

GEDSI Learning and Leadership Hub: Safeguarding

Key learnings from the meeting held on 25th November 2025.

Gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) and safeguarding

Emma Grant, UK PACT GEDSI Advisor

GEDSI mainstreaming and safeguarding are distinct but interconnected concepts. Both GEDSI mainstreaming and safeguarding involve analysis of root causes and power dynamics, share common principles and approaches, and can serve as entry points for one another. GEDSI work can indirectly prevent SEAH and other harms, however, the strong participatory element of GEDSI work comes with safeguarding risks.

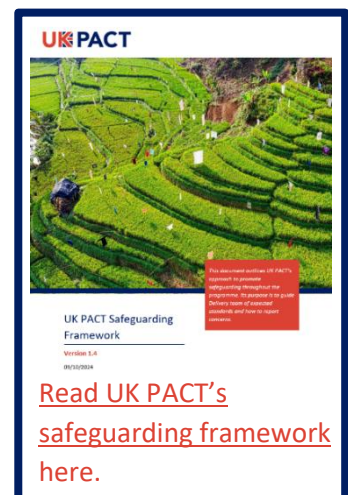
Safeguarding is key to sustainable and inclusive climate action. In contexts where power imbalances are already wide, climate programmes need to be careful about exacerbating existing harmful social dynamics. Climate programmes are also more likely to operate in remote settings so different prevention and response approaches are needed. Climate programmes often rely on close cooperation with local communities. When people feel safe and empowered, they engage in and contribute to programme success. Conversely, if people don't feel safe to engage because of safeguarding risks, the programme is more likely to fail. Even when climate initiatives are not remote or community based... **there are always safeguarding considerations and measures that should be built into organisations and projects!**

Key safeguarding messages

Haifa Ungapen, Safeguarding Manager

Palladium defines safeguarding as protection from the following: (1) Sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment, (2) Intimate Partner Violence, (3) Child abuse or exploitation (on or off-line) or neglect, and (4) Trafficking of adults for sexual exploitation or trafficking of children for any purpose. As perpetrated, caused or exacerbated by: (1) Palladium staff, consultants, contractors, interns, or anyone who represents us, (2) Anyone we work with: representatives of partners, suppliers, government departments, funding donors, etc., (3) The nature of our project/programme, (4) The design and organisation of our programme, activities, offices, equipment. Key messages relating to safeguarding include:

- **Always go back to the prevent, report, respond and learn cycle.** A safeguarding risk assessment and introducing mitigation measures, such as decreasing opportunities for abuse (e.g., through solid vetting at recruitment stage) and making it safe to speak up, are key elements of prevention.
- **Safeguarding risks are always present and can never be dismissed.** Some risks are common to all of our projects – such as people-related risks like interacting with staff and community



members – and other risks are specific, such as how established an organisation's safeguarding procedures are.

- **Any person who believes that a child / or adult is at risk of harm needs to report their concerns.** You do not have to prove that abuse or any other wrongdoing has taken place – it is not your role to investigate. You only need reasonable grounds for your belief.
- **Report to whom you feel safe to report as soon as you are safe to report.** You can reach out to the [Integrity Hotline](#), a supervisor, team leader, management teams, or human resources. Find out more in the UK PACT Safeguarding Framework or by reaching out to the UK PACT Safeguarding Focal Points [Antony Woolf](#) and [Oxanna Suau](#).

Delivering safe and inclusive training in UK PACT Vietnam

Chu Thanh Hoa, UK PACT Vietnam GEDSI Expert, and Phung Nguyen, Climate and Sustainability Services Lead, Arup
Delivery partner Arup delivered a training for implementing partners working on High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) Transmission Systems projects in Vietnam to build capacity on planning, investment, and operation, whilst integrating GEDSI and safeguarding into workshop design and content.



80% of participants agreed training materials and activities were entirely or mostly accessible.

The training built HVDC knowledge in a safe and inclusive way. The workshop was designed with GEDSI and safeguarding considerations fully integrated, with consideration of the location, content, and training delivery style. The training was delivered at the National Electricity System and Market Operator (NSMO) office, a familiar and trusted environment for participants. This helped ensure participants felt comfortable and safe, the venue was fully accessible to everyone, and participants could use the onsite canteen avoiding risks associated with travel.

Question and answer

- **Is there a safeguarding checklist for project implementation?** A template is being developed. You can use the safeguarding checklist in the [UK PACT GEDSI Mainstreaming Guidance](#) (p.29).
- **How should we manage cultural differences when approaching safeguarding? For example, when a country has a different legal age of consent.** Our standards are not contextual. A child is anyone under the age of 18 (as per the UN Child Rights Convention and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child) regardless of the age of consent in any country. Abuse is also not contextual. Child labour is child labour, wherever it happens. Contextualisation is, however, important when it comes to mitigation measures, reporting mechanisms, and responding to cases (e.g. ensuring the availability of translators for an investigation).
- **Each implementing partner has a GEDSI action plan, where they outline their ambition and activities. Which safeguarding tools should we use?** You can use some of the same approaches. The difference is that a safeguarding action plan should be rooted in your risk assessment and focus on mitigation measures and their implementation.