DIGITAL SAFEGUARDING GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

All event organizers are encouraged to ensure that their digital safeguarding mechanisms strive to ensure safe and meaningful engagement of their target participants. Conscious efforts are required to ensure that such safeguarding mechanisms do not become a barrier for people's participation, especially young people under the age of 18 and people with disabilities.

As technical safeguarding partners for WD2023, the Adolescent Girls Investment Plan (AGIP) has curated the contents of this Digital Safeguarding Guidelines with inputs and resources from our members, adolescent girls, and industry peers and partners.

Who is this document for? It is intended for all those organizing online events related to WD2023 in the lead up to and at the Conference in July 2023.

The Digital Safeguarding Guidelines establish non-negotiables for organizing online events as a part of WD2023 to ensure reduced risk of harm and meaningful engagement of target participants, especially young people. It also includes key resources on safeguarding practices from the industry. The resources go beyond 'do no harm' towards 'centering well-being' of the young participants engaging in these spaces.

You can use the Digital Safeguarding Guidelines for the following purposes:
- Establish mechanisms for keeping people safe in your digital engagements at and beyond WD2023, including the Global Dialogue.
- Review your current digital safeguarding mechanisms from a youth-centric perspective.
- Learn from the digital safeguarding work of other youth-centric and youth-serving organizations.
- Practice applying the insights from these resources to your own safeguarding practices.

Invitation to contribute:
AGIP intends to continually update this document as safeguarding best practices in the sectors continue to evolve. We encourage you to write to us with suggestions for future versions.

Notes on use:
Please feel free to use the whole or a part of this document for your organizational purposes with due credit to AGIP and the organizations whose resources are added here for further reference.

Duty of care
Women Deliver and AGIP are providing this document to ensure all WD2023-related online event organizers can establish, review, and strengthen their digital safeguarding mechanisms. All online event organizers have a proactive obligation to ensure the safety and well-being of their participants and respond to the concerns and complaints raised by them as per their organizational policy. In this regard,

Women Deliver and AGIP are not liable for any claims, actions, or demands from organizers or participants in matters related to safeguarding.

NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR ORGANIZING WD2023 ONLINE EVENTS

All those organizing WD2023-related online events, such as a Global Dialogue event or a virtual concurrent event, are required to ensure the non-negotiables for their respective events are respected.

Overall: All online interactions before, during, and after the event are to be carried out with target participants in a format and language they understand.

Before the event:

1. The event is co-created with target participants and their needs and priorities are reflected in the event objectives.
2. At a minimum, expenses incurred by young people during the co-creation process are reimbursed.
3. Event registration includes options to state accessibility needs and safety concerns of the participants.
4. Accessibility-specific measures such as live captioning, sign language, and simultaneous interpretation are embedded based on participants' needs.
5. The online event is designed to enable participation via different formats such as writing, discussion, chats, etc. to accommodate diverse preferences.
6. Risk assessment is completed well in advance and ideally co-developed with target participants.
7. Safeguarding measures respond to safety concerns of the target participants.
8. To ensure safe and meaningful engagement, all event-related information is shared with participants at least one week in advance. This includes:
   - Pre-reading, such as event descriptions, agendas, discussion questions, platforms to be used, etc.
   - Event-related safeguarding focal point for support before and during the event
   - Guidelines on using interactive platforms and tools (i.e., Mentimeter, Mural, Jamboard), where relevant
   - Other materials as applicable to the event
9. Digital safeguarding information is shared with participants at least one week in advance. This includes:
   - Code of conduct

- Reporting mechanisms
- Safeguarding focal points
- Media consent
- Data protection measures
- Parental/guardian consent for young people under 18
- Reporting mechanism
- Other information as applicable to your safeguarding due diligence

10. A trained focal point is assigned in advance to provide support before and during the event.
11. Organize a briefing call ahead of the main event to share safeguarding information and enable Q&A with participants.
12. Organize a briefing call ahead of the main event to discuss safeguarding aspects and other event-related information.
13. External service providers such as interpreters and facilitators:
    - are experienced with topics related to gender equality and working with young people.
    - receive all event-related materials in advance.
    - join a pre-event briefing call with event organizers.
14. Where possible, all event-related materials and safeguarding information is made available at the time of registration in one place for easy download.
15. In case of sensitive topics such as gender-based violence, map support and referrals in advance.
16. Always keep the adult safeguarding focal person copied into any communications with minors.

During the event:

1. For safe and meaningful participation, share the following information at the beginning of your event:
    - Event agenda, objectives, and planned activities
    - Safeguarding focal points and values of engagement
    - Instructions on using interactive features
    - Accessibility features like simultaneous interpretation, live captioning, sign language, etc.
    - If the event is being recorded, the purpose of recording it and the choice to opt-out, as preferred
2. Trained safeguarding focal points remain ready to respond as needed.
3. Chat and other shared documents are monitored for incoming inputs.

After the event:

1. Documentation and dissemination of the event is done in line with the media consent received prior and during the event.

2. Post-event materials ensure privacy and confidentiality of the participants based on risk-assessment and participant consent.
3. Post-event survey is done to assess participants' overall experience as well as their specific inputs on safeguarding mechanisms for the event.

SAFEGUARDING GOOD PRACTICES FOR MEANINGFUL ONLINE ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

This section includes additional good practices for establishing and strengthening digital safeguarding, presented in three categories: process, culture, and capacity building. These categories are not exhaustive but have emerged repeatedly in AGIP-hosted conversations on safeguarding with adolescent girls, youth, coalition members, and industry peers.

Safeguarding good practices for meaningful online engagement with young people		
Process	**Culture**	**Capacity Building**
1. Online platform 2. Risk assessment 3. Community-based safeguarding focal point 4. Accessibility	5. Digital safeguarding policy 6. Power sharing 7. Resourcing sharing	8. Staff 9. Young people

SAFEGUARDING PROCESS

ONLINE PLATFORM
- **Safety features:** Stay up to date with the latest safety features and know how to set them up for different online platforms like Zoom, Meets, Teams, etc.
- **Safeguarding focal point:** Assign a trained safeguarding focal point for your virtual spaces to ensure that participants know who to reach out to when they have safety concerns. Ideally, if target participants predominantly represent a specific gender, assign the safeguarding focal point of the same gender. For big groups with highly diverse representation, more than one focal point of diverse backgrounds can enable young people to approach more openly.
- **Platform navigation:** Allocate time to familiarize your participants with the online platform of use to enhance navigation and inclusion.
    - **Useful resource:** [Video: Zoom Security Basics by Zoom](#)

RISK ASSESSMENT
- **Online risks:** Map various types of risks for your online event. A helpful framework to think about the types of online risks are:
    - (1) Content: risks around harmful, inaccurate, or illegal content
    - (2) Contact: inappropriate or unwanted contact between users

- o (3) Conduct: risks around behaviour
- o (4) Control: use of technology to control or coerce
- o **Risk mapping process:** Ideally, include young people in co-mapping, reviewing, and updating the risks with you to ensure that their perspectives and unique experiences reflect in the safety and mitigation measures. **Useful resource:** AGIP's risk assessment template for online spaces

COMMUNITY-BASED SAFEGUARDING FOCAL POINT

- All participants under the age of 18 need to be onboarded for online engagements with a trusted adult, ideally based in the same/nearby community as the participants' who can act as their safeguarding focal point/chaperone. This is specifically important for those event organizers who do not engage with their participants, whether children or adolescent, directly in their communities. The lack of direct community-level interactions means that the organizers do not have a full picture of their immediate offline realities and factors that may enable or hinder their safe and meaningful engagement online.
- This will ensure that event organizers have a better contextual understanding of the risks and needs of the children and adolescents and can devise more informed ways to support their safe and meaningful participation.

ACCESSIBILITY

- Online events enable people from across the world to join. However, online platforms are not yet inclusive by design.
- Some good practices mentioned in the protocol linked below include visually describing images and videos, incorporating subtitles in recordings, using plain language, using URL shorteners when sharing links, ensuring the appropriate use of hashtags, emojis, and related add-ons for social media, and ensuring that the registration process and information available are accessible to feminists with disabilities, including by ensuring color contrast and not using CAPTCHA systems based on images.
  - o **Useful resource:** Feminist Accessibility Protocol by Women Enabled International [Must Read]

SAFEGUARDING CULTURE

DIGITAL SAFEGUARDING POLICY

- **Accessibility:** The digital safeguarding policy must be designed in formats accessible to target participants and shared with all participants at least one week in advance of the event. Assign a trained safeguarding focal point to ensure participants can raise queries as needed.
- **Co-designing the policy:** Ideally, the digital safeguarding policy must be co-created with the target participants to ensure that their needs and experiences are reflected in the policy. Where the policies have already been created, timely reviews must be carried out with the participants to see whether the policies are working as intended and changes must be made in response to the feedback received.

- **Duty of care:** Clearly mention who holds the safeguarding responsibility and to what extent to avoid confusion.
- **Reporting mechanism**: Clearly mention the main point of contact and enable participant to use different formats of raising concerns.
  - **Useful resource:** [Child Friendly Complaint Mechanism by UNICEF](#)

POWER SHARING

- **No participation without shared power:** A safe online space would enable meaningful participation of target participants and meaningful participation cannot happen without shared decision-making power. Any online event where the lives and futures of young people are being discussed must be co-created with them, including the safeguarding measures for those events.
- **From compliance to well-being:** There is a need to bring in rights and well-being perspectives in safeguarding policies and processes, which requires addressing the imbalanced power relations. Unless these power imbalances are addressed, inclusion of young people will remain tokenistic and is a risk to their overall safety and well-being.
  - **Useful resource:** [Quality and Standards Framework – HCD on ASRH by YLabs](#)

RESOURCE SHARING

- Several young people experience added barriers in accessing online opportunities. It is therefore important to **provide monetary and non-monetary support** to enable their participation. Monetary support can help ensure accessibility while non-monetary support such as training or speaker preparation can ensure meaningful engagement.
  - **Useful resource:** [Maximising Benefits: A Recommended Framework for Volunteerism and Compensation for Young People](#)

SAFEGUARDING CAPACITY

- **Staff capacity:** All staff members engaging in online spaces must be trained in digital safety with a special focus on specific threats for young people from diverse backgrounds. Such trainings to enable knowledge of organizational digital safeguarding policies; help staff understand their role in digital safeguarding; enable staff to identify all forms of online abuse, be an online active bystander, and be aware of their own power, privilege, and biases, as well as how they reinforce or challenge the existing inequalities and practices that can be harmful to young people are crucial.
  - **Useful resource:** [Safeguarding Matters: E-learning module by Safeguarding Support Hub](#)

- **Young people's capacity:** Support your young participants in strengthening their capacities to navigate digital spaces in a more informed and safe manner. Ensure easy access to your organizational policies and signpost to further resources. Organize pre-event calls to help them prepare for the main event.
  - **Useful resource:** [Digital self defense tips by Glitch and AGIP](#)

Interested to learn more?
Click **here** for a checklist format with more resources for the content above.

Connect with us!

Visit our website, Twitter channel, and YouTube to stay connected, and sign up to AGIP's quarterly newsletter for regular updates.

Keen to explore safeguarding for meaningful engagement with young people?
Reach out to AGIP's Youth Engagement Officer via agip.agip@plan-international.org

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[1] The Adolescent Girls Investment Plan (AGIP) is a global, intergenerational coalition working to affect change for adolescent girls by closing the large persistent gap between resources, evidence & commitments for adolescent girls and the lived reality of adolescent girls. AGIP is providing technical advice on safeguarding for the WD2023 Conference. (https://adolescent-girls-plan.org/)