ARUA CoE for Non-Communicable Diseases

Introduction to Safeguarding in International Development

Report on Training Workshop

23 August 2022

1.Introduction

The UK Collaborative on Development Research (UKCDR) has defined safeguarding as preventing and addressing *'any sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment of research participants, communities and research staff, plus any broader forms of violence, exploitation and abuse... such as bullying, psychological abuse and physical violence'* (Balch et al., 2020).

As part of its commitment to upholding the highest standards of safeguarding in international development research, the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) Centre of Excellence for Non-Communicable Diseases (CoE-NCD) led by Dr Frederick Bukachi from the University of Nairobi (the project Hub) commissioned and provided an introductory training workshop involving Node Leaders and Researchers from the following partner universities:

- University of Ibadan, Nigeria
- Osun State University, Nigeria
- Ambrose Alli University, Nigeria
- Makerere University, Uganda
- University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa
- University of Ghana
- University of Lagos, Nigeria

An invitation to participate in the engagement was also extended to colleagues within the University of Nairobi in order to build institutional capacity. The workshop was opened by the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (AVC), Professor Margaret Jesang Hutchinson, and attended by senior staff from the Office of the AVC – Research, Innovation and Enterprise, as well as the Intellectual Property Management Office, Grants Office and other departments.

UKRI has been explicit about their expectations and requirements in relation to safeguarding, including that all funded organisations must have appropriate policies and procedures in place, and must be able to respond to and address incidents of, harm, exploitation and abuse. They also expect to be informed of

any upheld allegations against staff, students or associated personnel directly involved in a UKRI funded activity (UKRI, 2020).

A South African consultant, Lucy O'Keeffe, was appointed to develop and facilitate the training on the basis of a referral from other ARUA CoEs. Lucy is an organisational development consultant and a qualified coach. Her background is primarily in the NGO sector with a specific focus on organisational and leadership development and community engagement. As detailed below, the aim of the training was to ensure that safeguarding principles and practices are understood, made meaningful in local contexts, and adhered to, by all partners throughout the ARUA CoE-NCD project.

2. Outline of training approach & structure

2.1. Approach:

The training was specifically developed by drawing on available literature and guidance, particularly from UKRI and the UKCDR, as well as experience of developing and implementing similar capacity building processes with eight ARUA CoEs.

We adopted a participatory and practical approach using adult education principles, (acknowledging and building on previous knowledge and experience, ensuring practical and contextual relevance and encouraging active learning), with the aim of ensuring that the training would be meaningful and applicable and would not feel like a 'tick box' compliance exercise.

2.2. Structure

An introductory training workshop was run on Monday 15th August 2022 with the aims of:

- Introducing the language of safeguarding and developing a shared understanding amongst partners;
- Developing awareness of key concepts including harm, power, and vulnerability; and
- Challenging participants to think about how they can anticipate, mitigate and address harm and abuse in their own research work and contexts.

The workshop was designed to facilitate the meaningful, practical and contextual application of knowledge. Structured in three sessions over the course of a 4-hour workshop, and using a mixture of different participatory facilitation techniques in both plenary and breakaway groups, the workshop covered the following:

Part 1 - Introducing Safeguarding in International Development Research

- Thinking about the kinds of relationships we want to develop in our research.
- Exploring different understandings of safeguarding and moving towards a common definition.
- Understanding the increasing focus on safeguarding in international development research.

Part 2 - Key concepts

- Understanding different types of harm and abuse.
- Thinking about power in research relationships.
- Understanding our own vulnerabilities and potential to do harm.

Part 3 – Developing policy and practice

- Anticipating risks and vulnerabilities
- Developing understanding of the 'safeguarding policy eco-system'
- Understanding safeguarding responsibilities at different levels
- Understanding the importance of reporting and responding to reports effectively

The workshop took place virtually on Zoom with breakout rooms and other online facilitation tools used to promote interaction and engagement. The session was facilitated by Lucy O'Keeffe with co-facilitation from Dr David Gwapedza, an experienced facilitator and Post-Doctoral researcher from the Institute for Water Research, Rhodes University.

Further resources

After the workshops participants were provided with a list of resources to support the development and implementation of safeguarding policy and practice - these are intended to assist Node Leadership and personnel from Human Resources and Research Offices in the process of developing coherent safeguarding policies and practice at an institutional level, as required by UKRI and other major funders.

 A folder of further reading for interested participants was also provided.

3. Workshop outcomes

A summary of the training workshop as well as key outcomes and learnings from the process are presented below.
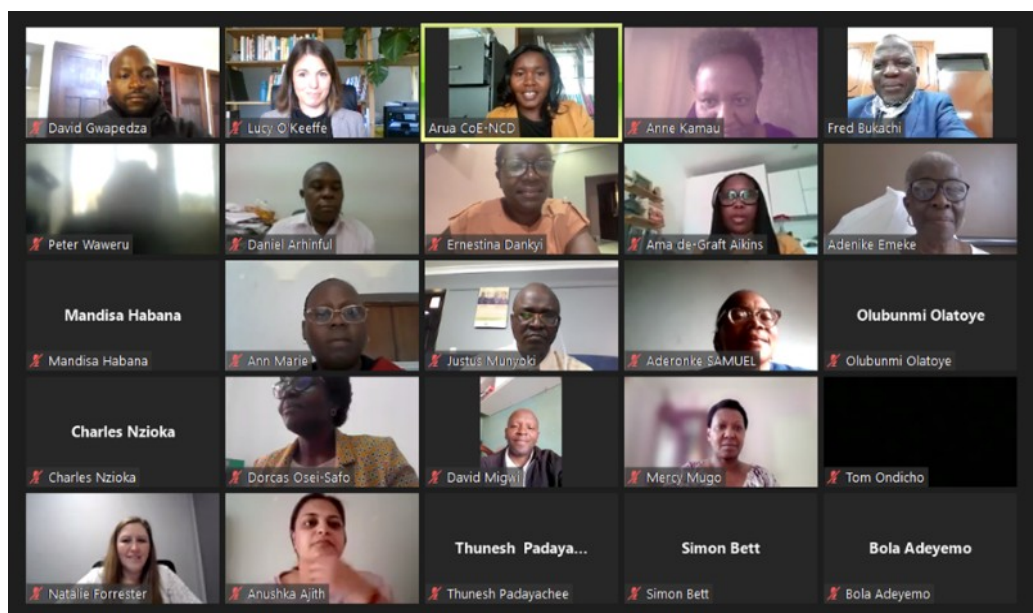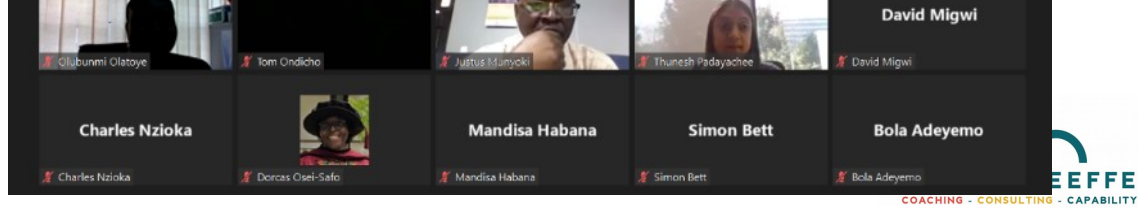
Screenshots of participants during the workshop

3.1. Introducing safeguarding and developing a shared understanding

We began the workshop by asking participants to reflect on the best relationships that they had experienced in their research work (with colleagues, students, supervisors, research participants or others). By identifying words that described what was most positive about the relationships we created a word cloud and reference point for the types of relationships – and values - that participants in the project want to develop and nurture in the work they do. Participants also shared their own examples of positive relationships. This exercise emphasized that safeguarding is fundamentally about relationships and how we engage with one another as human beings.

Word cloud: What words describe the best relationship you have experienced in research?

We then asked participants to share their 'baseline' understanding of what the term 'safeguarding' meant to them, acknowledging that for many people this was new territory. The word 'safeguarding' is not widely used in Africa and it was helpful to 'translate' the concept into more familiar language. Participants focused on different aspects of safeguarding and shared their perspectives on what they understood by the term. By doing so the group was able to start to develop a common language and understanding.

Safeguarding, in the words of participants, means:

- *Keeping someone safe / Safe environment*
- *Preventing or avoiding harm / Do no harm*
- *Protecting yourself*
- *Being accountable / Ownership*
- *People-centred / Inclusive / Community-building*
- *Ethics*
- *Awareness*
- *Compassionate / Empathetic / Considerate / Careful*

Definitions of safeguarding from UKRI, the UK National Health Service, Oxfam International, and the Arise Research Consortium were shared and discussed.

The background to the focus on safeguarding was presented and UK AID's short video, Are you listening? from the 2018 Safeguarding Summit was shared to provide historical context to the attention being paid to preventing harm in the international humanitarian sector as well as in research.

4.1.   Exploring key concepts

The key concepts of HARM, POWER, and VULNERABILITY were introduced with definitions, examples from the UKCDR Evidence Review (Orr, Daoust, Dyvik, Puhan & Boddy, 2019). The Power Matrix tool (Miller, undated) was also introduced as a framework for thinking about power in relationships in research and the different dimensions of 'power over' including visible, hidden and invisible dimensions of power.

This introduction led into a breakout group activity where participants were supported to explore a series of short practical case studies of different types of harm, to reflect on the following questions and to share their own experiences (if they felt comfortable to do so):

- What kind of harm is being described?
- What are the power dynamics in the example? Visible, Invisible, Hidden?
- In your own context, who might be particularly vulnerable to this kind of harm?

4.2.   Developing policy and practice

Using UKCDR's framework of 'anticipate, mitigate and address' (Balch et al., 2020), the third part of the workshop challenged participants to think about how they could develop policy and practice to anticipate, mitigate and address harm within their own activities, research teams, and institutions.

Anticipate

As far as possible, working collaboratively with diverse partners/advisors, gather information on all the potential harms that your research could inadvertently create or exacerbate.
(Balch et al., 2020)

Two practical tools were introduced to participants:

- UKCDR's Guidance on Safeguarding in International Development Research (Balch et al., 2020)
- Arise Consortium's Risk Mapping Tool (Aktar, Alam & Ali et al, 2020)

In small breakout groups, participants were supported to think about their own research activities and context and to brainstorm

- Groups or individuals who might be particularly vulnerable
- Potential harms that their activities could cause or exacerbate

Vulnerable groups identified by participants:

| Research participants and local community members	Staff, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors
• Minors • Migrant children • Children living on the streets • Community members - due to lack of information • People with NCDs – e.g. consent might be a challenge for stroke survivors • People living with disabilities • People who do not speak primary languages and therefore rely on translators • People living with HIV - vulnerable to carers and service providers • Selected sample within a community • Anyone disclosing personal information	• Researchers - working in dangerous areas and/or very remote areas, dependence on community mobilisers • Students • Early Career Researchers • Female students • Technical staff • Research assistants • Staff in bursary section • Project leaders • Analysts • Ethics Committee • Opinion Leaders

Potential risks identified by participants:

Research participants and local community members	Staff, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors
• Risks caused by flow of information – some people well-informed, others 'in the dark' • Stigma and stereotyping – e.g. due to involvement in research activities. • Physical risks – e.g. minor risks of using particular medical equipment and devices • Retraumatisation or psychological harm – bringing attention to hardship without capacity to alleviate any suffering; raising expectations of change or exchange in return for involvement. • Research fatigue – involvement in repeated studies and nothing tangible occurs. • Exposure – e.g. worsening abuse due to reporting in a context of dysfunctional law enforcement, disclosure of personal information due to insufficient safeguards for confidentiality. • Adverse impacts of a clinical trial	• Coercion or pressure to provide desired results / manipulation • Falsified information • Exclusion from publication. • Physical harm – exposure to harmful pathogens or chemicals in a laboratory; encountering dangerous wildlife in remote locations • Stress of pressure from funders

Mitigate

Take actions and put processes in place to mitigate the harms
*you have identified. (*Balch et al., 2020*)*

In this section we focused on the safeguarding 'policy ecosystem', meaning the complex, interconnected system of policies, procedures, guidance, services and other resources that need to be developed and implemented in order to mitigate (and address) harm. The following illustration of a generic 'safeguarding policy ecosystem' was presented and explained to help participants to reflect on their awareness about the existing policies and procedures at their own institutions, and what some of the strengths and areas for development might be.
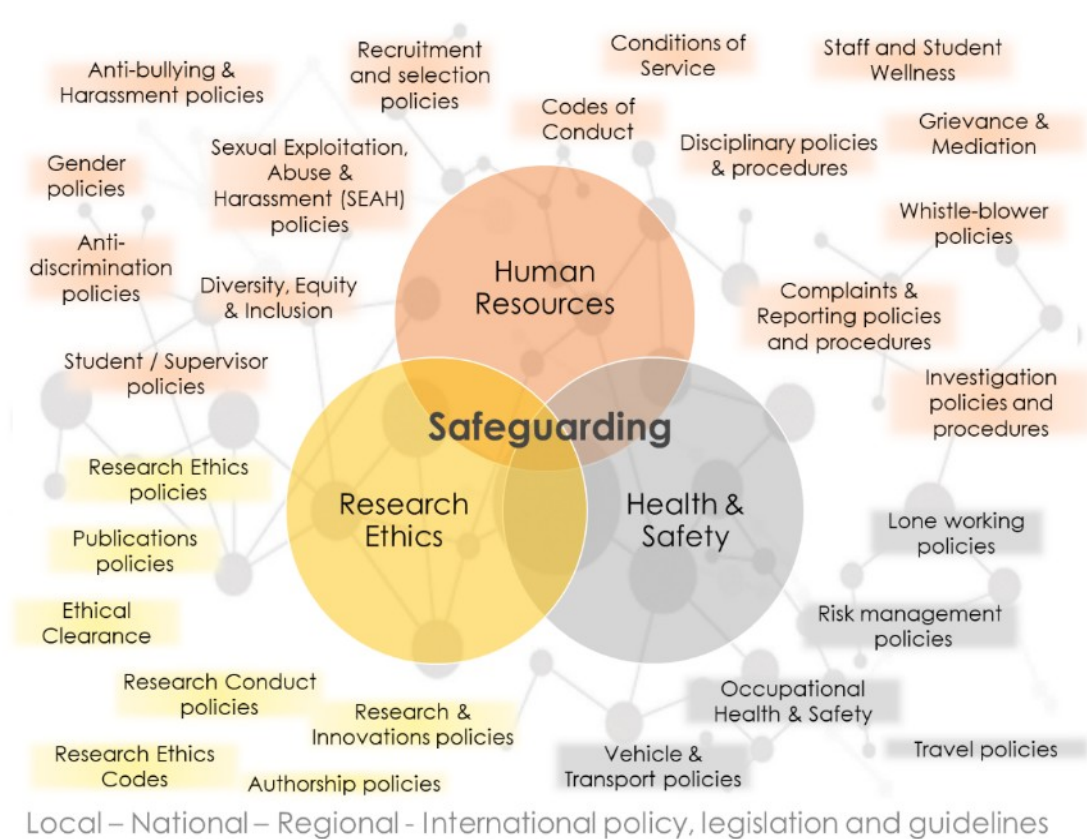
An 'ecosystem' of institutional safeguarding-related policies and procedures nested within local, national, regional and international policy and legislation.

Safeguarding responsibilities were also presented at different levels – individual, organisational and partnership, as illustration in the picture below.

Safeguarding responsibilities

INDIVIDUALS

Act with the highest standards of integrity, honesty and professionalism;

Be aware of relevant policies and procedures;

Know how to respond to and report concerns;

Raise concerns through appropriate channels

ORGANISATIONS

Have contextually and culturally relevant policies and procedures in place and accessible;

Provide guidance, awareness-raising activities and training;

Respond to reports effectively and timeously;

Inform funder of incidents.

PARTNERSHIPS

Ensure that policies and procedures are in place across the partnership, over the lifetime of the project;

Have agreed processes for sharing information about upheld allegations against individuals directly involved in the project.

Safeguarding responsibilities (adapted from UKRI, 2020)

Address

Take actions to ensure adequate processes to report, investigate and provide redress for any safeguarding harms which may arise. (Balch et al. 2020)

This section focused on the important of reporting. General guidance on reporting and how to respond when receiving reports was presented and practical resources for further information were also signposted.

Participants were asked to consider reasons why people might choose not to report safeguarding concerns and what the implications might be. Obstacles to reporting that were highlighted included the following:

- *Embarrassment / Fear of ridicule*
- *Lack of enabling environment / safe reporting mechanisms*
- *Lack of trust*
- *Stigmatisation*
- *Chronic inaction on previous reports / Fear that no action will be taken / Complacency*
- *Previously accepted norms, e.g. misogyny*
- *Fear of loss of opportunities*
- *Taboos / Cultural beliefs*
- *Lack of awareness of reporting mechanisms*
- *Victimisation / Threat to safety / Retribution / Intimidation*
- *Channel of reporting involving perpetrator*

4. Conclusion

The focus on, and terminology of, safeguarding in the context of international development research is new territory for many of the researchers, staff and students involved in the ARUA CoE-NCD projects (and internationally). It is important to acknowledge that this is a long-term and iterative learning process in which individual and collective knowledge will develop over time. UKRI's recognition of this in allowing funded organisations and partnerships time to demonstrate steady progress towards policy and practice is appreciated.

Participants engaged enthusiastically in the training workshop. There was lively discussion and participants' closing comments indicated that the workshop had been eye-opening and valuable.

It was particularly encouraging to have leadership and senior staff from the University of Nairobi, up to the level of the Assistant Vice Chancellor, engaging in this workshop. Universities are complex, bureaucratic institutions and developing policies, (not to mention transforming organisational cultures), will require leaders to play a critical role in driving the agenda as well as modelling and promoting cultures of openness, learning, and accountability.

Buy-in and support from ARUA's leadership and governance structures will be vital in fulfilling the network's commitment to safeguarding policy and practice and will be a strategic investment for all participating universities to make in terms of securing future research funding.

5.References

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