



# INTERNAL RISK MANAGEMENT GROUP: IMPROVING NGO RISK MANAGEMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY AND SAFEGUARDING PRACTICES IN UGANDA

Phase 1: Jan 2019 – March 2020  
 Phase 2: July 2020 – December 2021  
 Transition Period: January 2022 – August 2022

DFID funded  
 Sida funded  
 Membership Contributions

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In mid-2018, a group of INGO Country Directors in Uganda came to the shared realization that the only way to mitigate fraud, corruption and safeguarding cases is through sector wide collaboration, cooperation and exchange of information. However, due to the sensitivity of these cases and the reputational risk involved, there was little joint learning, reflection and sharing of experiences among the NGO community.

A founding group of country directors decided to form the “Internal Risk Management Group (IRMG)”, a safe space for NGO leaders to share, learn and improve their management and mitigation of risk. As of March, 2022 the IRMG consists of 70 NGO members, celebrating the diversity of Ugandan and International NGOs operating in the country.

Under phase 1, the Department for International Development of the UK government (DFID), generously funded the IRMG to conduct a benchmark and baseline study of NGO Risk Management and Accountability Practices in the country, as well as to tailor and run training for

IRMG member agencies to improve their understanding and ability to respond to internal risk in Uganda.

Under phase 2, Sida allocated funds to continue support to NGOs operating in Uganda to address internal risk management issues such as fraud and corruption, as well as funds to improve how NGOs prevent, mitigate and manage safeguarding issues.

## PROGRAM APPROACH

The program has three expected outcomes:

- **Improve organizational culture concerning dealing with fraud and corruption**, through implementing the recommendations from year one assessment of best practices and gaps on fraud and corruption prevention, detection and management.
- **Improve the safeguarding practices and reduce the risks of Sexual Harassment Exploitation and Abuse (SHEA) and child abuse in NGO programs.**
- **Leverage lessons learned and knowledge of the IRMG to benefit the wider civil society sector in Uganda** to improve on managing wrongful conduct, including safeguarding practices and the prevention of fraud and corruption.

Josephine Kaleebi  
 Executive Director – Reach Out, Mbuya  
 (Steering Committee Chairperson)  
[jkaleebi@reachoutmbuya.org](mailto:jkaleebi@reachoutmbuya.org)

Wycliffe Nshoka  
 Country Director – FinnChurchAid  
 (Steering Committee Co-Chairperson)  
[Wycliffe.Nshoka@kirkonulkomaanapu.fi](mailto:Wycliffe.Nshoka@kirkonulkomaanapu.fi)

Henry Owora  
 Project Manager – Plan International  
 (IRMG Project Coordinator)  
[henry.owora@plan-international.org](mailto:henry.owora@plan-international.org)



Photo: End of Project Workshop Group Photo at Hotel Africana 8th December 2021 (in the Middle is the GoH – Swedish Ambassador)

## PHASE 2 ACHIEVEMENTS

### Program Achievements

- **Expansion of IRMG Membership** – 11 Local NGOs were successfully on-boarded while additional 3 International NGOs were brought on board that saw growth of membership from 56 to 69 member organizations.
- **Engaging External Partners** – Included engagements with both the NGO Forum and NGO Bureau as well as the Humanitarian Platform, The AAP Task Force/ULearn and The Safeguarding Resource Hub. Some which included dialogues to bridge the gap between Donors, UN agencies, INGOs and local/national humanitarian actors for better partnerships with emphasis on building trust in areas surrounding risk management.
- **Development of the Community of Practice (CoP) Strategy** – Completed the CoP strategy. Activities were enrolled in November 2021 after establishing the working groups.
- **Development of the Online Campaign Hub/System** – Developed to support continued uptake of best practices and access to standardized tools for implementing effective systems as well as providing collaborative, dynamic and visual

expression on the activities of the IRMG including creating a space for online discussions, feedback, statistics and generally advocacy, the online system was developed (<https://irmghub.org>).

- **Plenary Meetings with the Leader of the Member Organizations** – To further engage other NGO directors, two plenary meetings were held in August and December 2021.
- **End of Project Workshop** – The workshop was held on 8th December 2021 at Hotel Africana with an aim of Sharing the IRMG Journey and Success Stories; holding plenary discussions on NGO Programming (Risk Management & SEAH); launching the IRMG Online Hub and Launching IRMG Reports (Assessment, Safeguarding & Risk Management Reports).

### Component 1 Achievements in Risk Management

- **Publication of the Baseline (Phase 1) Study on Internal Risk Management and Accountability Practices in Uganda for the IRMG** (July 2020).
- **Publication of the Internal Risk Management Manual** –The manual provides a comprehensive guide on how member organizations will be in position to internally design and implement a risk management system (December 2020).
- **Level 1 - Development of the capacity of the member organizations on Risk Management** based on the evaluations and feedback from phase 1 training with 238 participants (149 in Kampala, 50 in Arua and 39 in Moroto) participating from 63 NGOs (April/June 2021).
- **Review (Phase 2) of the Study on Risk Management and Accountability Practices amongst Ugandan NGOs (October 2021)**.
- **Level 2 - Follow-Up Training on Risk Management** designed as a hands-on experience in the application of various risk management tools. The training attracted up to 60 trainees that is 28 in Kampala, 23 in Arua and 9 in Moroto. (November – December 2021).

Josephine Kaleebi

Executive Director – Reach Out, Mbuya  
(Steering Committee Chairperson)  
[jkaleebi@reachoutmbuya.org](mailto:jkaleebi@reachoutmbuya.org)

Wycliffe Nshoka

Country Director – FinnChurchAid  
(Steering Committee Co-Chairperson)  
[Wycliffe.Nshoka@kirikonulkomaanapu.fi](mailto:Wycliffe.Nshoka@kirikonulkomaanapu.fi)

Henry Owora

Project Manager – Plan International  
(IRMG Project Coordinator)  
[henry.owora@plan-international.org](mailto:henry.owora@plan-international.org)



Photo: Participants display certificates of completion after one of the completed capacity building sessions.

### **Component 2 Achievements in Safeguarding**

- **Publication of a Review of NGO INGO Safeguarding Practices and Systems in Uganda for the IRMG** (Feb 2020).
- **IRMG Methodology SHEA Assessment as a benchmark** review of the existing safeguarding (focused on SHEA and prevention of child abuse/exploitation) and review of the UN Inter-Agency Prevention of Sexual Exploitation (SEA) Action Plan and UNHCR's Refugee Feedback, Referral and Resolution Mechanism (FRRM) (May 2020).
- **Reviewing Reporting Mechanisms to support strengthening capacity of Member Organizations** – to support process improvement such as a) Safeguarding policy and code of conduct; b) Working through partners, contractors, and other third parties; c) Leadership and governance; d) Reporting process; e) Capacity strengthening; f) Safe recruitment; g) Assistance and referral and h) Investigations. See additional details here (August 2021).
- **Level 1 (Basics in Safeguarding) – Capacity Strengthening for NGO Staff on the Safeguarding Principles.** A total of 199 Participants (138 in Kampala, 43 in Arua and 18 in Moroto) from 38 IRMG member organizations and 16 non-members

organizations were trained in a series of 12, 3-day workshops (August 2021).

- **Leadership Safeguarding Training for NGO Leaders and Partners** – The core of this training was to “demystify the concept of safeguarding at a leadership level, understand their roles and responsibilities as directors regarding safeguarding and share feedback from staff members on key areas that need leadership direction from the Senior Management Team aimed at strengthening the culture, values and practices surrounding safeguarding”. At least 23 directors attended the training (September 2021).
- **Development of Guidelines, Policy Templates and Tools for Adoption of Safeguarding Mechanisms** – Included Guideline on Setting Up Safeguarding Systems for IRMG; Guideline on Safeguarding Advocacy Messages and Plans; Safeguarding Policy Template for IRMG Members and Tool for Assessing Adoption of Safeguarding Measures (September 2021).
- **Safeguarding Case Management/Co-Investigations Training** – Overall, the Safeguarding Case Management/Co-Investigations had a total of 95 participants (48 male and 47 female). The aim of the training was threefold that is i) To improve case management and management of co-investigation in IRMG member organisations; ii) Increase managers' knowledge and application of underlying principles and ethical issues in case management/co-investigations and best practices; and iii) To improve managers' ability to consistently use the case management tools (October 2021).
- **Assessment and Reporting on the Benchmark Review and Technical Guide for Safeguarding Practices for Phase 3** (October 2021).
- **Follow-Up Training on Adoption of Standards and Action Planning for Safeguarding Case Management/Co-Investigations Training** – This was three

five-day regional trainings that saw a total of for 58 (37 Female, 21 Males) IRMG members and partners participating in the training (November 2021).

- **Contextualizing the Global Inter Agency Safeguarding and SEAH Prevention and Response Guidelines for the IRMG Member Organizations** – The guidelines are governed by eight minimum operating standards (December 2021).

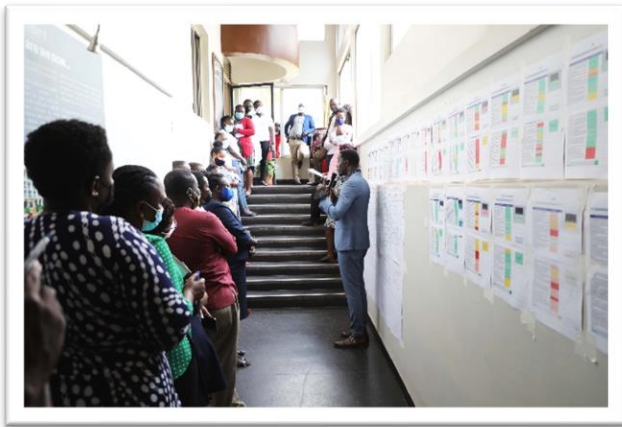


Photo: An analysis of the Risk Management Matrix Results for the IRMG Member Organizations at Fairway Hotel on 3rd November 2021

## ABOUT THE IRMG

The IRMG Steering Committee is made up of nine NGO members who are elected on a yearly basis.

The IRMG is currently chaired by the Executive Director of Reach Out Mbuya and Co-Chaired by the Country Director of FinnChurchAid (FCA). Plan International Uganda is currently the Grant Holder for the initiative for both the transition period and phase 3. The previous management of the grant was by Mercy Corps that managed both the DFID and Sida grants related to this project for Phase 1 & 2.

Other Steering Committee members include international Rescue Committee (IRC), DanChurchAid (DCA), Care International, Mercy Corps Uganda, ACTED and Child's I Foundation 78y98uuiiuo8

(CiF). The IRMG committee is made up of Country Directors and Executive Directors of these NGOs, who meet monthly to set the strategic direction for the initiative.

## On-boarding Members to the IRMG

The IRMG membership is open to all. As of March 2022, there were 69 members. Entry as a member is on a Voluntary Basis meeting the following minimum standards: -

- ✓ The organization (INGO/LNGO) registered as a legal entity operating in Uganda.
- ✓ The organization fully registered with the NGO Bureau.
- ✓ The organization has been in existence in Uganda for at least 5 years or more.
- ✓ The organization have minimum governance standards (Country Director/Executive Director supervised or advised by a Board of Directors).
- ✓ The organization should have Audited Books of Accounts for at least the last 2 years.
- ✓ The organization has no political affiliations.

## CONTACT

Josephine Kaleebi

Executive Director – Reach Out, Mbuya  
(Steering Committee Chairperson)  
[jkaleebi@reachoutmbuya.org](mailto:jkaleebi@reachoutmbuya.org)

Wycliffe Nsheka

Country Director – FinnChurchAid  
(Steering Committee Co-Chairperson)  
[Wycliffe.Nsheka@kirkonulkomaanapu.fi](mailto:Wycliffe.Nsheka@kirkonulkomaanapu.fi)

Henry Owora

Project Manager – Plan International  
(IRMG Project Coordinator)  
[henry.owora@plan-international.org](mailto:henry.owora@plan-international.org)

For more information about the IRMG, please visit the online resource hub ([www.irmghub.org](http://www.irmghub.org)) or call the Project Team on 0772 426 585 or 0702 426 585 or 0778 306 771.

Josephine Kaleebi  
Executive Director – Reach Out, Mbuya  
(Steering Committee Chairperson)  
[jkaleebi@reachoutmbuya.org](mailto:jkaleebi@reachoutmbuya.org)

Wycliffe Nsheka  
Country Director – FinnChurchAid  
(Steering Committee Co-Chairperson)  
[Wycliffe.Nsheka@kirkonulkomaanapu.fi](mailto:Wycliffe.Nsheka@kirkonulkomaanapu.fi)

Henry Owora  
Project Manager – Plan International  
(IRMG Project Coordinator)  
[henry.owora@plan-international.org](mailto:henry.owora@plan-international.org)