

Safeguarding Children and Young People from Violence in Schools

A Guide for Children and Young People in Children's Clubs

Based on findings from a global research study on children's clubs

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thank you!

We would like to thank the Safe to Learn team and others involved at the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and UNICEF for their support during this research project. Thank you to all of the individuals and organizations around the world who contributed case studies and to those who spent extra time to be interviewed. A special thanks to the children and young people from different parts of the globe who shared their thoughts and ideas that were integrated into the final report “*Role of Children's Clubs in Safeguarding of Children in Schools*” (Manion et al., 2020). And finally, to those children and young people who offered their thoughts, and ideas about the final report and contributed to the development of this guide, we offer our utmost thanks.

Hey there friend! I'll be here to walk through this Guide with you. This is your Guide to support you to start or strengthen your Child Club activities! Please write the name of your club here:

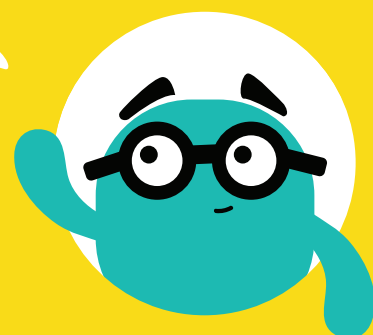


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All about Children's Clubs

What are Children's Clubs?

A group of children and young people who meet together, offer each other support and work together on activities or issues that are important to them.

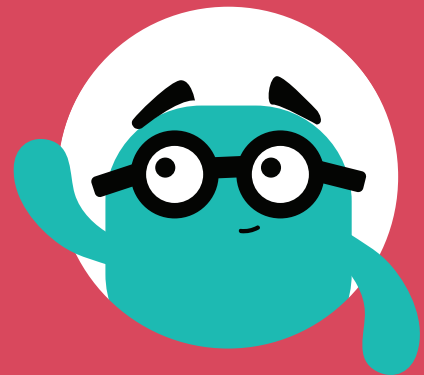
Some clubs are very organized, while others are more loosely coordinated. Most are based at schools, but some are based at community organizations.

Who is part of a Children's Club?

Children and young people of course, and there are often adults present who support them, such as teachers, workers from community organizations and others.

Some clubs are run by children, some clubs are run by adults, and in some other clubs, adults, children and young people work together.

What does your club work on? What do you enjoy the most?



What do Children's Clubs do?

Children's clubs work together on issues or topics that are important to them, but most often these are focused around positive social change. For instance, the children's clubs we spoke with were all working on at least one project that helped keep children safe from different forms of violence.

Clubs work together to decide what they might want to work on, and come up with plans for advocacy, projects or other initiatives they can implement to assist with creating change in their school or community organization.

Important Words in this Guide

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE. What do we mean when we talk about children and young people?

There are different definitions for a child and a young person, but we chose commonly used definitions that say that a child is anyone 18 years or younger (UNCRC, 1989) and a young person or youth is anyone between the ages of 15-24 (UNDSEA, n.d.).

CHILD PROTECTION. What is Child Protection?

All children have the right to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect (UNCRC, 1989). This means that **adults are responsible for keeping children and young people safe from harm.**

Children also have a responsibility to recognise the rights of other children and this includes not intentionally causing them harm or being violent to them.

CHILD SAFEGUARDING. What does Safeguarding mean?

While all children have the right to be protected, organizations have a particular responsibility to keep children safe. This means that their staff and their programs **do no harm to children.**

Organizations need to take great care that they do not expose children to any harm or abuse and that if any concerns come up, that these need to be reported and responded to accordingly (Keeping Children Safe, 2014).

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (UNCRC).

What is the UNCRC and what are children's rights?

Every child around the world has rights. Rights put into words things that you should have or be able to do, so that you can live a healthy, full life and reach your full potential. Children's rights are set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, an internationally recognized document that sets the foundation for children's rights in almost every country around the world. Many of the concepts and terms used in this document were drawn from the rights set out in the UNCRC.

CHILD WELLBEING. What is Wellbeing?

Wellbeing is complex, it speaks to the physical, emotional, social, spiritual and cognitive health of children. Here are a few examples of things to consider when you think about wellbeing:

- Are children safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence?
- Do children have their basic needs met, such as food and shelter?
- Are children connected to and cared for by loving adults?
- Do children have positive relationships with relatives, peers, teachers, community members and their community?
- Can children safely share their ideas and contribute to things that are important to them (ACPHA, 2019, p.10)?

VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN. What does violence against children mean?

Violence against children occurs in many forms. When thinking about some of the common forms, the UNCRC (Art.19) says it includes, "all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse".

The Global Research Study on Children's Clubs and Safeguarding in Schools

WHAT WAS THE RESEARCH PROJECT ALL ABOUT?

We wanted to understand what children and young people have been doing within their children's clubs to protect each other from violence. We also wanted to understand what role children's clubs play in promoting safeguarding in schools and other learning environments, and what roles and responsibilities children have in their clubs.

Why did we want to find out more about children's clubs?

The research project "Role of Children's Clubs in Safeguarding of Children in Schools" explored the important role children have in safeguarding in school settings (Manion et al., 2020). There is not a lot written about the impact of children's clubs, and even less about their role in safeguarding.

We thought that children's clubs might be doing things to work on safeguarding, as we had heard this from stories shared by people. But we didn't know a lot about what clubs did, how they did it and what impact their activities had on members of the club and other young people.

It's really important to mention that **protecting children from harm is the responsibility of adults, not children**, but we also know that many children take on roles to protect themselves and their peers from violence and these actions should be honoured.

WHO WAS INVOLVED?

The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and its Safe to Learn team were keen to do this research. They asked a team of people at the International Institute for Child Rights and Development to help.

What was the key question asked in the research?

“What is the role of children in children’s clubs in safeguarding children in schools and learning environments?”

WHAT WERE THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

1 LITERATURE REVIEW

We read as many reports, academic articles (essays written by people who work with universities) and other documents (reports, blogs, stories by community organisations) we could on children’s clubs and their roles in safeguarding children.

2 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

We talked to three adults who have worked a lot with children’s clubs in child safeguarding in different countries around the world to give us an idea of the variety of ways children’s clubs are working in this area.

3 CASE STUDIES

We asked organizations who support children’s clubs to fill out a form to tell us all about their children’s clubs, and we collected 15 case studies from these countries: Benin, Chile, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Uganda and Ukraine. While the research focused on 15 specific children’s clubs, the answers also provided information about clubs around the world including almost 21,000 children and young people.

4 CHILDREN’S CONSULTATIONS

As children and young people have a right to share their opinion on matters that impact them, it was important that we include their voice in this research. We spoke with five different groups of children, who represented many children’s clubs from across three countries (Uganda, Ukraine and Kenya). We asked children about their experiences in the clubs, strengths and challenges, and to provide recommendations for other children running clubs. We included what we learned in the report.

5 CHECKING THE FINDINGS WITH CHILDREN

We worked with children and young people in many children’s clubs in Uganda and Kenya and to check the findings from the report, and to gather additional feedback and ideas in preparing this guide.

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Article 12 of the UNCRC says that children and young people have the right to give their opinion, and that adults need to listen and take your ideas seriously.

What ideas did children and adults share that might be useful for you in your club?



"When we get someone bullying, teasing or anything like that we call that person; we give him or her a simple punishment that will help them to report or change. When they do not change, we can report them to a teacher"

-Young person, Uganda

Tips for Setting up and Maintaining Children's Clubs

Hold **REGULAR CLUB MEETINGS** and make space for all children and young people's voices to be heard.

Make sure everyone has **CLEAR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** within the club. When children and young people understand what is expected of them to make the club function well, they are more likely to get the job done.

As a group, **SET CLEAR GOALS FOR YOUR CLUB**. This could be monthly or yearly goals. If everyone has a shared understanding of what they are working towards, you will be more likely to achieve it.

Create open and **CLEAR COMMUNICATION** within your children's clubs and with teachers and schools staff that support you.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES within children's clubs for children and young people **TO SHARE** their opinions on things that are important to them.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPLORING GENDER ROLES, while also promoting all genders to be leaders in children's clubs.

RECOGNIZE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S INTERESTS and adapt activities to meet their current needs as well as their future goals.

WORK WITH YOUR SCHOOL to set up and run a children's club. Make sure there are supplies and funds to help the club run its activities.

INVOLVE THE WHOLE SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY in club activities. Build community and school awareness about what is important for clubs and use art, theatre, dance, debates, radio broadcasts, workshops and training sessions to help **SHARE IDEAS**.

COLLABORATE with other children's clubs and with others, like teachers, principals and build from the work of strong role models.

PROVIDE TRAINING AND EDUCATION for children and adults as a platform for success.

WORK TOGETHER AND BE BOLD!

"It was also hard because not everyone was ready to help, not everyone actually believed in us, everyone thought that we would start but fade in the future, so starting was really hard and we are thankful that we are still strong 'til now"

-Young Person, Kenya

“Being part of making decisions has made our club very strong”

– Young Person,
Uganda

Clubs are helped when they

Have space and resources

Have ongoing adult and school support

Have an understanding of child rights

Ensure children are safe, respected, listened to and can trust those involved

To get the most from your club

- Hold regular check ins
- Keep processes and roles consistent and clear
- Take the time to build trust
- Include everyone
- Share your work
- Be creative and have fun
- Accept adult support

“Believe in yourself and do not be afraid to share your thoughts with each other and teachers and adults”

– Young Person,
Ukraine

Club Activity Example

At our school the girls were facing challenges with a shortage of sanitary towels making them miss school. The club asked pupils to bring 1 shilling a day and at the end of the week we would collect the money to buy sanitary towels for girls in need (Young person, Uganda). This showed, “as a child I could have a positive impact on a person’s life and did not have to be an adult to help” (Young Person, Kenya).

A group of young people in the Ukraine had a school safety committee where they created a code of conduct for their school, made reflective stickers for safe walking in the dark, increased awareness on bullying and mapped out risks and ideas to address them in and around their schools (Young People, Ukraine).



“River Journey for Children’s Consultation, Children’s Club, Uganda”

What from the list of tips would best support you and your club?



COVID-19 and Children's Clubs

COVID-19 interrupted children and young people's schooling and that meant that many clubs could not meet. Globally, rates of violence against children went up, as did hunger, poverty and lack of access to soap, water, masks and the Internet. Some children and young people reached out to peers to provide education and support around violence during COVID-19. This shows how adaptive and supportive children's clubs can be. One person shared that the club was, "encouraging (children) to speak to a trusted adult or escorting them to report a case of violence to the local authorities". Children were also involved "demand[ing] the right to have safer classrooms" or directly supporting other children experiencing or at risk of experiencing violence.

Tips for Clubs around Safeguarding & Protection from Violence in Schools

- Watch out for your peers in your club, to make sure they are safe from all forms of violence and bullying that may come from being involved in the club.
- Within your club, create some “policies” or rules that ensure all children regardless of gender, race and ability can be involved in the club, and no one is discriminated against or hurt because of who they are.
- For “us to address the issue of violence we can come up with stories or ideas of stories that talk about bad things but also communicate a message about what violence does” and what children’s rights are (Young Person, Kenya).
- Work with your adult supporters, to bring in training for your club on child rights, child protection and safeguarding.
- If children and adults have the same understanding of what child safeguarding is, then clubs can help educate other children in the school and empower them to watch out for their rights.
- Work with your school to make sure that there is a process in place to report violence and to track it. For example, use anonymous ‘voice boxes’ for safe reporting and have user friendly posters around the school on where to go for support.
- Make sure that in addition to meaningful activities that address challenges, for example to children’s safety, that there are also opportunities for activities to be fun, educational, creative and meaningful.

IDEAS FOR INCREASING PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING

Have a Code of Conduct

Know how to report violence

Map risks around school

Celebrate Achievements

Have a Safety Committee to reduce risks around school

Develop a Shield of Protection (a way to identify safe people to report issues to)

Consider a Child-led Court

Offer peer monitoring, mentoring, and counselling

Raise awareness

What kind of safeguarding activities do clubs do? Here are some examples:

Organize training on children's rights, child protection and safeguarding, and on specific issues related to violence such as bullying, physical abuse and ways to report violence.

Raise awareness about issues around violence against children, explore together where violence takes place and how clubs can work together with adults to address this, as well as peer-mentoring and/or counselling.

Support your peers to increase their confidence and understanding of child rights to help build a respectful school environment.

Work on creating a safe environment for children and young people, including having safety measures in schools, clear ways to report violence and address online abuse.

Activity

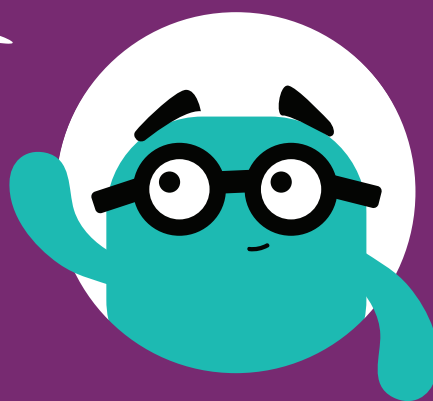
A Repeat After Me activity (Concentration) to support club members to develop relationships, energize, and laugh during their club activities.

Concentration

Concentration is the game, keep the rhythm if you can (Soloist)
Concentration is the game, keep the rhythm if you can (Respondent)
Names of...cities/fruits/sports/colors (Soloist)
The respondents then have to give names of the items mentioned

(Young Person, Kenya)

What tips do you have to help your club work on safeguarding against violence in schools?



Tips for Adults Supporting Children's Clubs

IDEAS FOR INCREASING PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING

- Provide support and encouragement for children's clubs across the school.
- Lead with children and young people, with support from adults that believe in them. Don't overstep.
- Build children and young people's confidence and skill sets by forming strong partnerships between children, young people and adults.
- Support activities that build trusting relationships between children, young people and adults.
- Make sure that the tasks in children's clubs do not overburden children and young people and being involved is a real benefit for them.
- Support outreach to the community to work on issues that are important to children and young people.
- Make sure children's clubs have support from organizations or groups that help to make sure that the club continues every year, has a clear process and that the work each club does has a positive impact on children, young people and the community.
- Reach out to parents and caregivers and engage them in what children and young people are doing.
- Provide resources as well as ongoing support, guidance and follow up for schools, parents and teachers, so that they can support children's clubs.
- Foster spaces for children's clubs to network with each other and share their ideas.
- Let children drive the process. Support them to elect their own leaders and decide their own activities. "Give them some guidance here or there but don't overbear them" (Young Person, Kenya).

"Even in child rights, we shouldn't make it an official thing that is run just by adults. These children if they sit down with them they will actually tell you what they actually want. They have their own ideas. Just sitting down letting them express their own views and taking their ideas into consideration" (Young Person, Kenya).

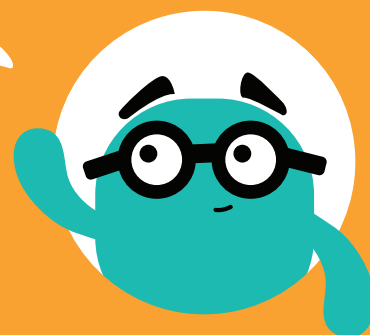
“Adults have more power to make changes, so adults can implement ideas that children have...[and] support these ideas that children have to come alive. It is not only about implementing the ideas, but also the respect for what children are saying. Before it was adults who knew best” (Young Person, Ukraine).

Supporting Safeguarding

When children and young people try to change how things are done in school or the community, especially around sensitive subjects like violence, adults need to help make sure that children and young people are not harassed or victimized because of their work in the clubs.

Provide training for adults on how to work with children and young people, to safeguard them, to improve their safety while also supporting their right to participation and respecting their thoughts, opinions and perspectives.

What tips do you have for adults who support your club?



Adults can help when they

Ensure children and young people's safety

Encourage, engage and empower children and young people

Provide resources and guidance when asked

Support child-led and collaborative initiatives

Respect children and young people's abilities

Be trustworthy

Make time and space for children's clubs

Commit to continuous learning about child rights and the impact of violence against children

Follow up on commitments

How Children's Clubs Make Impact

WE LEARNED THAT CHILDREN'S CLUBS IMPACTED CHILDREN, STAFF IN SCHOOLS, SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES IN MANY WAYS. HERE IS A BIT MORE ABOUT WHAT WE LEARNED

- **Children and Young People:**

Felt good about being in child clubs. Developed self-confidence, self-esteem, had the chance to share their voice, felt connectedness with their schools and their peers, gained leadership experience and improved problem solving and communication skills.

- **Staff at School:**

Learned from children and young people about their concerns around safety and violence. Gained respect for children's skills and leadership.

- **School:**

Increased awareness of child safety and protection, increased school attendance, improved safety in the school environment and increased awareness of children and young people's ability to promote safety.

- **Community:**

Learned from children and young people about their concerns around safety and violence. Gained respect for children's skills and leadership.

What are some of the great things about Children's Clubs work on Child Safeguarding around the world?

- Increase children and young people's self-confidence, feelings of being connected, ability to use their voice, empowerment and their resilience.
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to meaningfully participate in issues that are important to them in schools.
- Increase awareness about children and young people's safety and the role that everyone can play towards keeping children safe.
- Promote school attendance.
- Help protect and safeguard children and young people from violence in schools.
- Encourage reporting of violence against children in school (e.g., bullying, harassment from teachers or other students and violence experienced elsewhere).
- Be actively involved in activities that promote child safeguarding in schools, but also in families and communities.
- Support peers' understanding of these concepts and how to enact these protections.



“We developed a shield of protection—so the children know who they can trust with their concerns” (Young Person, Ukraine).

What's great about your club?
What do you want to improve?



“Children have become confident and they can reach out to their teachers and share their concerns without fear, they look out for one another and this has strengthened peer relationships among themselves”
(Young Person, Uganda).

Next Steps

YOU ARE NOW READY TO WORK WITH YOUR CHILD CLUB TO STRENGTHEN SAFEGUARDING IN YOUR SCHOOLS. WE WISH YOU THE BEST IN YOUR IMPORTANT ROLE IN YOUR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY!

“...these kids will go and tell [people in] other projects and then a whole community will know, and they will all know about child protection. This is what I hope will happen”
(Young Person, Kenya).

“I am looking forward-
I want to see everyone having a nice future as bright as a sun when everyone is feeling safe and I am feeling safe. I want everyone to be in a lovely environment in which all children are entitled to feel safe and protected”
(Young Person, Uganda).

Safeguarding Plan for your Club

What is the vision for your club for child safeguarding?

Draw a picture of your ideal vision for child safeguarding at your school that your club will support.

Where and when is violence most likely to occur in your school?

Create a map of spaces and times when it may be more risky. Make a plan of how to make these places more safe.

Who are safe people you can talk to about violence?

Add people to your picture. You can draw and write who they are.

What is the process for reporting violence in your school?

Create a simple poster that can be shared around the school.

How can the club support children and young people who experience violence?

Write or draw your ideas.

What are some activities you might do to promote safeguarding from violence?

List your activities.

Add in other ideas here:

***Remember it is an adult's job to protect children from violence,
but you can help too!**

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Appendix 1: Children and Young People's Role in Building this Report

Children and young people shared their thoughts and ideas on strengths, challenges and recommendations for child clubs working on safeguarding in their schools. They joined us online in play and arts-based activities to share their ideas and some emailed drawings and stories to us, too. After completing the research we wrote a one hundred and seventy page report on the results.

We summarised key points and met with the children and young people again to ask for their feedback on what we had learned. We asked them if what we had written made sense and was valuable, if it shared their ideas properly, and if they had any more recommendations that we missed. We also asked them for top tips for how to make this report fun, useful and interactive. They asked for bright colours, an interactive space, and for paragraphs not to be too long and boring. While meeting we made sure to play games and have time to chat so that the experience could be enjoyable for children, young people and adults joining!

After writing up this guide we asked a young designer, Maren Mealey, to take the words and create a story with bright colours based on the advice from the children and young people around the world we talked to.

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