

Safeguarding and Beyond Report of a GADN workshop, March 2018

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1. Introduction

During the past months, the disclosures of sexual harassment and abuse by male staff in INGOs and their partner organisations, of women staff, and the women and girls using the services that INGOs provide, have brought into the open that women are not safe as staff or as beneficiaries/participants in the development sector. These public disclosures have precipitated some difficult conversations within and between INGOs and donors. While there is widespread agreement that women and girls should not be abused, as a general principle, there is very much less clarity or agreement about what organisations can and should do in order to improve their practice. In many instances, there is lack of clarity or agreement about what the ‘problem’ is, and how it needs to be framed in order for there to be any significant change.

In response to these revelations, and to the experiences of women’s rights and gender equality staff in organisations, the Gender and Development Network (GADN) organised a workshop as a space to begin to make sense of the current issues and start to collate a set of proposals, so that the safeguarding response to the current sexual harassment issues is as robust as it can be. Prior to the workshop, women’s rights and gender equality staff were invited to reflect and give feedback on their experiences in their organisations, the concerns they have about the ways in which this conversation, and proposed responses from organisations, are evolving, and what they would like to see in the future. These perspectives, and other background documents including: DfID’s Safeguarding Summit statements; DfID’s Strategic Vision for Gender Equality; feedback from the GADN Feminist Forum meeting; and discussions with women’s rights experts inside and outside organisations in the global south and north, informed the focus and priorities in the workshop.

This report of the workshop is primarily intended as a resource for gender equality and women’s rights practitioners wanting to ensure that the response to the revelations is based in feminist analysis. As a write up of a workshop, it is intended as a resource for discussion and reflection, and a first step, rather than a set of definitive proposals. It will be shared with others within GADN and beyond with an invitation to comment on the analysis towards building a set of recommendations to share with decision makers. The report starts with the opening presentations made by experts Heather Cole and Liz Kelly, and concludes with some of the ideas that emerged from the workshop as possible ways forward.

2. Setting the Scene – discussion led by Heather Cole and Liz Kelly

2.1 Doing the work while we’re doing the work

Being a diversity practitioner means you are in effect appointed by an employer to transform the employer. It is a difficult position. One practitioner described the job as a “banging your head against a brick wall job.” Even if you are appointed by an institution to transform the institution, it does not mean the institution is willing to be transformed. In fact, many practitioners encounter resistance to their work; diversity is work because of that resistance.

(Sara Ahmed, feminist killjoys, 2017¹)

To ground the workshop and frame the conversation, it is critical to recognise the implications for gender equality and women's rights staff. Over recent months, the extent of men's abuse of women has become increasingly visible in the public arena across different industries and sectors. The emergence of the current revelations is not a surprise to many working in these areas; to a large extent, this has been 'known' for many years.

However, this 'knowledge' – of men's abuse of women and girls – is 'private' knowledge, and knowledge held largely by and between feminist women, and/or women who have been harassed and abused in, or by, men in organisations. As such, practitioners have been in the position of doing their work to promote gender equality and women's rights, while at the same time, living with the reality that the same things are happening in their organisations. Trying to raise these issues in organisations has not been easy or straightforward, and the gendered power hierarchies of organisations have acted as resistance to this knowledge. Women of relative privilege have faced sustained blocking as they have tried to raise the issues; this is not a conversation that organisations have wanted to have. In recent weeks, the 'private' knowledge of this abuse in the development sector has become 'public', framing a particular moment where the discussion and recognition is part of a public conversation. The public nature of these revelations has resulted in multi-layered responses:

- the need to be seen to clean up the delivery of aid to protect organisational reputations and funding;
- to deal with emerging disclosures;
- to demonstrate some kind of change in how they operate to restore confidence in the future.

At the same time, the processes of re-shaping the conversation and closing down the fundamentally gendered dynamic at its heart have already begun. Organisational and donor statements are frequently using gender-neutral language², making invisible that this is a profoundly gendered issue. The narrative is reinforcing a frame and a narrative of 'a few bad apples', rather than a recognition that such harassment and abuse is inevitable and endemic in hierarchical systems where gender inequality is entrenched and re-made.

For staff doing this work, there are some difficult feelings; most women's rights and gender equality practitioners have experience of witnessing abuse in organisations, supporting women who have been abused in organisations, and/or experienced abuse themselves. Others have spoken out, and whistle-blown, and have borne the consequences of this. No small part of the parallel processes is the personal experience alongside the professional practice. Witnessing the public conversations can be a powerful emotional experience, encompassing a wide range of feelings generated from long experience. In addition, in many organisations there is an expectation that staff with gender equality and women's rights experience will 'step up' and take on a great deal of additional work as organisations struggle to manage the current crisis, including public perceptions of the issues and donor relationships. Overwork coupled with powerful feelings is extremely difficult to hold and manage. Moreover, 'stepping up' does not necessarily mean having any authority, or being in the rooms where core decisions are being made: this combination of feeling responsible at the same time as having little control is particularly exhausting and hard to manage. For some staff, there has

¹ <https://feministkilljoys.com/2017/11/10/complaint-as-diversity-work/>

² Many public statements use gender-neutral language, failing to acknowledge that this abuse is profoundly gendered and deeply rooted in gender inequalities, attitudes and entitlements. Sexual abuse is exploitation overwhelming perpetrated by men, against women, girls and boys, and both the framing and the language needs to reflect that.

been a clear process of the experts in the organisation being actively excluded from the conversations and decisions, underpinned by a resistance to a feminist analysis or a gendered perspective, contributing a further layer of personal experience in professional practice, and mirroring the wider debate.

It is not unexpected or unusual that many women involved in this conversation are feeling overwhelmed and shattered, finding it difficult to strategise and to claim space in the conversations and decisions. This is not an abstract or depersonalised exercise, it has significant implications for the women involved in the current organisational processes. The failure of organisations to recognise this can also be understood as one of the ways in which there is resistance to a gendered analysis, reducing the power of expert knowledge by grinding down and marginalising those who hold that expertise.

Lastly, it is critical to recognise that patriarchal systems of privilege are highly skilled at absorbing and reconfiguring some of the issues raised by feminist and women's rights practitioners, without fundamentally changing the systems sustaining them. Not everyone involved is necessarily fully aware of how they are participating in these processes, and the ways in which they are contributing to patriarchal resistance. The grooves of these processes are well-worn, well-rehearsed and rarely examined: presuming that women, in particular, are 'emotional' as a way of dismissing concerns, rather than interrogating what has led to these strong feelings; the default assumption that the systems, and 'people' (men) in them are essentially good and benign, and there only needs to be some tweaking; the attribution of a negative 'agenda' to feminists who are trying to change the conversation; the movement of language to gender-neutral; the 'othering' of presumed perpetrators as implicitly men who are not white, or not international staff; the push to close down public knowledge and force it into 'private' spaces again, and so on. Moreover there is almost no recognition in this discourse of the intersectional nature of power and privilege and the roles that race and class play in who is doing what to whom.

One of the most difficult areas to navigate for many women's rights and gender equality experts currently is managing the powerful emotional layers, and not to be devastated by them. It is extremely important that women trying to move this agenda are properly supported, to acknowledge those feelings, to use them constructively as energy, and to be generous with one another: rifts and divisions amongst those with expertise are painful, divert from the work of shifting the narratives, and contribute to more isolation and more distress. The work of supporting each other, in disagreement as well as in agreement, needs to be grounded as far as possible in kindness.

2.2 Conducive Contexts for Abuse

One resource that we can use in such situations is knowledge and language: finding key concepts and research which supports and enables new narratives. Rather than the 'few bad apples' discourse – which points only to better recruitment and supervision processes – the concept of 'conducive contexts' requires examining not only intersectional power relations but also the cultures within organisations which have meant that abuse could be invisible in plain sight for so long.

Liz Kelly developed this concept in response to various definitions of violence against women and girls (VAWG), including those from the UN, which conflate forms of abuse with the contexts in which they are most commonly found.

Feminists have long noted that certain contexts are conducive to VAW: the family; institutions; conflict and transition; public space and more recently online

*environments. What is less common is exploration, at a theoretical level, of what connects them, what makes these spaces ones in which men are enabled to abuse women and girls.*³

The origin of the concept and its implications for intervention were outlined in the paper cited above, and further developed in the report *'Fertile Fields'*⁴, examining the interconnecting social, political and economic conditions that enable and support a conducive context for the exploitation and abuse of women and girls.

A more recent piece of work for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in the UK has examined discourses on child sexual abuse and how they influenced institutional responses⁵. The conceptual model below groups the majority of these ideas as involving deflection, denial and disbelief, with the majority being in the deflection and denial arenas (see Annex 1 for the more complex model). Deflection of focus and responsibility operates in relation to both perpetrators and institutions, with denial related to either the extents of abuse or its harms. One possible piece of work would be to use this model to develop a similar analysis but related to VAWG in the context of development and humanitarian work. This would serve as an analytic tool to show how institutions are implicated when they fail to address how ways of talking about abuse serve to minimise or legitimise it. The model also includes two 'counter discourses' – of power and belief. These are recognised as having emerged within feminist ideas and responses and the work and words of survivors. Whilst not as influential, these discourses locate abuse as a crime of dominion – of power over – and create spaces to speak. It is these spaces which GADN members could be seeking to grow and sustain.

One current application of the conducive context idea is what Carlene Firmin, in relation to child sexual exploitation, calls 'contextual safeguarding'⁶: here the focus is not individuals making particular reports, but the harnessing of organisational knowledge and intelligence about the locations where abuse is known to be taking place. Organisations/agencies take responsibility for developing interventions which target the context, making it one in which abuse is less likely to take place.

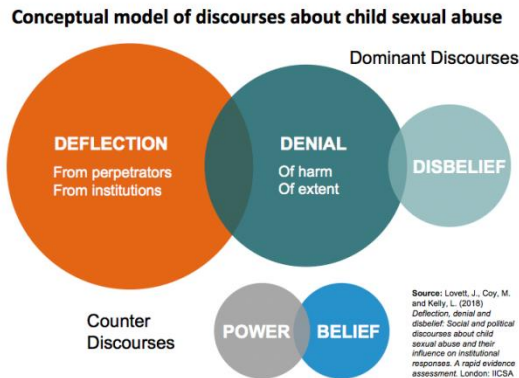
³ <https://discoversociety.org/2016/03/01/theorising-violence-against-women-and-girls/>

⁴ Kelly, L (2005) *'Fertile Fields; Trafficking in Persons in Central Asia'* International Organisation for Migration

⁵ <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/key-documents/3848/view/Social%20and%20political%20discourses%20about%20child%20sexual%20abuse%20and%20their%20influence%20on%20institutional%20responses%20%28full%20report%29.pdf>

⁶ <https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/about/what-is-contextual-safeguarding>

Conducive Contexts for Abuse



2.3 Starting Points; what do we know?

Following the discussions and feedback prior to the workshop, Heather Cole collated the following starting points for strategising about asks, and expectations of organisations.

- *We know that the nexus of gender inequality, resource power and racism makes abuse inevitable and endemic in humanitarian and development aid – in communities, in programmes, in country offices, in headquarters.*

The construction and positioning of issues of sexual harassment and abuse as an area of specialist programming and not as a dynamic in all domains has been a mechanism of denial (and possibly also deflection) for organisations. De-gendering language, presuming that organisational spaces are gender neutral, presuming that everyone is responsible and respectful, have been highly successful ways of reinforcing the idea of ‘a few bad apples’, and of marginalising the concerns of women’s rights and gender equality experts. A feminist analysis of gender and power makes visible the reality that hierarchical gender power that privileges men, the gendered nature of sexual violence, and massive disparities in the control of resources mean that sexual harassment and abuse are inevitable and endemic. These also support narratives that minimise the harm done by perpetrators, and that sustain response systems that fail to recognise the power differentials and implications for complainants. Racism also allows the opportunity for the focus on perpetrators to be ‘othered’ away from northern white men, and towards national staff in the global south, and partner organisations. Feminist analysis provides the most coherent explanations for the prevalence of sexual harassment and abuse within organisations, and of beneficiary groups, as well as for the failure to act on reports of abuse, and the protection of perpetrators (including allowing them to resign without completing an investigation or disciplinary process).

- *We know that this is not new, or a secret; this has been women’s ‘private’ knowledge for decades.*

Many women's rights and gender equality experts have long held the knowledge and experience of these abuses of power by organisational staff. This has been effectively 'private' knowledge, marginalised and silenced in organisations. Many women have seen the consequences of reporting; their professional reputations ruined, their careers derailed, the disbelief and questioning of the person raising the issues, and the mobilisation of organisational resources to protect the perpetrators. At the same time, women's rights and gender equality experts have continued to try to shift the narratives; doing the work while they are doing the work.

It can also be extremely difficult for women to speak out, in their organisations or in public, since all women are engaged in 'safety work' and managing risks. It is important to navigate this carefully, and to acknowledge and respect the reasons why women may or may not be in a position to speak in any situation. It is also critical to recognise that there are times when it is appropriate for women with more power to represent and speak on behalf of women with less, and to ensure that this is negotiated and agreed with the women concerned in each situation (we cannot presume the risks/costs for others). It is also essential to recognise that women and women's groups take all sorts of calculated risks, all the time, and will be able to make their own decisions about those they are prepared to take, and articulate the support they need to do that.

- *We know that there is resistance in organisations to real engagement with a feminist and intersectional analysis of power as the foundation of substantive change and*
- *We know that there is ambivalence within organisations about the role of feminists and women's rights activists in the organisation*

The marginalisation of this specialist work in organisations is a systemic representation of organisational resistance to looking inward to their own assumptions and practices. The work is marginalised, and thus 'othered', into specific programming areas, as though this is an issue that happens elsewhere. Organisational systems and processes for reporting operate as though this behaviour is an aberration, and separate from 'normal' practices, making invisible the ways in which the organisations contribute to a conducive context for abuse. The experience of many experts currently is of being shut out of organisational discussions on how to respond to the current crisis, and of being undermined through negative assumptions about their motivations for wanting to participate and contribute. These exclusions, and negative assumptions, can be understood as the mechanisms through which organisations can start to close down the opportunities for substantive, transformative change, effectively re-privatising the conversation.

- *We know that policies, codes of conduct, training, and systems exist and that they are frequently not used, not usable, and not useful in the current shape of organisations*

This is clearly not just an issue of policy; there are multiple statements, policies, codes of conduct and training modules, from the UN Secretary-General downwards. The problem is not a lack of these; the 'problem' is something else. A reliance on new policies and more 'training' does not address the central issue that this is a highly gendered issue, and embedded in organisational systems and hierarchies.

- *We know that while there is some acceptance of gendered language, those using it do not necessarily or always know what it means*

The language of safeguarding, protection and of harassment includes the use of some gendered language, but does not reflect feminist understandings. At worst, the use of this language can be understood as a tactic to *appear* as though there is a depth of understanding and a functional analysis of the roots of this abuse, without the requirement to properly act. It cannot be assumed that reference to gender or power dynamics will mean a depth of understanding of these, or a commitment to changing practice. In addition, the language of protection and safeguarding is not explicit and can serve to obscure, rather than articulate, the issues at the centre. This can make it extremely difficult for survivors to know whether their experience is included in policies, and hard to name what has happened to them.

- *We know that organisations work from a position of ‘safe from’ and not from a position of ‘safe to’*

Defining the potential for harm and the ways in which organisations create and enable conducive contexts for abuse rarely start from a position of **‘safe to’**; there is little understanding of the need for an analysis of gender, and power, in the context of massive economic disparity and racism, that considers what needs to be in place for women to be ‘safe to’ participate in programmes and the delivery of aid. Starting from this position reframes the ‘problem’ as one that is already existing, and that demands a thoughtful response, rather than from the assumption that the environment is neutral and essentially benevolent, with the exception of some few ‘bad apples’. This kind of analysis would also include a recognition of the role of stigma; when it is known in communities, for example, that women have been sexually exploited in aid distribution, there can be an assumption that all women who have been to that distribution site have had sex with the men delivering the aid. The socio-sexual reputational damage to women, and the consequences of this, can be sufficient for women not to go to those sites, and thus be excluded from aid delivery, in order to protect themselves from the violence of stigmatisation in their communities. Starting situational analysis and programme design, as well as organisational structures and systems, from a question of ‘what needs to be in place in order for women to be safe to engage?’ would result in radically different programme models and organisational practices. It would also bring into view and visibility the ways in which gendered and intersectional power inequalities are the foundations of sexual abuse and exploitation, and the mechanisms of conducive contexts for abuse.

2.4 Areas for attention

In the background conversations shaping the workshop, the core issues emerged as two groups; the ‘how’ of what is happening and needs to happen (the processes), and the ‘what’ of what is happening and needs to happen. Grouped around these discussion areas participants identified key ‘asks’ (see annex) which have been edited into recommendations (below)

1. HOW
 - Responsibility and accountability
 - Collectivity, solidarity and representation
 - Personal and political
2. WHAT
 - Structures and language
 - ‘Prevention’
 - ‘Response’

3. Reflections on which to base recommendations

The workshop identified a number of ideas which could form the basis for recommendations for staff to share with colleagues in INGOs in order to improve the organisational response. We noted first that the process by which the response takes place is important, this needs to include recognition that: **responsibility for** preventing and responding to sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation lies with senior leadership in the INGOs, not with staff to whistle blow; there should be **accountability to**, all women and girls particularly survivors, who must be fully **represented in** decision making.

Changing the narrative, inside and outside

- **This is an issue of gender inequality, women's rights abuses, and power imbalances including racial inequalities.** Racial inequalities are further exacerbated by neo-colonial legacies and attitudes, particularly in emergency responses. Language recognising the roots of this abuse needs to be gendered, needs to be concrete and needs to recognise the intersections of gender, race and class.
- **INGO leadership needs to recognise that this is not about 'other people'** – it is about us; they should recognise they have been at best wilfully ignorant, and made serious mistakes which have had significant consequences for the women in their organisations and the women and girls participating in their programmes. It is at best inadequate to commit to actions 'going forward' without sufficient acknowledgement of the impacts of these previous failures. Organisations should commit to engaging with impact reviews to recognise and document what has been lost through women and girls being excluded from participating in programming, through being marginalised in organisations, and through leaving their jobs and careers; losses to communities, organisations and to women and girls themselves.
- **The experiences, voices and views of women from the global south must be central**, and they must be supported to talk about abuse by and within international organisations, international partners, and other civil society organisations. Consideration should be given to a global conference, led by women from the global south, for women to discuss sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation in and by INGOs.
- **INGO leadership must commit to listen, reflect, learn, and act over the longer-term**; taking a problem-driven approach, and reframing 'the problem' as one of conducive contexts for abuse (see page 3) rather than just 'a few bad apples'.
- We need to commit to start at the bottom of the causal pyramid **looking at the underlying causes of the problem** by tackling the culture of sexism and power imbalances that create the conducive context for these abuses.
- **Organisations must educate supporters and donors to understand the approach**; work with communications teams to redefine the frame and the narrative, and educate the public around tackling the causes of abuse as well as responding to abuse as it happens. Organisational communication with supporters must be honest, nuanced and open; not smoothing over or smoothing out of issues, and working from the assumption that there is the potential for better dialogue with a supporter base to rebuild trust.

Identifying abuse

- **Value women's knowledge and experience**; smaller reporting mechanisms grounded in an understanding of how survivors disclose (slowly, hesitantly, indirectly), recognising the

priority of safety. Use this for contextual safeguarding interventions. Encourage and use 'cause for concern' reporting mechanisms to document women's private knowledge, and collate a wider picture of abusing behaviour without needing an 'incident' for investigation. Encourage women to share their unease.

- **Trust women's reporting and look for other forms of evidence;** build honest and respectful relationships with and resource women's rights organisations to share information of contexts that need investigation (disaggregated, anonymised information to direct orgs where to look for issues). Challenge the need for 'watertight, indisputable evidence' and look for other forms of evidence, including consistent reports of 'causes for concern'.
- **Encourage, enable and reward the reporting of 'causes for concern' as indicative of potential deeper issues;** Use issues such as pornography on work computers, for example, as representative of a culture of sexualised inequality and respond seriously; this is at the least contributing to a hostile work environment and should not be underestimated.
- **Look at ways to do contextual safeguarding** based in collecting data around issues through good relationships with women's rights organisations, response services, and women's community groups. Using this information well will move away from a reliance on individual 'incidents' and individual complaints for investigation; taking seriously the information provided in aggregate from women's groups provides the direction for where to look more closely and where to intervene to ensure that women and girls are 'safe to' to participate in programmes and to sustain their employment (see page 7).
- **Develop media protocols and processes on speaking out** if women have been failed by organisations, including mechanisms of support and ensure these decisions are made intentionally, situationally and in recognition of women's assessments in their 'safety work'.

Organisational Structures and Cultures

- **Organisational culture** - changes are needed in organisational culture both in relation to safeguarding, and the recognition of sexual harassment, abuse and exploitation as issues of gendered power, but also in relation to underlying sexism and racism, and the recognition of power imbalances as central in a conducive context. It is not accidental that perpetrators abuse 'downwards', since their relative gender, economic and racial power (or combinations of these) reinforce their impunity and surround the abuse with credible threats to survivors who challenge them.
- **Definitions of VAWG, and sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse need to be linked to a recognition that these are holistic, systemic issues and not single 'incidents'.** This includes analysis of the ways deflection, denial and disbelief within organisations create and maintain conducive contexts for abuse. Accurate and appropriate language should be used to name the problem, including the recognition that this is deeply gendered in both victimisation and in perpetration. Harassment, abuse and exploitation are built on gendered and other forms of power and this needs to be explicitly recognised. It needs to be explicit that these are not the issues of 'others'; the relative privilege of white, northern women has not protected them from gendered experiences of abuse, but at the same time it has meant that their experiences are more visible than women facing intersecting discriminations.
- **Leadership - promote and support feminist leadership in INGOs** and ensure senior leadership have gender expertise and experience, including women's rights experts on Boards.
- **Collective responsibility - create and nurture organisational cultures of reporting, of raising issues, and of the responsibility of colleagues and witnesses to report.** This also involves recognising the irreconcilable tension between the 'safety work' that women are engaged in in the hope of avoiding an 'incident', and the current requirement of organisations that

there is an 'incident' to be reported that will trigger an investigation. An analysis of a conducive context for abuse removes the need for a specific, serious 'incident' in order for there to be intervention, and it becomes a collective responsibility to maintain an environment where it is safe for women and girls to participate in programmes, and to work. Encouraging and embedding a culture of raising and documenting 'causes for concern' allows a bigger picture to be built without reliance on an individual, isolated report.

- **Reporting at all levels - make it the responsibility of Boards and senior managers to change the contexts of their organisations, and not to wait for or rely on whistle-blowers**, with reporting on progress at all levels. Organisations must explore what contextual safeguarding might look like across the work of the organisation, both within the organisation and in programming interventions.
- **Consultation - foster and nurture dialogic relationships with women's rights organisations**, survivor organisations and specialist VAWG services in HQ countries and in countries of operation; invite their perspective and expertise and ensure that their involvement in decision-making and contextual safeguarding is meaningful and influential. Ensure that women's rights and VAWG experts are encouraged and enabled to use their expertise in relation to organisations, as well as their programming.
- **Support for women's organising - support internal organisational spaces for feminist collective action with recognised influence**, and cross-organisational networking. Create space and resourcing for women to meet and discuss the issues that concern them at work, and support them to articulate and propose improved policies and practice. Ensure that this is within work time, recognised as part of their jobs, and directly linked to feminist senior leadership.
- **Focal points - resource women in women's groups (see above) as focal points**, and enable matrix management by feminist senior leadership to hear initial issues. Cross-organisational advisory groups of feminist champions must also be directly connected to Boards and senior leadership. Resources should also be made available for designated specialist posts (similarly to finance and logistics in country offices) to ensure that there is oversight and accountability, and that focal points are not overloaded, or undermined. Use the information and knowledge generated through these positions and their relationships with partners and communities to inform and guide contextual safeguarding.
- **Reporting - report on harassment as well as abuse and exploitation and ensure abuse is fully documented** (an end to 'quiet chats') to generate comparable data between programming and organisational issues, and between organisations; use this data to document and analyse organisational cultures and practices that support a conducive context for abuse.
- **Independent audits - accountability requires independent audits and/or an external accountability body in the sector**, focussed on gendered and intersectional power analyses. Recognising the failure of past independent reviews and redefining the 'problem' to address it properly is necessary. Using the data collected through an emphasis on a conducive context will redefine the 'problem' and provide opportunities for more appropriate remedial action.
- **Programme design - recognise that masculinised organisational cultures also create a conducive context for abuse in programming**. Standard programme design does not necessarily fully recognise the implications for women and girls of gendered inequality, or the ways in which it contributes to a conducive context for abuse. Programming design needs to be built on an analysis around 'what would make women and girls safe to participate in programmes? What would make women safe to work in this partner organisation?' This approach would of necessity involve an analysis of the gendered conducive context for abuse, recognising the structural gender, hierarchy and race issues as foundational.

- **Programme monitoring - build in indicators and reporting on the use of reporting mechanisms.** Design reporting mechanisms with women and girls during the situational analysis and design processes, based around 'safe to'; what would be safe for them to use? Articulate specific indicators to monitor confidence in the use of these mechanisms, confidence in recommending them to others, and the trustworthiness of responses. Ensure that there are wider and appropriate contextual mechanisms to gather 'cause for concern' data, including building trustworthy and consistent relationships with specialist VAWG response services, and women's groups. Ensure that these are not 'tick-box' exercises, but based in an understanding of the need for on-going dialogic relationship building.
- **Programme reporting - recognise that for women and girls participating in programming, the power inequalities are severe, and the risks of reporting profound.** Build relationships with women's rights organisations and specialist response services to enable aggregated reporting of issues of concern. Ensure that pathways for sharing this information are not onerous or extractive for women's organisations, and take responsibility for being trustworthy and engaged in dialogic relationships. Take responsibility for identifying contextual 'hotspots' and responding in ways that prioritise the 'safe to' of women and girls. Be guided and informed by VAWG experts in the potential for retaliation and additional abuse, and design responses in relation to these wider risks. Invest in outreach and the visibility of focal points to make disclosive conversations routine; use all direct and indirect information shared to build a bigger picture and do not rely on individual complaints or reports. Do not wait for a catastrophic incident. Use a case management approach in responding to specific complaints, and commit time, resources, and skills to safety planning with survivors. Ensure that Child Protection systems and processes are built on an analysis of gender and recognise explicitly the specific vulnerabilities of adolescent girls.

Human resources

- **Performance management - include promotion of 'safe to' (see page 7) environments in performance management and recruitment criteria** and require examples of action taken to promote an environment of 'safe to' and the results of those interventions.
- **Recruitment – value feminist power analyses of sexism and racism in recruitment and induction processes** and ensure that core recruitment questions ask specifically about experience with and actions on reports of sexual abuse and exploitation, in programmes and in the organisation.
- **Commit to completing all disciplinary proceedings**, even if a person resigns; to ensure accountability to survivors, promote organisational learning (how did we get to a position where this was possible and what do we do to reduce the likelihood of this happening again? Frame it as an issue of conducive contexts rather than as an individual 'bad apple') and ensure a documented trail for references etc.
- **Use international reporting protocols for expatriate perpetrators** and hold them to account through the legal systems available to them in their home countries (UK citizens, for example, can be prosecuted in the UK for sex/rape of minors in another country).

Response

- **Survivor-focussed Standard Operating Procedures** to collect and share data on perpetrators and allow for joint/collective reporting; don't rely on individual, separated complaints. Use aggregated 'cause for concern' reports as the basis of precipitating action.
- **Provide survivor-centred support** (do not re-victimise a survivor in organisational processes and in making them repeat their story multiple times); provide access to confidential,

independent medical and psycho-social support, integrate safety planning, broaden the definition of 'justice' for survivors, track outcomes of reports. Resource access to independent legal advice and advocacy for survivors making a complaint through criminal justice systems

- **Recognise that poor organisational responses compound trauma;** confidentiality, safety, dignity and respect need to be the central principles of response. Treat breaches of confidentiality as an act of serious misconduct. Ensure that organisations hold and uphold the responsibility for timely response and action, and for sharing information with survivors, including outcomes of internal actions and processes.
- **Support a survivor to sustain their employment, and support wider options;** do not presume they will not be able to continue working. Offer options, be led by a survivor's actions in their own best interests, including offering alternative positions where appropriate.
- **Recognise the difficulties of whistle-blowing** (aligned to the recognition that perpetrators abuse 'downwards' for precisely this reason, and the centrality of power in this dynamic), and provide support from the same principles; confidentiality, safety, dignity. Take seriously the potential for retaliation, threat, and ostracism, and apply the same principles as supporting a survivor, including access to independent advocacy services.
- **Use the right language; use case management principles and name what is happening accurately in relation to race, gender, class, sexual assault, sexual abuse.** Train all staff in active listening, appropriate responses, and in appropriate language. Capture data accurately and systematically.
- **Have clear country office positions on the involvement of national legal systems;** women will not report if they fear they will face potential prosecution or public punishment for reporting. Country office positions should be informed and guided by women's rights experts and recognise that legal systems are not gender-neutral. It may not be safe or appropriate for survivors to report if legal systems do not support them. Decisions about whether to make a legal complaint in country needs to rest with a survivor, and be informed by their assessment of their safety. Organisations should not rely on formal justice systems as a mechanism of response.

The full model from the IICSA study

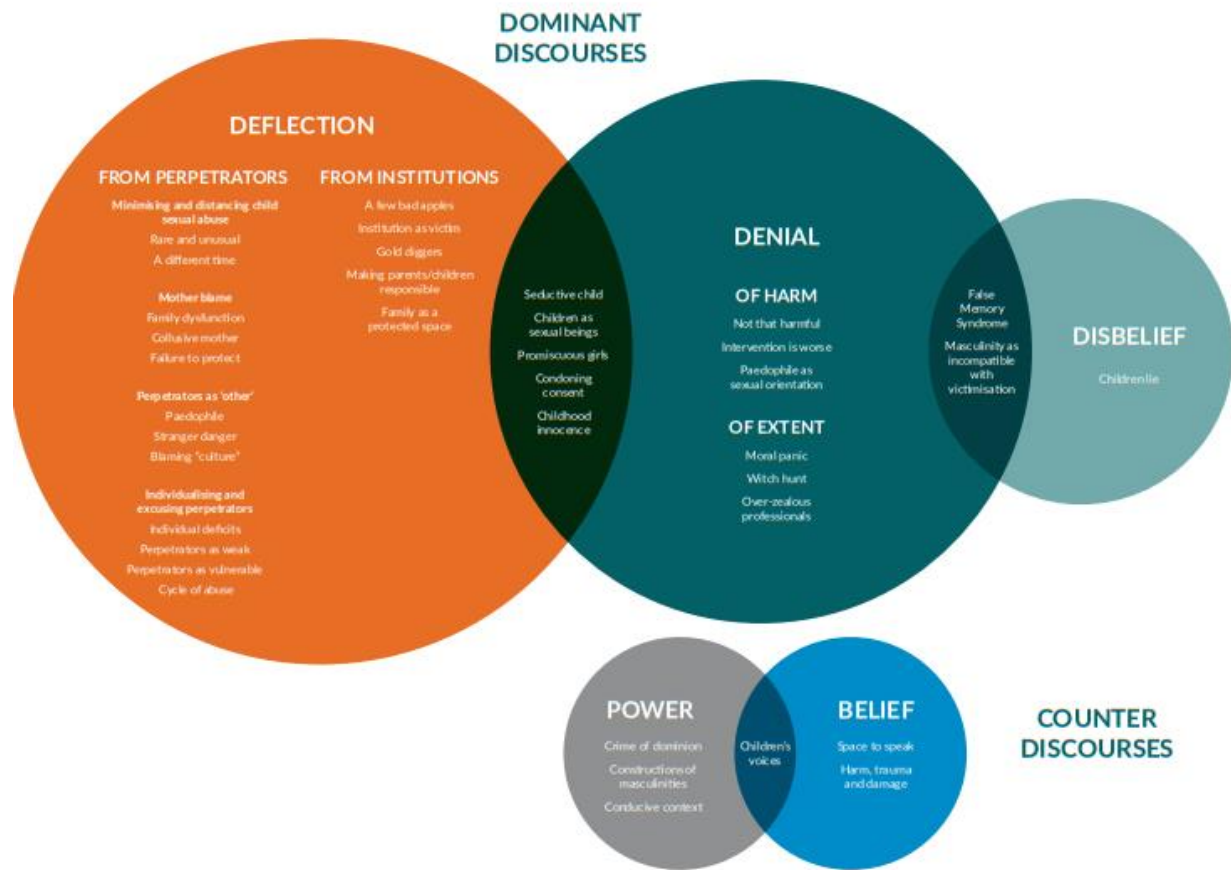


Figure 2: A conceptual model of discourses about child sexual abuse in England and Wales

Annex 2

Write up of flip charts from the discussion groups

1) How

➤ **Responsibility and accountability**

1. Identifying supportive leaders; senior leadership have gender expertise and experience, women's rights experts on Boards, cross-organisational advisory group of feminist champions connected to Boards and senior leadership
2. External accountability body in the sector, focussed on gendered power analysis
3. Team leaders of staff at every level in the organisation trained as focal points, and matrix managed by feminist senior leadership to hear initial issues
4. Donors require gendered power analysis in all proposals
5. Organisational communication with supporters to be honest, nuanced and open; not smoothing over or smoothing out of issues, and working from the assumption that there is the potential for better dialogue with a supporter base to rebuild trust.

➤ **Collectivity, solidarity and representation**

1. Global conference on gendered and sexual harassment and abuse, lead by women from the South
2. Media protocols and processes on speaking out if women have been failed by organisations, including mechanisms of support
3. Openly creating and supporting internal organisational spaces for feminist collective action with recognised influence
4. Openly creating and supporting cross-organisational solidarity networks between women
5. Integrated approach to VAWG; name it accurately and stop 'othering' it

➤ **Personal and political**

We recognise that

1. This is an issue of gender inequality, women's rights abuses, and power imbalances (including resource power), filtered through racial inequalities
2. This is not the other – it is us
3. We have been at best wilfully ignorant; we recognise we have made serious mistakes
4. We have shown we cannot police ourselves or mark our own homework
5. We need to commit to start at the bottom of the pyramid (image), in taking on the culture of sexism and power imbalances that create the conducive context for these abuses

2. What

➤ **Structures and language**

We commit to:

1. Listen, reflect, learn, and act over the longer-term; taking a problem-driven approach. We will learn about the reasons for the failure of past independent reviews and redefine the 'problem' to address it properly
2. Make it the responsibility of Boards and senior managers to change the contexts of their organisations, not waiting for whistle-blowers
3. Include promotion of 'safe to' environments in performance management
4. Hold independent audits to promote and sustain accountability between organisations
5. Listen to and involve specialists (including survivors, and southern WROs) in decision-making
6. Report on harassment as well as abuse and exploitation, ensure harassment is fully documented (an end to 'quiet chats') to generate comparable data and the documentation of organisational cultures that support a conducive context for abuse
7. Promote and support feminist leadership
8. Educate supporters and donors to understand the approach; work with comms teams to redefine the frame and the narrative, and educate the public around 'safe to'

➤ **'Prevention'**

1. Commit to completing all disciplinary proceedings, even if a person resigns; to ensure accountability to survivors, promote organisational learning (how did we get to a position where this was possible and what do we do to reduce the likelihood of this happening again? Frame it as an organisational issue – conducive contexts – rather than as an individual ‘bad apple’) and ensure a documented trail for references etc
2. Look at ways to do ‘victimless’ prosecutions based in collecting ‘evidence’ around issues through good relationships with women’s rights organisations, response services, and women’s community groups
3. Create and nurture organisational cultures of reporting, of raising issues, and of the responsibility of colleagues and witnesses to report. Do not rely solely on individual survivor reports. Invite women’s ‘private’ knowledge, and use it
4. Ensure all recruiting and induction processes incorporate feminist analysis of sexism and racism, using clear and explicit language
5. Design programmes from a position of ‘safe to’; this will require a gendered power analysis and risk mitigation to be built in from the beginning

➤ **‘Response’**

1. Value women’s knowledge and experience; smaller reporting mechanisms grounded in an understanding of how survivors disclose (slowly, hesitantly, indirectly), recognising the priority of safety
2. Survivor-focussed SOPs to collect and share data on perpetrators and allow for joint/collective reporting; don’t rely on individual, separated complaints
3. Trust women & look for other forms of evidence; build relationships with and resource Women’s Rights Organisations to share information of contexts that need investigation (disaggregated, anonymised information to direct orgs where to look for issues). Challenge the patriarchal need for ‘watertight, indisputable evidence’ and look for other forms of evidence (victimless prosecutions)
4. Provide survivor-centred support (do not re-victimise a survivor in organisational processes and in making them repeat their story multiple times); provide access to confidential psycho-social support, integrate safety planning, broaden the definition of ‘justice’ for survivors, track outcomes of reports
5. Use the right language; use case management principles and name what is happening accurately in relation to race, gender, class, sexual assault, sexual abuse. Capture data accurately
6. Have clear country office positions on the involvement of national legal systems; women will not report if they fear they will face potential prosecution or public punishment for reporting. It may not be safe or appropriate for survivors to report if legal systems do not support them. Use international reporting protocols for expatriate perpetrators (UK citizens, for example, can be prosecuted in the UK for sex/rape of minors in another country).

The Gender & Development Network (GADN) brings together NGOs, consultants, academics and individuals committed to working on gender, development and women’s rights issues. Our vision is of a world where social justice and gender equality prevail and all women and girls are able to realise their rights free from discrimination. Our goal is to ensure that international development policy and practice promotes gender equality and women’s and girls’ rights.