GOAL

LEARNING BRIEF

SAFEGUARDING IN MARKET SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT
LESSONS LEARNED FROM GOAL UGANDA

DATE

March 2023

THEME

Market Systems
Development;
Safeguarding

LOCATION

Uganda (Rwenzori,
Lango, Acholi, Tooro,
and Karamoja regions)
18 districts of Kabarole,
Kasese, Fort Portal
City, Hoima, Kikuube,
Kamwenge, Kiryandongo,
Lira, Apac, Dokolo,
Lamwo, Kitgum, Moroto,
Karenga, Abim, Pader

DONOR

The MasterCard
Foundation

PARTNER(S)

Civil Society
Organisations (Kabarole
Research Centre, Multi
Community Based
Development Initiative &
Wezesha Impact), Private
Sector Partners (Agro
Tourism Association,
Yield Harvest, Nile
Agro Forestry, 49ners,
BRAC Seeds, Agri
Farm, AgPlotous, Gulu
Agricultural Development
Cooperation), Financial
Institutions (Local
Links, Centenary Bank,
Equity Bank, Micro-
Finance Support
Centre, Cycle Connect,
Agro Consortium),
ICT (MobiPay), Skilling
(Shalom Ventures, Gudie
Leisure Farm, Excel Hort
Consult Agribusiness
Incubator, Human
Technical, AgroMax).

INTERVENTION DATE(S)

2020 - 2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Learning Brief outlines how GOAL Uganda takes responsibility for ensuring a safe environment for the young persons the programme is working with, for our staff, and for staff of our partners. The programme has developed a safeguarding strategy and a community-led training manual to clarify how staff and partners can take steps to ensure that prevention, detection, and response to harm and abuse are firmly embedded throughout programming.

It is GOAL's responsibility to ensure that participating partners meet our minimum safeguarding standards and provide support in strengthening practices.

Key findings are presented on how GOAL identified the 'hook' or niche for each partner, adapting our approach to suit their individual organisational needs. It also shows how GOAL works with youth champions to cascade knowledge about youth rights and expected behaviour of GOAL staff and partners through community peer groups.

GOAL Uganda in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation is implementing Young Africa Works in Uganda: Market for the Youth programme. The Young Africa Works in Uganda: Markets for Youth programme is a market systems development intervention that aims to directly enable 300,000 rural young women and men to access dignified and fulfilling work by 2025 across 18 districts in Karamoja, Acholi, Lango, Mid- western and Western Uganda. 210,000 of them will be young women, 30,000 young refugees, and 15,000 young persons living with disabilities. In addition, the programme envisions 600,000 people benefiting indirectly through the multiplier effect of the different programme interventions. The project is leveraging agriculture sector to create employment opportunities through private sector partners, financial institutions, skilling partners (vocational training institutions) and civil society organisations. The programme has a total budget of $24 million with the biggest percentage tagged to youth.

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding in GOAL is defined as taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur.

BACKGROUND

GOAL Uganda, in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation, is implementing the Markets for Youth programme in 18 districts since June 2020. This programme is targeting youth between 16-35 years persons with disabilities, refugees and young women and men. It has a specific focus on young women in the Rwenzori, Lango, Acholi, Tooro, and Karamoja regions. The programme as of January 2023 has reached over 81,000 youth (55% young women) and enabled 68,000 of them to transition to work in agriculture sector.

Markets for Youth aims to equip youth with knowledge and skills to achieve dignified and fulfilling work. It collaborates with civil society organisations and private sector (skilling, financial institutions, and inputs and outputs markets) partners. Safeguarding is integrated throughout the programme to ensure that while youth interact with partners, they acquire knowledge on safeguarding concerns, where and how to report in case harm occurs.

Working closely with vulnerable communities, particularly youth, implies that one shall have clear ideas, policies and plans in place from the very start of the programme so that potential risks and harm for the target group (but also staff) are minimised. This requires assessing safeguarding risks that could occur; ensuring measures are in place to prevent possible risks; and to outline the steps / protocols to follow if an incident occurs.

Safeguarding is unique in the Markets for Youth programme because it is implemented by local business partners, traditionally lacking experience in safeguarding and often reluctant to prioritize its importance. These partners include private sector actors, financial institutions, skilling organisations (vocational training institutions) and civil society organisations. Each partner implements its interventions differently. Therefore, GOAL has undertaken different ways to engage them on the significance of safeguarding and how it contributes to protecting youth.

GOAL, through learning by doing, has made efforts aimed at ensuring all implementing partners working directly with youth not only understand but also embrace safeguarding to create a safe and harm free environment.
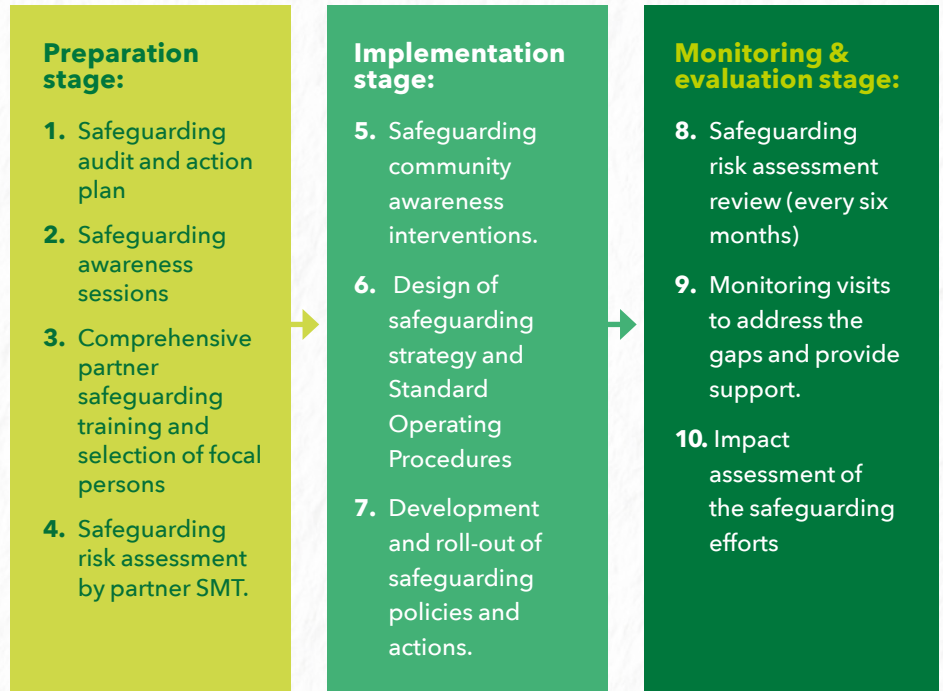
In 2021 the programme conducted a baseline study on safeguarding. It revealed that 25% of the 2,839 youths interviewed were trained on safeguarding. In our latest Annual Survey (2022), this figure has risen up to 90%.

Most of the youth reported in the baseline that they were trained by an NGO or government programme (44%). In the latest annual survey, more than 80% were trained by an agent working for a private company. It shows that those agents are well able to deliver such training, more even when looking at the satisfaction level of learners (98% is positive).

Most partnering companies stated that the Markets for Youth programme had alerted them about the risks that their clients can undergo while engaging with them. They mentioned in interviews during the annual survey that safeguarding being one of the key topics that had changed their internal organisation. They mentioned to have policies in place to safeguard their youth clients.

GOAL'S APPROACH

GOAL's approach to safeguarding entails that our partners have robust and well-embedded safeguarding policies, procedures and practices in place. During the selection of partners, GOAL's partnership team already starts with safeguarding awareness raising. The next step is a safeguarding audit, in which the safeguarding manager conducts a safeguarding audit for the potential partner, and they jointly develop an action plan. The next steps are presented in the diagram below.

Preparation stage:

1. Safeguarding audit and action plan
2. Safeguarding awareness sessions
3. Comprehensive partner safeguarding training and selection of focal persons
4. Safeguarding risk assessment by partner SMT.

Implementation stage:

5. Safeguarding community awareness interventions.
6. Design of safeguarding strategy and Standard Operating Procedures
7. Development and roll-out of safeguarding policies and actions.

Monitoring & evaluation stage:

8. Safeguarding risk assessment review (every six months)
9. Monitoring visits to address the gaps and provide support.
10. Impact assessment of the safeguarding efforts

LEARNINGS

GOAL has identified the following learning outcomes thus far from this ongoing programme: And from our experience we found it useful that:

- One-off safeguarding training for partners is not enough. Continuous engagement is required and refresher trainings once a year are necessary. GOAL needs to work with and support the partners so that together gaps can be identified in safeguarding and the required solutions are developed.

- Surveys carried out by GOAL's MEAL Team with programme participants about their knowledge on safeguarding and reporting mechanisms are key to determining the impact of interventions under safeguarding. This also contributes to identifying key areas that need further attention by GOAL's Safeguarding Team.

- Visibility brochures and posters designed in participation with youth champions should be shared and displayed within communities at local council offices, district, sub county offices, and partner offices to create more awareness among programme participants. These materials must contain relevant reporting channels, including partner focal point contact details.

- Regular calls and visits with partners through officers in the field are key to identifying gaps and support in finding solutions to address them.

IDENTIFYING THE 'HOOK' OR 'NICHE' FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL PARTNER

- Due to the different nature of each partner, private sector, financial institution etc, GOAL had to find a 'hook' or niche to successfully explain WHY Safeguarding is important for each individual organisation and what specific risks they could face. Hence, we learned that adaptation of the standard approach is helpful to suit the partner's needs, the type of organisation and business models used.

PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

- We have learned that a partner organisation having selected its own focal point is key. It helps GOAL in contacting and working with the right, dedicated person in that partner organisation. This focal point should have clear roles and responsibilities of what is required of them.

- We have learned that it is important that management has signed off on the action at the start of the process. This ensures their buy-in and accountability.

- It is important that the initial engagement with a partner is held with the Manager or a decision-maker in the organisation, rather than an employee. It will help to get safeguarding right from the beginning with attention and buy-in from management.

- Based on the COVID-19 experience of meeting digitally, the learning here is that when engaging with partners for the first time on safeguarding, a topic which they do not necessarily know about or have much interest in, it is important to plan this meeting face-to-face and preferably with top-management.

MEASURING AND MONITORING IMPACT

In this MSD programme we have collected baseline information on young persons' knowledge and attitude towards safeguarding and behaviour. Conducting regular (annual) updates gives the programme a good overview of the progress made in terms of knowledge and intended behaviour).

- At first, partners felt that they did not need to do any activities with regards to safeguarding as they were not held accountable for that (are not measured towards this). We realised that we needed to develop two or three safeguarding indicators that could be measured over the remaining lifespan of the project. This would make partners clear of what is expected from them with regards to safeguarding and how GOAL will measure their achievements and progress.

- Further, we realised the partners needed a system to track the number of youth/ agents they train in safeguarding. This could be a simple excel sheet that then feeds into the Safeguarding and Accountability Manager at national level. Likewise, a system is needed to then track the youth/agents cascading this knowledge to their peers at the community level (this could be an attendance sheet).

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING, TOOLS, AND RESOURCES

- GOAL designed a Safeguarding Manual with a variety of training modules and methodologies. Furthermore, GOAL developed a Safeguarding Strategy with SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) for each individual partner, outlining which specific training modules would cater their needs best. When piloting the Safeguarding Manual, we realised that different trainings were needed for training different partners.

- After piloting the tools with youth champions and agents, who would in-turn train and discuss with youth in their communities on safeguarding, those youth champions and agents advised that additional tools and guidance were needed to undertake this task. These included:

  - The word 'safeguarding' was not easily understood by the youth; "Protecting', 'Guiding' or 'Counselling' were recommended as alternatives.

  - The duration of the training and conversation for youth should be capped at 1 to 1.5 hours.

  - The need for a trainer manual to help them memorise and share information. The manual could be in the form of a folder or plastic files/bags so they can easily be carried and not torn. When asked what languages the manuals should be in, all of them said the manual should be written in simple English. It should contain different exercises and activities (including role plays) to help them explore and identify negative behaviours, attitudes, and practices that increase their risk to abuse and harm.

  - Visual aids shall accompany the manual outlining the different types of abuse and harm and reporting mechanisms. These visual aids include designs, pictures to be given in large calendar style booklets (with spiral spines) to allow them to fold over and show the designs during the session.

  - Short videos would be most useful. We questioned the practicality of this as not all youth have phones. The youth champions stated that they usually have phones and can pass their phones around the group as they engage.

  - Group sessions should highlight the theory of safeguarding using the visual aids and sharing examples from their community so their peers can relate, then to cement the knowledge/learning through role play.

Though suggestions have been made by youth champions and agents to make the trainings more suitable for its audience, young women and men, a high percentage of youth respondents in the Annual Survey said to have learned important, new things: 88% where and how to report; 56% on safeguarding strategy and 76% on recognizing / describing "bad" behaviour.

REPORTING MECHANISMS FOR PARTNERS AND YOUTH

- Programme participants expressed their need to share their concerns and feedback through multiple channels, and not just through one point of contact. Therefore, GOAL expanded its Community Feedback Mechanism (CFM) in Markets for Youth to include additional channels.

- It was important to involve Partners in discussions to assess what additional channels would be most appropriate for each specific organisation.

- Safeguarding concerns may require different, more personalised reporting mechanisms due to the sensitivity of reports, hence this should be factored in when designing a CFM.

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CONCLUSIONS

GOAL has learned that working with multiple Partners requires flexibility, patience, and adaptive management. Organisations need to understand why safeguarding is important to them and what risks and consequences their organisation could face if a safeguarding incident occurs. Only then it is likely a partner will strengthen its system to prevent harm towards youth.

Cascading knowledge to communities about people's, especially youth's rights is not an easy task. Creative means are therefore required, working with youth champions, local governments, and sub-country stakeholders. Multiple forms of information and communication technologies/media can be used to successfully cascade such information. For example posters, songs, role plays/theater, and radio adverts.

Finally, GOAL has learned that if partners use their own reporting mechanism, the implementation of a safeguarding strategy is more successful. The roles and responsibilities to identify, report, and conduct investigations should be clearly outlined for all partners.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- Design of a communications plan involving ICT partners to identify and broaden the different avenues to share key safeguarding messages. This will include radio talk shows, a social media campaign with short videos and messages, the dissemination of posters in villages etc to create further awareness among programme participants and the community at large.

- Rollout the Safeguarding strategy and manual - Field staff will attend a two-day workshop to understand how the content in the manual will be disseminated to youth champions and agents. These Market Systems Officers will be expected to cascade the details to youth champions and agents and during Partner activities support them to cascade to youth.

- Field officers will engage partners to better help them understand the standard operating procedures and ensure they are pinned on their office walls for easy reference.

- Monitoring progress will be through surveys and monitoring visits by field officers and the M&E Team.

- Feedback will be received directly through monitoring visits but also for confidentiality through GOAL CFM lines in our regions of operation.

Other programmes with intentions to implement similar safeguarding activities in Market Systems Development are further recommended to:

- Develop a communication plan to raise awareness on key safeguarding messages, including the rights of participant communities, the fact that assistance and services are never conditioned on sexual favours, and how to prevent, detect and report sensitive complaints.

- Ensure that the communication plan is informed by community participation, contextually and culturally appropriate, considering the different language requirements, different levels of literacy, different sensory or communication impairments and based on the participant community's needs.

- Monitoring community engagement is key to ensure knowledge is being gained, the tools and methodologies used are effective in achieving the desired outcomes and ensure continuous improvement.

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