from other *Creating Safer Space* activities (such as training workshops, networking events, or committee meetings) should be reported to the lead organiser of the activity, or the organisation responsible for the activity.
- **Project Staff and Contractors:** Safeguarding concerns should be reported in accordance with the employing/contracting organisation's procedure, and where this is not possible, to the Principal Investigator or Lead Organisation for the project.

In some circumstances, the person or organisation most immediately responsible for the activity that is causing harm may be unwilling or unable to mitigate or redress such harm. As a last resort, safeguarding concerns can be reported centrally to the *Creating Safer Space* network:

Administrative Team:

creating-safer-space@aber.ac.uk

Principal Investigator of the *Creating Safer Space* network, Prof Berit Bliesemann de Guevara:

beb14@aber.ac.uk

The Lead Organisation of the *Creating Safer Space* network, Dr Patrick Finney (Head of Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University):

pdf@aber.ac.uk

Resources

UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR), *Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research* (2020), available at <https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/170420-UKCDR-Guidance-for-Safeguarding-in-International-Development-Research.pdf> accessed 12 February 2021.

UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR), *Safeguarding Resources* (2021), available at <https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/guidance/safeguarding-resources/> accessed 10 September 2021.

Orr, David et al., *Safeguarding in International Development Research - Evidence Review* (2019), available at https://www.ukcdr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/20190603-UKCDR-Evidence-Review_updated.pdf accessed 12 February 2021.

Trust Consortium, *Global Code of Conduct for Research in Resource-Poor Settings* (2018), available at https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/coc_research-resource-poor-settings_en.pdf accessed 10 September 2021.

Changing the Story, *Safeguarding Resources* (2021), available at <https://changingthestory.leeds.ac.uk/resources/related-projects/safeguarding-project/safeguarding-resources/> accessed 10 September 2021.