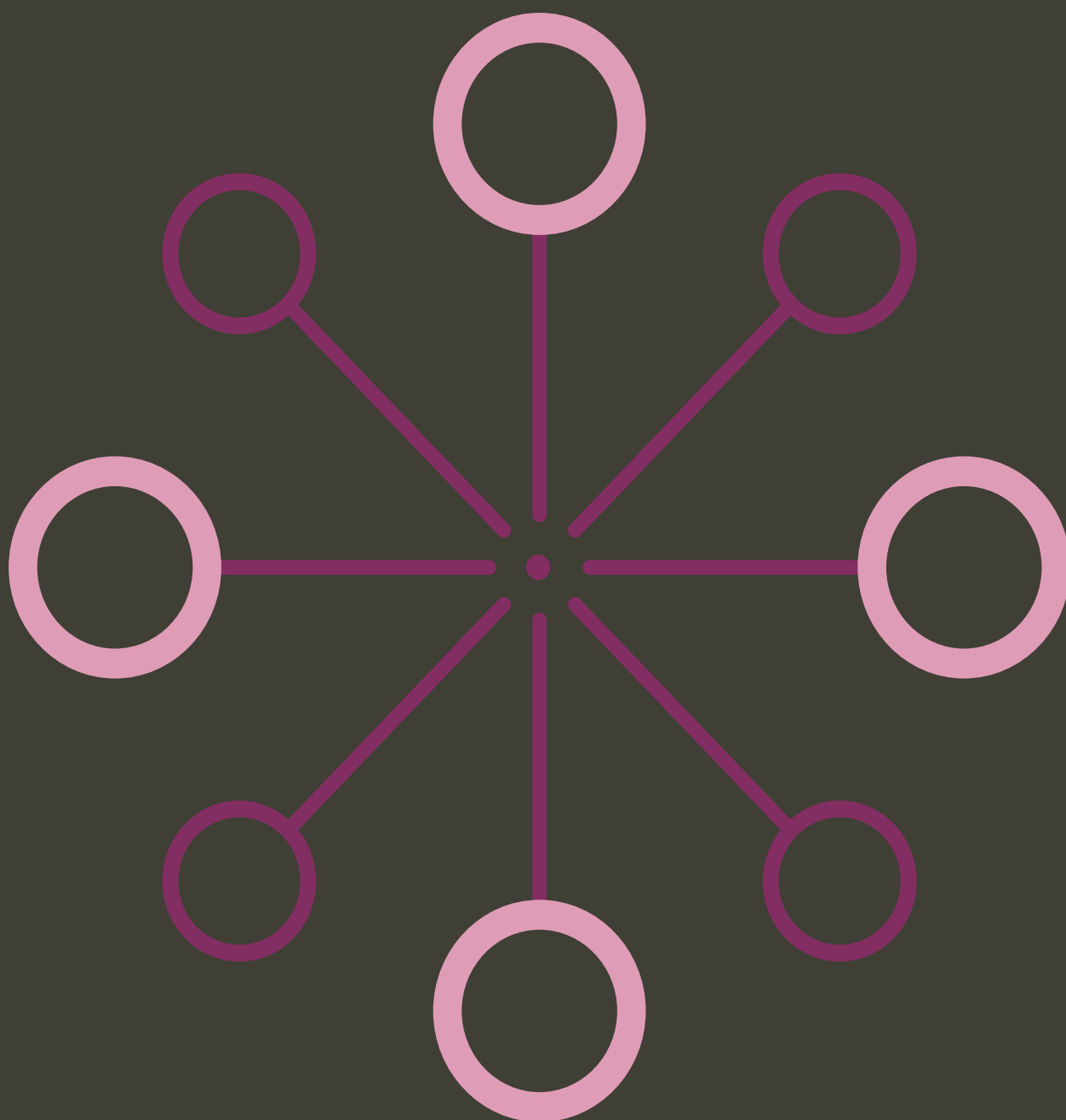


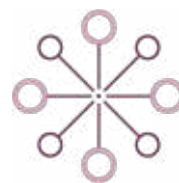


Case study: Working with partners to safeguard children and adults at risk

ChildHope's approach to safeguarding



Working with partners to safeguard children and adults at risk



Organisational capacity and capability



Safeguarding Commitment 11:

We strive towards more equal relationships between organisations delivering and receiving aid, where the local expertise of in-country partners is respected, and we share responsibility for high quality programme delivery and keeping people safe. [Read the commitments.](#)

Organisation: ChildHope

Date: February 2020

Safeguarding challenge:

- How can we support and empower partners to safeguard children and adults at risk?

Key recommendations:

- Start with the assumption that local partners are the experts in safeguarding where they work – they should be shaping the agenda.

- Take time to build partnerships. Strong partnerships require time to get to know each other and build trust.
- One size doesn't fit all – working with partners to develop and implement bespoke safeguarding is key. A safeguarding policy and procedures that reflect organisational and local realities is needed to proactively keep children and adults at risk safe and effectively respond to concerns and disclosures.

ChildHope develops long-term partnerships to support children who are considered the hardest to reach. Director Jill Healey explained why safeguarding is at the heart of their partnerships.

ChildHope works with partners to develop and implement effective, locally applicable safeguarding policies and practices. They view any safeguarding challenges as an opportunity to develop both the partners' and ChildHope's knowledge and they value partners' expertise in safeguarding in the contexts they live and work in. Safeguarding needs to be contextualised without using cultural norms as an excuse to justify harming a child. Local knowledge is therefore also vital for tailoring safeguarding to recognise and address culturally accepted behaviours that are harmful to children, as well as valuing those that nurture and protect children.

When considering building a new partnership, ChildHope first reviews the organisation's safeguarding policy and encourages the organisation to do a self-audit (for example, the Keeping Children Safe or ChildHope one). They don't send out a proforma policy as it needs to be tailored to each organisation. They then work together to identify any gaps and how to address them, such as developing and delivering bespoke training. ChildHope also does a range of due diligence before agreeing to a partnership so they know the organisation and their attitudes to safeguarding. They won't disregard an organisation because it doesn't have a policy, but they need to be sure there is a genuine commitment to safeguarding within the organisation.

ChildHope believes that safeguarding requires an organisational approach – it's not just the responsibility of one person. There needs to be a number of people who understand and can support on safeguarding, including the board. A dedicated safeguarding person is key, and they must have access to support within their organisation. ChildHope makes sure the organisation has a solid safeguarding commitment before supporting partners to safeguard.

ChildHope emphasises to partners that it's important they develop a safeguarding culture that's driven by leadership. Feeling and being safe needs to be an organisational priority. To develop robust safeguarding procedures, it's important to involve everyone in the process, especially children and young people. Supporting local partners to safeguard adults at risk* can be more of a challenge because ChildHope's partners are accustomed to focus on children, and there is often less knowledge and fewer structures available in communities to support adults who are vulnerable or at high risk. A lot is about giving time to discuss things and work out how to adapt to different vulnerabilities and risks.

ChildHope supported the development of the South to South Safeguarding Network (funded in its first year by Comic Relief). Six partners with particularly strong safeguarding practices and capacity to extend into a training and consultancy role formed a consultancy that delivers contextually relevant training and support across Africa and Asia. Director Jill Healey said: "As a sector, sometimes there's not very much space given to enabling strong partners in the South to lead the international development agenda. Safeguarding will be very limited until we listen to and build on the knowledge of people in the South."

*Note – some organisations choose to use the term "vulnerable adults" instead of "adults at risk."