USALAMA
FUND

The CivFund received funding from the Global Children Fund (GFC) to establish and pilot a Safeguarding Fund christened the Usalama Fund[1]. The Usalama Fund supports the development field to build awareness, learning, and infrastructure to ensure that the projects implemented by various development partners do no harm to the communities they seek to serve. During the 15-month pilot, the fund focused on three sectors women, children, and persons with disabilities in the Northern and Eastern subregions of the country.

The pilot aimed to identify and strengthen effective models and practices used by development organisations in the three sectors of focus. Rather than imposing specific safeguarding models, the Usalama Fund sought to gain a better understanding of the types of safeguarding strategies and models that were most effective within the Ugandan context. The Impact and Innovations Development Centre (IIDC) was enlisted to facilitate peer learning among the 11 organisations supported during the pilot.

Four Communities of Practice (CoPs) were created for purposes of peer learning namely, child rights, persons with disabilities, women's rights, and media collectives. The learning activities undertaken include an inception meeting (April 6-7, 2022) eight online CoP meetings, and two learning convenings (October 24- 27 2022, and April 6-7, 2023). The learning provided insights into the risks and vulnerabilities, traditional behaviours and practices used by organisations to keep people safe, and the most significant practices introduced under the Usalama fund. The shared perspectives across the CoPs are presented below.

Risks and vulnerabilities of development work.

- Potential for abuse (sexual, physical, emotional, neglect, and exploitation) by staff and fellow beneficiaries.
- Intersecting vulnerabilities around age, gender, physical ability, economic status, etc.
- Negative cultural and gender norms, beliefs, and practices that sustain abuse.
- Limited awareness of organisations obligations and commitments to keep people safe.
- Lack of a national regulatory framework for social development organisations to keep people safe.

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[1] *Usalama* is a Swahili word for safety

Traditional behaviours and practices to keep people safe.

- Inclusion of safeguarding clauses in the human resource policies of organisations.
- Undertaking safety risk assessments before deploying their staff in emergency contexts such as during armed conflict, riots, disasters, etc.
- Conducting awareness-raising campaigns on the rights of beneficiaries among target communities.
- Working with religious, political, and traditional leaders on sensitive issues with the view of creating a favourable operating environment.

Most Significant Safeguarding Practices introduced under the Usalama Fund support.

- Introduction of comprehensive safeguarding policies that seek to protect beneficiaries and staff from all forms of abuse in relation to the work of organisations.
- Introduction of routine safeguarding risk assessments and keeping of organisational safeguarding risk registers.
- Establishment of functional safeguarding structures and appointment of safeguarding focal persons to enhance accountability and ensure timely response to reported safeguarding concerns.
- Introduction of confidential mechanisms for reporting safeguarding issues and sensitizing beneficiaries and communities about these mechanisms.

Steina Bjorgvisdottir from the Oak Foundation and GFC presenting asks to different stakeholders to further safeguarding of development work at the first learning convening at Fairway Hotel in Kampala

A cross-section of participants from the four CoPs take part in a panel discussion during the first learning convening.

Lillian Tamale presents one of the participants with a token of appreciation from CivFund at the end of the first learning convening

Anselm Wandega from IIDC shares a light moment with participants at the second learning convening held at Metsil Hotel Kampala