



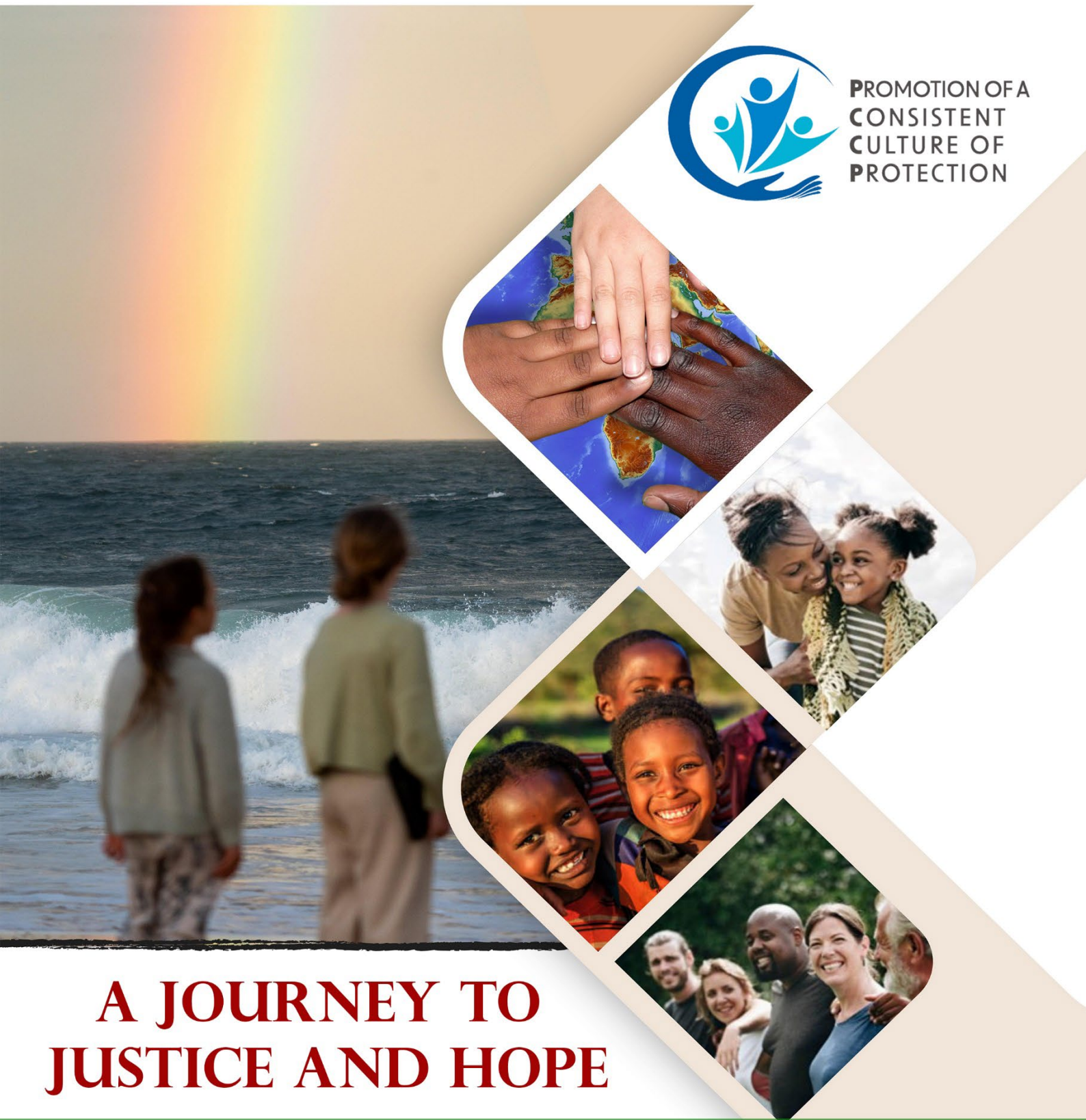
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# Promotio Iustitiae

Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES), General Curia of the Society of Jesus, Rome, Italy



PROMOTION OF A  
CONSISTENT  
CULTURE OF  
PROTECTION



## A JOURNEY TO JUSTICE AND HOPE

**Cover Design:** Rakesh Mondol SJ (CCU)

# **A Journey to Justice and Hope**



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## Editorial

**Xavier Jeyaraj SJ, John Guiney SJ & Sandra Racionero-Plaza PhD**

The social problem of abuse reaches all sectors and institutions in society. It is one of the most pressing and concerning adverse developmental experiences for children and adults all over the world. The literature in the field has shown now, with a vast amount of data, the very negative mental and physical health consequences of child sexual abuse and sexual abuse in adulthood. Research has also pointed out the tremendous difficulties in breaking the silence regarding abuse in all social institutions and the negative impact suffered by those who dare to speak and support victims/survivors.

Much work still needs to be done to walk with victims on the road to justice and healing. Many steps have been taken in the Church both to break that silence and put measures in place to accompany the victims. The publication in 2019 of '*Vos estis lux mundi*' was a key moment for that to happen. In his Motu Proprio, Pope Francis noted that the eradication of such problem in the Church necessarily implies action: "In order that these phenomena, in all their forms, never happen again, a continuous and profound conversion of hearts is needed, attested by concrete and effective actions that involve everyone in the Church, so that personal sanctity and

moral commitment can contribute to promoting the full credibility of the Gospel message and the effectiveness of the Church's mission". Consequently, '*Vos estis lux mundi*' requested all dioceses and religious orders to establish offices to attend to victims, to have protocols to deal with complaints and allegations, and implement reparation and compensation policies. This work is central to responding to those who have already been victims and must be done by placing them at the centre of the Church's response to the abuse crisis. The focus on listening to victims has been requested as well by the participants in the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, as expressed in their Letter to the People of God: "Above all, the Church of our time has the duty to listen, in a spirit of conversion, to those who have been victims of abuse committed by members of the ecclesial body, and to commit herself concretely and structurally to ensuring that this does not happen again".

The commitment of the Church and of society at large to overcome this social problem must also include working for a different future for communities, institutions, schools, colleges, universities, parishes, job settings, etc., to make them

free from sexual abuse and other types of abuses. The Society of Jesus, since its General Congregation 36, broke the silence about the sexual abuse of minors and vulnerable adults, acknowledging that was also the case in the Order, and started putting in place specific measures to translate that commitment into practice. In 2018, Fr. Arturo Sosa SJ, the Superior General, approved the Promotion of a Consistent Culture of Protection Project (PCCP), the global strategy of the Society of Jesus to help eliminate abuse inside and outside the Church. Since then, Provinces, Regions, and Networks of the Society of Jesus have developed policies, protocols, and training to support the victims and implement actions to avoid such abuse from happening again.

PCCP is about transformation. Safeguarding children and adults is about transforming human relationships, from violence to dialogue, from abuse to equity, so that social interactions become the best shield to prevent abuses. Scientific evidence strongly supports this: United communities are the best preventive factor. With PCCP, safeguarding delegates, Provincials, principals, headteachers and parents in schools, university professors, children, victims, assistants and apostolic secretaries in the General Curia, and many others from diverse parts of the world have engaged in inspirational work that has achieved significant transformations in the life of many. They have contributed to the advancement of safer Jesuit works and institutions across the world, from the slums in Nairobi to schools in Chiang Mai. This special issue of *Promotio Iustitiae* is dedicated to sharing the good news about the safeguarding work carried out in the Society of Jesus in the last years. It communicates the Light that comes from

the passionate and committed work carried out by so many lay and Jesuits worldwide. It includes contributions from women and men, from lay and Jesuits, from all six Conferences of the Society of Jesus, different types of works and ministries, and diverse cultures, communities, and contexts.

The first article, by John Guiney SJ and Dr Sandra Racionero-Plaza, the coordinator and the assistant project coordinator, respectively, share the story of PCCP's unique achievements for the Society of Jesus and society. The new global formation and training phase for all Jesuit works by integrating scientific evidence is also noted. Next, we move to the work with victims/survivors and the mechanisms and actions being carried out to repair the harm done, as much as possible, and to do justice. In this sense, the article by Solar & Yéneves, from the Centre for Prevention and Reparation of abuses (CPR) of the Chilean Province shares their work on welcoming the victims of Jesuit abuse and seeking, together with them, paths of encounter, justice and reparation, in addition to working on the prevention of abuse. Restorative Justice is one tool to respond to cases of child abuse that is being implemented in some Jesuit Provinces with positive results. S. Fox explains the Restorative Justice (RJ) Processes in the Irish Province in dealing with historical cases of abuse. The author points out the outcomes of this RJ process in restoring bonds of relationship and community and the main lessons learned and challenges ahead.

To advance a consistent protection culture is critical to training one's personnel. For the case of the Society of Jesus, this means quality training for Jesuits and the lay



partners in Jesuit works. The article by Fr. Mark Ravizza, General Counsellor for Formation in the General Curia, presents the approach and the actions of the Society of Jesus regarding the provision of quality safeguarding formation for Jesuits. His article also introduces the current agenda on developing a quality formation curriculum at all stages of Jesuit formation as part of the new global project on training/formation. Human capital is central to the mission of eliminating abuse, and quality training of such means is the best investment.

From formation, we move to transformative stories from around the world, mainly in the education sector. Schools are the primary contexts of child, adolescent, and youth development, and therefore, implementing effective prevention actions and programmes in education is crucial to creating a better future. Claramunt, from Escuelas San José in Valencia (Spain), explains in his article the impressive impacts of the Zero Violence Brave Club, a successful action in safeguarding, grounded in the scientific evidence of social impact, implemented in his school. Claramunt reports how Zero Violence Brave Club brought many benefits to the school community, including reduced conflicts and new upstanding behaviour in children that transferred to other contexts, such as the streets and the households. Safeguarding can provide much change to children in the most vulnerable conditions, such as those at risk of becoming street children and victims of diverse adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Masenge and Osabwa explain the Upendo and Uzima Safeguarding Projects in Kangemi, a slum in Nairobi (Kenya), that serve orphaned, abandoned, sexually exploited,

marginalized, and vulnerable children from the slums, some of them affected by HIV/AIDS. Upendo and Uzima have achieved peaceful, nurturing and safe environments for the most vulnerable children in Kangemi and their families. From Nairobi, we travel to Saskatchewan, Canada. Kleisinger and Cote focus on protecting indigenous cultures, narrating the case of their work on safeguarding rooted in kinship and culture at the Mother Teresa Middle School. All three articles in education make clear that effective safeguarding effort requires constant dialogue with the community; a top-down approach brought by parachuting experts does not work. Universities also have a crucial role in eliminating abuse. Scientific research has proven the real presence of sexual harassment and other forms of abuse in higher education worldwide. The article by Lao, Ofreneo, Pavia and Sison-Arroyo, from the Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines, presents their rigorous work to make their university a safe space for students, the faculty, and everyone in the community. A central message in their journey is to support and cultivate care and social justice networks among community members to break the silence, accompany victims, and develop a sense that overcoming harassment is a community responsibility.

Finally, the Society of Jesus is a global organization with six Jesuit Conferences and various apostolic networks serving vulnerable populations worldwide. All Conferences now have a safeguarding delegate or a team to promote and support protection work in all Provinces and Regions in the Conference. The article by Fr. Ravi Sagar shares the origins and main activities of the Team for Safeguarding

(SATS) in the Jesuit Conference of South Asia (JCSA). The last three articles of this special issue share the ground-breaking safeguarding efforts of three crucial Jesuit Networks that reach the lives of millions of individuals: the Xavier Network, the Jesuit Refugee Service, and Fe y Alegría. The article by Kerrigan presents the history of protection, commitment and work of the Xavier Network, a network of Jesuit Mission offices and Jesuit NGOs in Europe, USA and Australia. They fund and partner development programmes, emergencies, volunteer programmes and advocacy in the global south. Partners of the Xavier Network are present in over 87 countries, carrying out diverse development projects. The Xavier Network has been a pioneer in developing protocols and policies for safeguarding minors and vulnerable adults with their partners in diverse cultures and contexts. The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), founded by Fr. Pedro Arrupe SJ, grew from helping Vietnamese boat people in a few camps in Southeast Asia to working with refugees around the world. Their work in the humanitarian area is profoundly remarkable, serving the needs of the most vulnerable in the most complex situations. In JRS work, the person is at the centre, and safeguarding is at the core. Cranmer, the safeguarding delegate of JRS, explains the exemplary protection measures JRS personnel undertake to safeguard minors

and vulnerable adults in their work. Popular education has a name in the Society of Jesus, that is, Fe y Alegría. Fe y Alegría is today present in more than 22 countries in Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia, with more than 935.844 participants and including schools in coordination with more than 100 religious congregations. Villanueva SJ, the general coordinator of the Fe y Alegría International Federation, shares Fe y Alegría's story of developing structures and creating committees to deal with abuse cases and work on prevention, as well as presenting successful safeguarding actions and other protection initiatives implemented in Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, El Salvador, Venezuela, Panamá, etc. Fe y Alegría's close work with the communities and cultures in every country is an essential element in their protection model.

The articles in this special issue show that working as a global community, we are making substantial progress in contributing to a world free from abuse that we all dream about. Each individual /article in this special issue is a story of lives restored, saved, protected, and transformed. Let us continue to encourage one another in this Gospel and global mission.

*Original in English*



## **PCCP Project: Breaking the Silence and Working for a World Free from Abuse**

**John Guiney SJ & Sandra Racionero-Plaza PhD**

*Coordinators, Promotion of a Consistent Culture of Protection (PCCP) Project*

### **Breaking the Silence regarding a Worldwide Social Problem: General Congregation 36**

The inspiration for the Promotion of a Consistent Culture of Protection (PCCP) Project, the global strategy of the Society of Jesus to help eliminate abuse inside and outside the Church, originated in the 36<sup>th</sup> General Congregation (GC) of the Society of Jesus, which took place in 2016. It was a significant moment in the birth of PCCP. General Congregations are important events in the life of the Society of Jesus. They are called to elect a new General, and it is also a privileged occasion for dialogue amongst the elected members to discuss the state of the life and works of the Society. The issue of safeguarding became a topic of animated and robust conversation during GC 36. Delegates from the global North spoke frankly of their experiences in dealing with abuse cases, and it served as an education for all to the fact that the abuse of children and vulnerable adults has no national, cultural, religious, caste or ethnic boundaries (Oates et al., 2000). It is a worldwide social problem (Plante, 2020) that reaches into all sectors of humanity (Barth et al., 2013; Finkelhor, 1986; John Jay College of Criminal Justice & Catholic Church, 2004;

Jud et al., 2016); it is present in the Church, political parties, schools, sports clubs, extracurricular activities, nightlife settings, families, etc. In GC 36, the Society of Jesus acknowledged the problem in our institutions and works and committed to breaking the silence about it, placing victims at the centre, and putting in place measures of various kinds to address this social problem in our own Order and society at large. Every social institution must start addressing this problem from within; one should not speak about the need to solve abuse and do not look inside, speak and act. After much discussion amongst the members in GC 36, the matter was referred to Fr. General for further consideration. One can say that the genesis of a new culture of safeguarding began in the Society of Jesus during GC36 in 2016.

### **Launch of the PCCP Project and Publication of the Universal Apostolic Preferences**

In October 2018, a response to the matter of safeguarding referred to Fr. General in GC 36 was acted on. Fr. General launched a project called the *Promotion of a Consistent Culture of Protection* (PCCP), the universal strategy of the Society of Jesus to contribute to eliminating abuse. This strategy has

translated since 2019 into specific policies, protocols, and training in all Provinces and Regions of the Society of Jesus, in all six Conferences of the Society, as well as in all its global networks, such as the Xavier Network, Fe y Alegría, and the Jesuit Refugee Service.



*PCCP logo*

PCCP could have been placed under different Secretariats- Service of Faith, Secondary and presecondary education, and Higher education, but it was located under the auspices of the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat (SJES) in the General Curia. In doing this, the Society of Jesus noted that doing justice is doing safeguarding, and doing safeguarding is doing justice (Guiney & Racionero-Plaza, 2023). Working to overcome abuse is unequivocally part and parcel of the mission of justice and reconciliation of the Society of Jesus as evidenced through the Universal Apostolic Preference 2 (UAP2) *Walking with the Excluded* (Sosa, 2019):

We commit ourselves to help eliminate abuses inside and outside the Church, seeking to ensure that victims are heard and properly helped, that justice is done, and that harm is healed. This commitment includes the adoption of clear policies for the prevention of abuse, the ongoing formation of those who are committed to mission, and serious efforts to identify the social origins of abuse. In this way, we effectively promote a culture that

safeguards all vulnerable persons, especially minors.

It is important to note that the safeguarding objective stated in UAP 2 makes the point that to contribute to eliminating abuse, it is necessary to establish a new culture of protection, respect, and care. It is not about checking boxes to show that one has policies and protocols, which are essential to have, but it is about transforming human relationships to make them more harmonious for everyone. It is about developing a new culture, which involves each of us interacting in new ways. This approach has been supported by current scientific literature (Burn, 2009; Melgar et al., 2021; Moschella & Banyar, 2020; Pietromonaco & Collins, 2017; Plante, 2020; Roca et al., 2021) on how to effectively address and eliminate sexual abuse and other type of abusive relationships.

#### **PCCP First 4 Years Achievements: A baseline Survey, a Worldwide Safeguarding Structure in Place, and a Global Audit**

In 2019, PCCP launched a baseline survey shared with 80 + Provinces and Regions of the Society of Jesus. There was a 100% response to this survey, thus showing the commitment of the global Society of Jesus to engage in this crucial journey actively. The data received indicated that Provinces and Regions across the world were at different stages concerning safeguarding. Some were *concerned* about the issue, others were *compliant* with basic standards, and others were fully *committed* to putting victims first and were already working on prevention programmes. As a follow-up to the 2019 survey, a worldwide safeguarding structure was promoted and established in the Society of Jesus, with one safeguarding

delegate (or team) in every Province and Region and one safeguarding delegate at the level of the six Jesuit Conferences: the Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar (JCAM), the Jesuit Conference of European Provincials (JCEP), the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP), the Jesuit Conference of South Asia (JCSA), the Jesuit Conference of Canada and United States (JCCU), and the Jesuit Conference of Provincials of Latin America and the Caribbean (CPAL). Individuals and teams in these safeguarding roles are, from the inception of PCCP, in charge of coordinating, supporting, and promoting safeguarding (the implementation of the three standards referred to below) in their Province or Region or at the level of the Conference. At every Province/Region, implementing the PCCP standards and guidelines has meant the creation of the Province/Region safeguarding strategy, often having its own name (i.e., safe environment, safeguarding programme, etc).

The PCCP coordinator and the assistant project coordinator have been meeting regularly, both online and in presence, with these Conference safeguarding delegates aiming to serve the Conference needs and collaborate to move the safeguarding workplan forward. They have also been present in all Jesuit Conferences to collaborate with Provincials, safeguarding delegates, and other actors to advance together in this mission. Everyone is key in making the dream come true.

In 2021, Fr. General wrote a letter to all Major Superiors insisting that every Province and Region of the Society of Jesus needed three basic standards to be implemented: policies, protocols, and

training/formation. What was required in every Province and Region and the Jesuit Networks were robust safeguarding policies, regular and ongoing formation and training for all Jesuits and lay partners in mission and protocols for dealing with complaints and accompanying victims. This was a critical step forward for Provinces and Regions to speed up actions in making all places of work and life safe environments.

The 2021 letter from Fr. General was later followed up by the 2022 Global Audit of how the three standards (policies, protocols, and formation/training) were being implemented in every Province and Region of the Society of Jesus. This was also a significant step forward. Again, the 100% response to the Audit indicated the willingness to engage in the Jesuit safeguarding mission. Very positive results have been consoling, evidencing the complete establishment of a safeguarding structure in every Province and Region of the Society. One major result and expressed demand of this survey was that all Provinces and works needed further quality training.

### **The Future is Already Here: A PCCP Global Training/Formation for All Jesuit Works**

In response to the paramount need expressed in the 2022 Global Audit, PCCP started designing a new training/formation project for all Jesuit works worldwide. The design of this breakthrough project has been done and influenced by (a) the main orientations in the international scientific community, which points out that co-creation (dialogue) is central to raising effectiveness, as well as (b) Ignatian

discernment, because “discernment, collaboration and networking offer three important perspectives on our contemporary way of proceeding” (GC 36 D2, §3).

The design process of this new project involved ongoing dialogue with the Conference safeguarding delegates, the members of the PCCP Advisory Committee, the four apostolic secretaries in the General Curia (Social Justice and Ecology, Secondary and Post-secondary Education, Higher Education, and Service of Faith), the safeguarding delegates of Jesuit Networks (such as JRS and the Xavier Network), Provincials, etc. The final version included feedback from these and others and was submitted to and quickly approved by Fr. General in July 2023. Fr. General Arturo Sosa SJ has already announced the new global training/formation project when discussing the priority of PCCP for the universal Society of Jesus in *De Statu Societatis 2023*: “We can now begin a new phase of the process for the universal body through a global program of formation and training for safeguarding minors and vulnerable persons” (Sosa, 2023, p.4).

The PCCP project of global formation and training for all Jesuits and lay partners in mission in all works of the Society is pioneering. It is based on a sound theology of safeguarding. Ignatian spirituality matched with the fruit of interdisciplinary scientific research in the area of abuse prevention and response (Racionero-Plaza and Guiney, under review), including successful actions in safeguarding that have proven to mitigate abuse and violence in very diverse contexts and cultures (Flecha, Puigvert & Racionero-Plaza, 2023). Scientific evidence in safeguarding at the

service of making real UAP 2 also means making real the spirit of *Magis*: moving further in our protection efforts and being at the frontiers of this mission, giving the best to every child and every adult. By providing the best evidence-based knowledge and tools available in different disciplines (Canon law, psychology, sociology, education, theology, communication, etc) to safeguarding delegates, to Jesuits in formation, to Jesuits in all ministries, to all the lay in Jesuit schools and universities, to spiritual directors, to everyone in the Ignatian family, we are simply meeting the right of every human being to benefit from scientific advancements to solve the most pressing social problems that affect their life and that of others (United Nations, 1948, article 27<sup>th</sup> of the UDHR). Child sexual abuse, sexual abuse of adults, and other types of abuse in our works, in the Church, and society at large is one of those problems.

We have started this new phase for more significant *social impact* (Flecha et al., 2018; Pulido et al., 2018). UAP 2 is solid and clear in its motivation: “We commit ourselves to help *eliminate* abuses inside and outside the Church”. Therefore, *our responsibility is not doing safeguarding -not giving safeguarding formation/training- but doing safeguarding and giving training and formation that proves to contribute to eliminating abuses inside and outside the Church*. This is, *doing safeguarding with social impact* (Racionero-Plaza, 2023). Impressive work has already been done in Provinces, Regions, and Networks of the Society of Jesus worldwide. This new PCCP training/formation programme complements excellent efforts by adding unique key contents to training and formation, backed by evidence of social

impact from all disciplines, enabling making a difference.

PCCP's commitment to impact the safeguarding of minors and adults translates, among others, into training and formation that provides knowledge that proves to eliminate abuse, as well as in promoting actions and programmes that generate such positive change (Flecha, Puigvert & Racionero-Plaza, 2023). In this crucial mission, we acknowledge that the safeguarding and social impact measurement industries are out there and stronger daily. We distance ourselves from this industry. PCCP will only draw on the knowledge about social impact analysis

that the scientists of social impact measurement have developed.

The PCCP journey has made significant progress and brought numerous consolations to many since its beginning. Many Jesuits and lay partners worldwide now embrace the importance of safeguarding well and are eager to engage in this mission. We have even seen that the actions undertaken by Jesuits and lay partners in many diverse locations have liberated many children and adults to speak and be supported and empowered. These actions have also promoted discussion and action in other sectors of society. Let's continue to open this window of change and transformation. Together, we can make a difference and live the *Magis*.

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## **The Holistic Reparation Process for Victims/Survivors: A Working Model Employed by the Centre for Abuse, Prevention and Reparation of the Chilean Province**

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Pope Francis' visit to Chile (January 2018) gave rise to dozens of allegations of sexual abuse of minors committed by Chilean diocesan and religious clergy. The Chilean Province was not unaware of the growing knowledge that Jesuits had committed serious – and even criminal – infringements against the physical, moral and spiritual integrity of many people. Abuse is a painful truth that we must recognise, address, and repair.

To this end, in April 2019, the Centre for Abuse Prevention and Reparation of the Society of Jesus in Chile (from now on, CPR) was created in response to the recommendations contained in the final report drafted by a Committee<sup>1</sup> convened by the then Provincial, Fr. Cristián del Campo SJ. This report outlined a series of recommendations aimed at building an institutional framework suitable to the current context, which could provide a timely response to cases of abuse and their victims.

The Centre's primary mission is to receive victims of Jesuit abuse and to seek, alongside them, pathways to justice and reparation. Furthermore, it works to prevent abuse in Jesuit communities and in the apostolic works of the Province to create a healthy and safe environment for children, adolescents and vulnerable adults.

In this article, we present the model developed by CPR for the care, reception and reparation of victims of abuse. The steps described here are the result of an ongoing learning process at the Centre. Personal contact with victims has necessitated an overhaul of some of our criteria and policies to develop a standard of care and compassionate, fair and appropriate response when receiving and responding to allegations, victims and survivors in institutions related to the mission of the CPR. To this end, we draw on and incorporate elements of psychology, criminal law, canon law and Christian pastoral/spirituality.

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<sup>1</sup> Chilean Province of the Society of Jesus.  
"Comisión de Estudio sobre abuso sexual,

prevención y reparación".  
<https://jesuitas.cl/cpr/>

These policies and guidelines are organised into three main focal points:

- a) The steps and measures are taken when receiving allegations, victims and survivors, and a process begins with first contact, either in person or virtually.
- b) Accompanying, containing<sup>2</sup> and keeping the person making the allegation constantly informed on the ongoing canonical process and the measures and sanctions implemented between the person and the perpetrator.
- c) The proposals for therapeutic, spiritual, symbolic and economic reparation are discussed and agreed with victims and survivors.

## 1. The Initial Interview

Among the central roles assigned to us is the sensitive task of conducting an initial interview with people who have been victims of abuse by a Jesuit.

This is a moment where the person making the allegation will report a series of painful events, often ones they have blocked from their memory and have not spoken about before. Therefore, to avoid possible re-victimisation and permanent psychological after-effects (trauma), it is vital to be transparent about how this interview will be carried out and the considerations that will be taken into account during these meetings.

The initial interview aims to uncover the facts and context of the sexual abuse

perpetrated by members of the Society of Jesus, along with acknowledging the victim's experience, to pave the way for truth, reparation and prevention through learning.

### Interview Flow:

- The interview commences with a brief reception and orientation where the CPR professionals dealing with the case are introduced. The person making the allegation is informed of the need to make a record of the interview, taking note of their personal information and the facts to be reported. One copy of this record is given to them, and the CPR keeps another.
- Information is given on the processes that can be initiated by the allegation through the judicial and/or canonical route, depending on the circumstance.
- It ends with a closing statement, where the victim is asked if there is anything else they would like to add. They are asked about their expectations and are given a post-interview brochure, which thanks them for participating and provides information on the possible emotional reaction they may experience from sharing their story. This helps normalise feelings that may arise following the interview and offers suggestions for dealing with any unwanted emotional side effects.
- The person making the allegation can attend the interview with a trusted companion if they wish or if it makes them feel more comfortable.

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<sup>2</sup> Translator's note: "emotional containment" in psychotherapy refers to the process of accepting the emotions of another, holding

them and allowing the person to move through these emotions safely and comfortably.

- A week after the interview, if the person making the allegation has consented to be contacted subsequently, the CPR psychologist reaches out to them to monitor their emotional state and resolve any concerns or difficulties that may have arisen.
- At this follow-up call, whether the person making the allegation needs to be referred to expert psychological and/or psychiatric care is determined.

### **Ethical Considerations and Care Measures**

The interview is an interpersonal process between an individual who has been a victim of traumatic abuse and another who, in their professional capacity, is tasked with listening and keeping a record of the facts being detailed. It is a meeting between two people who navigate a painful conversation in which the interviewer becomes a witness who listens and validates the experience of the other, facilitating the breaking of the silence.

As much as possible, the interviewer should avoid an interrogation-type conversation and be respectful and empathetic while being transparent about the objectives and procedures. The professional follows and accompanies the rhythm of the interviewee, listens without being overbearing or pressuring, and avoids a judgmental mindset that silences and censors. This dialogue seeks to generate a connection with the individual, making them feel welcomed, validated, listened to and accompanied in their experience.

The interview is a facilitative and care-giving space for the individual's resilience processes. The focus is not only on the

traumatic and victimising events but also on the survival strategies, resources, values and positive intentions of the people in the interviewee's life.

Finally, to effectively achieve the interview's objectives and create a caring environment for the interviewees, it is also crucial to take care of the interviewers. In this sense, building an environment where the interview team can self-care, vent healthily and find emotional containment is essential.

### **Informed Consent**

Within the initial reception interview, the person making the allegation is invited to read and sign an informed consent form, which establishes, among other aspects, the limits around the storage of their information, how they wish to be communicated in the future, and their freedom to file an allegation with the civil justice system.

## **2. Accompanying the Process and Reporting on the Steps Taken**

The reparation work carried out by CPR professionals seeks to establish a relationship dynamic founded on recognising and validating the experiences and feelings of the individual who has gone through a traumatic event. CPR witnesses their story and tries to create an understanding and welcoming space for them. These ideas guide the actions of those who are part of the CPR from the first moment a person makes an allegation. The response that the Society of Jesus can offer to those who make abuse allegations is important, as it will determine, to a large extent, whether these wounds will be set on a pathway of healing. This is reinforced by an understanding that the abusive

experience is not the sole source of pain: secondary victimisation occurs when the victim is invalidated, both in terms of their story and the emotional states that they find themselves in following the abuse.

We make a commitment to the people who make abuse allegations, victims and survivors, to keep them well informed on any decisions taken at each stage of the process. This also goes for decisions that aren't necessarily within the remit of the Society of Jesus, such as, for example, when a case is prosecuted, or the courts decree the seizure of a canonical document. This is part and parcel of building trust and developing a bond with the people who seek our assistance.

### **3. Therapeutic, Spiritual, Symbolic and Economic Reparation**

Given that the reparation process is one where the relational and symbolic dimensions are of crucial importance. In the last number of years, a series of concrete actions have been taken to improve our processes around healing victims. These actions have been designed in conjunction with victims and constitute a specific response to many of the needs that have been identified:

- a) Facilitating psychological and/or psychiatric treatment as required by the individual. In addition, where necessary, financial support has been provided for the medication costs associated with these treatments.
- b) Offering victims processes of spiritual accompaniment can rehabilitate the transcendent and faith dimension as an element to heal relationships.
- c) Economic reparation: We know that no amount of money is equal to the

damage suffered by a victim of sexual abuse; however, when appropriate, it is crucial to make a concrete gesture that allows us to recognise the impact of these actions and, in that sense, materially compensate the economic damage experienced as a result of abuse.

For this reason, the Society of Jesus has considered economic compensation for victims that require it, considering national and international references and standards while making its best efforts in financial terms. To date, dozens of victims have been financially compensated by the province.

#### **d) Other Symbolic Actions**

- i. To acknowledge the acts of abuse and institutional responsibility, both at the private and public levels, through communications, interviews in the media and press conferences.
- ii. Fr. Cristián del Campo SJ, the then Provincial, publicly apologised in July 2019.
- iii. Apologies were made in person by a representative of the Society of Jesus to the victims.
- iv. A letter from the Provincial was sent to each victim, acknowledging the abuse and apologising for these events.
- v. Return of a prize from the State of Chile awarded to a Jesuit who committed abuse – now deceased – communicated on the Society of Jesus' website.
- vi. Transparency in the communication of new allegations, ensuing investigation processes, and outcomes.

- vii. Collaborative work with victims in designing new prevention and intervention policies to be carried out by the Society of Jesus.
- viii. Development of a stand-alone CPR page within [www.jesuitas.cl](http://www.jesuitas.cl), where one can find various documents to serve as the basis for our work and an anonymous allegations button.
- ix. Press releases and public statements announcing the primary outcomes of canonical investigations carried out against living and deceased Jesuits.

### **Economic Compensation**

We will dedicate additional space to discuss economic compensation, as it is a type of reparation that has been contested and, in some cases, controversial.

As we, in the Society of Jesus, have a holistic view of reparation, we consider that financial compensation cannot be ignored in our victim reparation process.

Compensation is proposed in all cases where a Jesuit has been found to have committed abuse. And it is delivered in cases where the victim accepts this form of reparation. We have set several conditions for this compensation as it is a sensitive issue.

Some optional items for consideration:

1. The Society of Jesus, through the CPR, has prepared a table that considers the facts and particular circumstances of each case. Close attention is paid to certain essential criteria, such as the type of abuse, the age of the victim at the time of the transgression, whether there was repeated abuse, the context in which the abuse occurred, etc. Based on

this, the financial compensation awarded to the victim is determined.

2. We consider that it is less re-victimising and less harmful to the relationship with the victim if there is no negotiation process; instead, the Society sets a high financial award, complying with compensation standards at the national and international levels, using comparative sexual abuse and human rights cases as a reference.
3. The victim is asked to have an attorney to advise them.
4. A confidentiality clause in favour of the victim is offered. That is, not to hide what has happened but to care for and protect the victim's information only and exclusively if they request this confidentiality.
5. The agreement is finalised through a transaction signed before a notary public. Both the victim's and the Society of Jesus' legal representatives are present, as well as a member of the CPR who has accompanied the victim through the process.
6. When the payment document is delivered to the victim, signing the papers is a very significant and emotional moment. The victim is subsequently invited to a meeting to discuss and reflect on their personal experience of the process.

### **Conclusion of the Process**

When the process of accompanying the victim reaches its conclusion, and the specific reparation actions defined jointly between the CPR and the victim have been carried out, the victim is invited to a meeting to review the process. Here, the victim's feelings are discussed, a letter of

acknowledgement and apology from the Provincial is delivered, and the terms of the future relationship are defined according to the person's needs and expectations.

### **Final Considerations**

The relevance of this model of receiving abuse victims and repairing their trauma is not restricted solely to the Chilean Province. We have been able to share our learnings and results with other Latin American provinces for their examination

and study while supporting them in solving specific situations they have faced.

Currently, we are focusing our priorities on establishing robust preventive mechanisms in all of the Society of Jesus' institutions, driven by the ethical conviction that we must do everything in our power to prevent a repeat of the situations of abuse that we have seen in the past. Our contact with victims has taught us how important it is for them that we create a culture of care solidly rooted in the principle of non-repetition.

*Original in Spanish*  
*Translation by Nils Sundermann*



## An Irish Province Reflection on Using Restorative Justice Processes to Respond to Historical Child Abuse

**Saoirse Fox**

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“What humanity really needs is an honest exposure of the truth and accountability for what has happened. Only then can human beings move ahead with dignity. Hurt needs to be spoken and heard. It does not just go away on its own. This can then lead to “restorative justice”. (Rohr, 2023a).

### What is Restorative Justice? And What is Not

It is not within the scope of this short paper to describe Restorative Justice (RJ) and its foundational principles in any detail. However, a few reflections on RJ are necessary to contextualise what follows.

Some may believe that RJ is not real justice; it is a way of escaping the consequences of one’s actions and the law. Proponents of this view would fail to understand the basic premise of RJ. It is not about denying harm but moving to the other end of the spectrum of truth-telling to take responsibility. It is about creating spaces for both or all parties to sit with vulnerability so that the conditions for honesty and emotion are heightened. In this way, dialogue is possible that allows people to make sense of and understand what happened.

RJ is different to retributive justice, which asks questions like:

- Who is to blame?
- What is the crime?
- What should the punishment be?

RJ asks:

- Who was harmed?
- What are the effects?
- What needs to happen to make things right?

RJ is concerned with restoring bonds of relationship and community.

It is crucial at the outset to state that the abuse of a child is a crime. RJ should not replace a criminal justice response where such a response is possible, i.e. the alleged perpetrator is alive. It is recognised that the criminal justice system has the potential to punish the offender and create a sense of justice being done for the person offended. However, it does not attend to the other needs of the person harmed and the effects of the harm caused. As Rohr (2023b) writes, “Crime is never merely an individual breaking the law; it is always a communal transgression that fractures *shalom*.”

Another possible misconception of RJ is that its main act involves the person who

caused harm coming together with the person who was harmed. The ‘victim’ speaks about the experience, and the ‘perpetrator’ responds and apologises. It is true that such an encounter can and does take place in the RJ context. To focus on that would be to start at the wrong place, as this encounter may be a culmination of several previous acts. Also, RJ can work well in church contexts when the person who abused is deceased. In this instance, the church body is the other party in a relationship with the person harmed. If the church body acknowledges that it had a role in the abuse story, RJ provides a framework for responding.

When responsibility is taken, and the organisation makes itself vulnerable, the person harmed can decide to take a risk with their own vulnerability.

### **Lessons from the SJ Irish Province Experience**

On 2 March 2021, the Irish Jesuit Province issued a communication which named one deceased SJ about the abuse of children in schools in the 1960s and ’70s. This public communication was the culmination of two years of consultation and discernment following a request to communicate from one man who had been abused. In the months after this communication, a set of processes were initiated which can loosely be regarded as falling under a restorative justice (RJ) umbrella.

The idea to contract two independent restorative facilitators to work with the Jesuits and the people who had been abused emerged from what was being heard in the weeks after the communication. Within weeks, around fifty past pupils had contacted the Irish Province Safeguarding Office. Two central

questions were asked of these men: What happened? What do you think now needs to happen?

Within a short period, themes emerged in what they were saying:

1. The most robust theme was the need to understand and make sense of what happened. People spoke of a desire for truth, transparency and accountability.
2. The need for learnings to emerge so that similar things did not happen again;
3. Spaces to talk and “collective solidarity”;
4. The desire for compensation and redress.

The facilitators were asked to continue the consultation process with the past pupils to co-design processes that would best meet their needs. In September 2021, the Jesuits were presented with a six-point agenda for work by the past pupils. They asked for 1) detailed answers to questions about what happened and how, 2) a historical record to be written, 3) funding for therapeutic supports for direct victims and family, 4) face-to-face engagements with Jesuits, 5) further outreach to potential victims, and 6) financial redress. The province committed to answering these requests and made substantial progress on all fronts.

### **What Worked?**

Many things worked well, and a full exploration of this question and the processes are written about by O’Connell & Walshe (2023). In this paper, I will briefly talk about three points:

1. Creating conditions for Jesuits to engage deeply, learn about what happened, and offer more



meaningful responses to those harmed.

2. Handing over control to those who had suffered harm.
3. Creating cultural or systemic change to ensure that what happened cannot happen again.

### *Jesuit Engagement*

The strongest theme emerging from conversations with the people who had been hurt was their need to understand what happened, what had been known by the Society, and how decisions had been made. The province committed to gathering information and recollections as fully as possible. Here lies some of the potential of a restorative framework. Those abused may assume that individual Jesuits have information and memories easily accessible and coherently organised. From experience, it is clear that Jesuits and other adults benefit from being provided with a space to make sense of and understand what happened. As part of the restorative processes, the two independent facilitators met over a number of days with large numbers of Irish Jesuits. These men had read the testimonies of victims in advance. Through these “circles”, Jesuits were enabled to process and talk about their own raft of pain emotions. This, in turn, allowed the men to be more emotionally available to the people who were harmed. It also led to more meaningful engagement with the attempts to write the historical record.

As more was learnt about what happened and how things happened, the Society began to engage with this information. It enabled the apologies being made to become deeper and more specific. The

narrative moved from “one bad apple” to “what were the systemic failings”.

### *Handing Over Control*

A personal reflection of the writer’s witnessing of Jesuit engagement during these processes is that it represented a radical departure from the “manage the issue” approach that has often been noticed in the church previously. Jesuits engaged in the processes but did not lead them nor try to influence direction. There was a willingness to make oneself, and indeed the Society, vulnerable. I believe that the past pupils could re-claim their voices in this restructuring of the power relationship between Jesuit and lay, teacher/priest and pupil, and the harmed and the harmer. Bergen (2016) addresses this issue by saying that the “penitent church must give up expectations for the management of success” and allow itself to be drawn “into an open-ended dialogical process, the outcome of which cannot be determined in advance”.

### *Creating Cultural Change*

Time and time again, we hear people who were abused say that their deepest desire is that change takes place so that what happened to them will not happen again. Working with a RJ approach requires heart engagement, not only head thinking. New understandings and insights emerge as participants engage with each other in dialogue. It has the potential to create real cultural change. Through meaningful engagement with the restorative processes, the members and the institution are able to demonstrate a new way of being and a commitment to ensure that similar things do not happen again. The humility and resolve that comes with this allows the

Society to enter into “a new covenant for now and into the future” (Bergen, 2016).

### Final Comments

Entering into the domain of restorative justice means handing over control to people who have suffered abuse. Outcomes cannot be managed or predicted. It requires real vulnerability. It requires, or may require, substantial resources on the part of the province: time, financial, personnel, and human. As such, it can render a Province vulnerable. If resources do not exist, it could be unwise for the province to move into this space. That being said, the over-turning of the power dynamics between the harmer and the harmed can create the most potential for healing.

While this paper describes a large-scale RJ project, it is possible that the principles and acts of RJ are being applied in Jesuit Provinces but are not being called restorative justice. Responses to hurt people which prioritise the needs of the ‘victim’ and relationship are in alignment with RJ.

At the same time, if RJ is seen as a technique, an option amongst many, it is likely that its possibilities will not be

realised. Restorative Justice is sometimes offered as one tool in the toolbox of supports and responses to ‘victims/survivors’. RJ is a philosophy and an understanding of the world and humanity. It is strongly coherent with Christian philosophy and Biblical teaching.

As Rohr (2023c) writes, “The central concern of biblical justice was not “getting what you deserve”; rather, it was making right what was done wrong... It was about bringing balance and wholeness back to the community”. Rohr references *Sister Mary Katherine Birge, who details many acts of Jesus, which are, at their essence, restorative justice. The principle underlying the acts is that we live with God and one another in just relationships.*

*We are still engaged with these processes in the Irish Province, and the outcomes are not clear. We are now reviewing the actions of the last few years, which will have implications for our policies and approaches to managing other cases. Whatever the final outcomes, I have been humbled by being allowed into the lives and experiences of those who have engaged in these processes. Throughout the most challenging times, I have held hope that I am involved in something that is about reconciliation in its truest sense.*

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## Jesuit Formation and Safeguarding: Where Have We Been and Where Are We Heading?

**Mark Ravizza SJ**

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In his recent *De Statu Societatis Iesu* (DSS hereafter) – 2023, Fr. General Arturo Sosa expands upon an “ambitious” mandate from General Congregation 36: Listening to victims of sexual abuse and trying to repair harm is not enough, writes Fr. General (Sosa, 2023), the whole Society of Jesus must “promote a *cultural change* and establish a ‘consistent culture of protection and safety for minors,’ and... vulnerable adults” (p.95). Changing a culture is not easy. Hence, the DSS underscores the slow, persistent work that has been done in the last seven years to transform the culture of Jesuit communities and apostolates. Crucial to this process has been the creation of the project for the Promotion of a Consistent Culture of Protection (PCCP), followed by two successive audits that PCCP carried out in 2019 and 2022 to establish clear baselines and provide a comprehensive picture of how the current culture needs to be transformed. With this work behind us, Fr. General (Sosa, 2023) insists, “we can *now begin a new phase of the process* for the universal body *through a global program of formation and training for safeguarding minors and vulnerable persons*” (p.14). But what type of formation is needed, and how can it best be developed and delivered?

In this short reflection, I would like to open a conversation about these questions. Toward this end, I will (1) briefly summarize some of the key findings of the PCCP’s audits that touched on formation, (2) offer a Case Study comparing how two different Conferences adopted diverse approaches to foster a transformation of culture in their respective contexts; and finally (3) look ahead and imagine how Jesuit formation must develop in the future. Given the constraints of this essay, I will limit my comments to Jesuit formation, and leave the important question of lay formation for another occasion.

### **What Has Been Accomplished?**

The first PCCP Audit in 2019 discovered that only 30% of Jesuit Provinces/Regions consistently “integrate training on children’s rights, safeguarding and protection into training and formation programmes.” (PCCP, 2019). Interestingly, although the other 70% of the Provinces/Regions lacked such holistic integration, there was widespread agreement “that training on children’s rights, safeguarding and protection is *extremely important during all stages of Formation*” (PCCP, 2019, p.26). Regency

was perceived to be the most important stage of formation for such training, followed by Tertianship, Theology, First Studies, Novitiate and Pre-Novitiate/Candidacy. Taken as a whole, these and similar responses, indicated that although the Society of Jesus had a long way to go to fully implement an integrated formation for safeguarding in 2019, there was, even at that time, both a clear perception of the importance of such training and a strong desire to develop it.

The 2019 Audit also provided a useful contrast between different approaches for achieving the desired cultural transformation. Whereas about a third of the Provinces/Regions provided “a good level of integration as mandatory issues in Jesuit formation programmes,” the majority of Provinces/Regions lacked “conscious plans for the integration of safeguarding training,” and relied only on “occasional awareness raising seminars, talks or workshops.” (PCCP, 2019). These included activities such as on-line training on codes of conduct, inviting resource persons to give talks on safeguarding, and “stand-alone safeguarding training days on topics such as, child protection issues; children’s rights; civil law; risk and protective factors; indicators and consequences of abuse; behaviours to avoid and eliminate; types of sexual offenders; mandated reporting; limits of confidentiality in a pastoral setting; healthy religious boundaries; internet use and pornography” (PCCP, 2019, p.27). I detail these activities because on the one hand they reveal the many good faith efforts people were making to address safeguarding issues; yet on the other, they show the limits of a “scatter-shot” approach that was not fully producing the broad change of culture required. One

important learning from this experience is that although isolated workshops and stand-alone presentations can inform people, they don’t seem to change them. Rather, these individual activities need to be creatively scaffolded in ways that create on-going conversations, heightened awareness, and intentional actions that can truly transform cultures of power and privilege.

In 2022, a follow-up Audit conducted by the PCCP developed a more fine-grained understanding of how individual Provinces/Regions were implementing safeguarding training throughout their respective formation programs. This also enabled the Society to glimpse how efforts to create a culture of protection were improving in real time. By 2022, the number of Provinces/Regions that were consistently integrating safeguarding training into all stages of formation had grown to 53%, with another 27% stating that they were “in progress” (PCCP, 2022). This growth offered the consoling suggestion that audit process itself was yielding not merely statistical information, but also was encouraging the type of transformation it was seeking to measure. Of course, during these years much more was happening than just the PCCP’s audit process (as I discuss in the Case Study below). Nevertheless, the clear focus provided by the PCCP’s efforts certainly seemed to be animating a positive transformation across the universal Society.

The extent of this transformation is seen even more clearly by examining the respective improvement in safeguarding formation in each of the Conferences. By 2022, Latin America (CPAL) reported that 35% of the Provinces/Regions had fully

integrated safeguarding training in every stage for formation, and another 50% of the Provinces/Regions were in progress toward that goal (PCCP, 2022, p.34). In Asia Pacific (JCAP) integrated safeguarding training for all Jesuits in formation rose to 42% (PCCP, 2022, p.46), in South Asia (JCSA) it increased to 43% (PCCP, 2022, p.65), and in Europe (JCEP) it grew to 53% (PCCP, 2022, p.58). Most encouragingly, by 2022, 100% of the Provinces/Regions in both Africa Madagascar (JCAM) and North America (JCCU) were providing safeguarding training for Jesuits in every stage of formation (PCCP, 2022, pp. 40, 52). The actual situation in formation may be even more positive than these numbers show. This is because a significant aspect of safeguarding formation takes place in common centres of formation overseen by Conferences, and the Province Safety Delegates, who responded to the 2022 Audit, were not specifically asked to comment on the training in these centres. Noting this reality helps to surface a deeper point: as Jesuit formation becomes increasingly interprovincial, efforts to audit and improve our safeguarding training cannot be focused just on Provinces/Regions. Conferences and international formation centres have an increasingly important role to play both in developing and sharing safeguarding formation. To illustrate this point, let us turn to the two Conferences, Jesuit Conference of Africa and Madagascar (JCAM) and Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States (JCCU), who have integrated safeguarding training into all stages of their formation, and explore the different strategies that they adopted to achieve this goal. We begin with JCAM.

### **Case Study: Comparing Safeguarding Formation Strategies in JCAM and JCCU**

As a result of an initial audit and baseline study in 2017, JCAM creatively developed a conference-wide strategy that intentionally engaged large common centres of formation in two ways: first, to ensure that safeguarding training was an integral part of the formation for all students in these centres; and second, to develop “the formation centres into resource centres on safeguarding through hosting specific research [institutes] to influence policy, programming, and practice around the role of the Church in safeguarding” (JCAM, 2018, p. 5).

Based on these complementary goals, JCAM established the Jesuit Centre for Safeguarding in Africa at Hekima University College in Nairobi, and fostered its collaborative work with L’Institut de Théologie de la Compagnie de Jésus (ITCJ) in Ivory Coast. Both these institutes shared a mandate (1) to produce “contextually relevant and culturally sensitive evidence-based research to support advocacy and safeguarding training”; (2) to provide quality formation for Jesuits and lay companions alike. An example of the success of this collaboration was the development and expansion of 2-credit academic course in Child Protection offered in Hekima University College every semester from August 2019, and the “Ubuntu Child Safeguarding and Protection Program” at L’Institut de Théologie de la Compagnie de Jésus (ITCJ). Thanks to such courses, these two institutes now provide safeguarding formation for all Jesuits studying in JCAM. In fact, since 2019 no Jesuit can be ordained without having completed a certification course from one of these institutes. The

institutes have also contributed to lay formation through on-line trainings and certificate courses, and through the publication of important research reports that offer both analysis and instruction to promote a consistent culture of protection in the African context. Throughout this process, the developments in the formation centres were enriched by how the Conference fostered a rich collaboration between the PCCP, the JCAM Safety Delegate, and the formation teams themselves.

Turning to JCCU, we find a slightly different approach both to developing safeguarding training and delivering it. Whereas JCAM focused much of its safeguarding efforts around common formation centres, in JCCU the Conference office itself played a vital role in the preparation of safeguarding training. In addition, it focused its efforts from the beginning on reaching all Jesuits, not just those in formation. This response flowed out of the scandal of child abuse that shook the North American church in the 1980s and 90s. As part of a Conference response to this crisis, the JCCU joined an accreditation process conducted by Praesidium, Inc., a professional organization that works with religious and other institutions to establish and maintain rigorous standards for protecting children and vulnerable adults. Part of this accreditation requires each Jesuit to participate in yearly “Conversations that Matter,” (CTM) a continuing education program that the JCCU Conference develops, and then distributes through Jesuit community meetings. The CTM program has improved over the years, thanks to regular feedback and the fruitful collaboration of outside experts, Jesuit

formators, and Conference Safety Delegates.

This annual CTM practice forms Jesuits from the time they enter the Society, and it continues as on-going formation even after their final vows. The regularity of these conversations enables CTM to cover an increasing range of topics; for example, this past year the conversation focused on healthy community life, and how it helps to support a culture of safeguarding. The yearly conversations of CTM are offered to all Jesuits who come to study and work in JCCU from outside the Conference. In this way CTM also provides a type of “cross-Conference” formation in safeguarding. Finally, all Jesuits in JCCU participate in a complementary set of trainings throughout their formation designed to promote cultures that enhance safe environments. The trainings vary depending upon the stage of formation, but all include workshops on psycho-sexual integration, and yearly colloquies with the local superior touching on topics of safeguarding, sexuality, and the vow of chastity.

While JCAM and JCCU have different approaches to safeguarding formation, both have achieved notable success. Their varying strategies are rooted not in competing formation theories; instead, they arise from the unique contextual realities that each Conference faces and the creative ways that each has addressed these challenges. Comparing these diverse approaches reveals several shared features that promise to be helpful in other Conferences as well: (1) the need for proactive Conference leadership to champion safeguarding efforts; (2) the importance of adapting safeguarding materials and their delivery to fit the local

cultural context; (3) the value of drawing on the shared expertise of Safety Delegates, formators, and outside experts to develop new programs; and (4) the benefits of utilizing international formation centres to share diverse styles of safeguarding training with Jesuits from across different Conferences. All these elements work together to create "cross-fertilization" of safeguarding training, ultimately enhancing the formation of Jesuits from all Conferences, especially those that may still be in the process of developing their own training programs.

### Looking Ahead

Changing culture is not easy. Over the past seven years, there has been notable progress and heightened awareness in the Society's efforts to promote a culture that fosters safe environments. However, the journey is far from over. As Fr. General writes in the DSS: "There is still a long way to go to engage the apostolic body of the Society in the complex process of contributing to a consistent culture of safeguarding" (Sosa, 2023, p. 96). Fortunately, the achievements of recent years point to elements of success that offer direction for the road ahead. These include increasing integration of culturally adapted safeguarding training into all stages of formation, proactive Conference leadership; fruitful collaborations between formators and Conference Safety Delegates, strategic use of our international formation centres, expanded formation of formators; and most importantly, a growing attention to the systemic and structural issues that underpin a culture of abusive power and clericalism.

In the 2022 Audit, increased safeguarding "training was most often cited as a key

priority" for the next phase of the PCCP (PCCP, 2022, p. 15). The Society's growing network of formators and international formation centres can play valuable roles both in developing and sharing such materials. During the COVID pandemic, formators expanded and improved their use of digital resources and on-line learning. Drawing on this experience, it is hoped that some of the best safeguarding training that once had been accessible only to limited groups in specific locations soon can be made widely available for all Jesuits in formation through pairing on-line lectures and workshops with on-site mentoring by local formators.

There is also a need to expand the content of our safeguarding training. Boundary violations with adults as well abuses of power, especially in pastoral situations, are two key areas demanding greater attention. Fortunately, the concern here is not that these types of abuse are growing, but that at long last there is a readiness to address them properly. Under the leadership of Pope Francis, the Church has become ever more aware of the dangers of clericalism and the abuse of privilege and authority. The revision of the Code of Canon Law Book VI (June 2021) now explicitly mentions crimes against the sixth commandment that involve an *abuse of authority* (Can 1395--§ 3, emphasis added). In addition, the revised Law has been expanded so that these canons referring to crimes of abuse involving the sixth commandment apply not only to clerics, but to all members of "an institute of consecrated life or of a society of apostolic life" (Can 1398--§ 2). All of these changes point provide a positive impetus to improve our formation so that it increasingly sensitizes young Jesuits to the possible misuses of clerical power and



helps them to become genuine collaborators in Christ's mission of reconciliation and justice.

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## The Zero Violence Brave Club: Improving Child Well-being and Protection Based on Scientific Evidence of Social Impacts

**Manuel Claramunt**

*Escuelas San José, Spain*

The *Escuelas San José* is a Jesuit-run educational centre located in the Campanar neighbourhood (Valencia, Spain). In 2013, we began to investigate and analyse evidence-based practices in schools in different parts of the world that were achieving results in the areas of instrumental learning and the cultivation of values, feelings and a harmonious school community. As part of this process, some teaching staff began participating in the pedagogical seminar “On the Shoulders of Giants” in Valencia (Rodríguez, Luis, Ruiz, & Oliver, 2020). In this space, through Dialogic Pedagogical Gatherings, we analysed and reflected on the theoretical and scientific basis of Successful Educational Actions (SEAs).

Successful Educational Actions are educational initiatives that obtain excellent results in every context in which they are applied, both in instrumental learning and in the acquisition and development of desirable values and feelings (Flecha, 2015). These results have been published in internationally recognised journals in studies conducted under the highest scientific and ethical standards.

In our school, we set up an initial team that

underwent extensive training to prepare themselves to introduce these SEAs. First, we introduced the *Dialogic Literary Gatherings*, and then in 2016, we gradually introduced the *Zero Violence Brave Club* across the board.

The Zero Violence Brave Club is a SEA that follows the framework proposed by the Dialogic Model of Prevention and Conflict Resolution developed by the CREA Research Centre at the University of Barcelona (Roca-Campos, Duque, Ríos, & Ramis-Salas, 2021). This initiative was mentioned in the European Commission’s recent report, “Achieving student well-being for all: educational contexts free of violence” (Flecha, Puigvert, & Racionero-Plaza, 2023) as one of the most successful international programs in achieving child well-being and contexts free of violence, thus preventing and reducing abuse.

In general terms, the Zero Violence Brave Club entails:

Creating a group of students who take a stand against violence, report violent instances, understand what it means to treat others correctly and value friendship. The main objectives of this initiative are: (1) to provide

students with ways to protect themselves and free themselves from violence; (2) to encourage students to be free in their decision-making and have their will respected; (3) to support victims so that they feel protected and supported when they report an aggression; (4) to dismantle the *code of silence* and the stigma around being a *telltale* (CREA, 2018).

Initially, we established the Zero Violence Brave Club in isolated instances with 4th graders in primary school and later extended the project to other year groups. Currently, 750 boys and girls participate in the Zero Violence Brave Club. Day by day, they learn to “step up”, to stand alongside victims and face aggressors peacefully and safely.

The Zero Violence Brave Club is different from other actions to prevent and overcome abuse we have previously implemented in the school. It provides us with a means to not only learn about the seriousness of violence and the importance of friendship and solidarity, but it also allows us to live and act daily according to the values we preach and in which we are educated. Over the years, we have proven that intermittent programs and activities do not work despite many being offered solutions and gaining popularity. However, they fail to reduce abuse and create a new culture of protection, especially when not founded on science-based evidence of social impacts.

We implement the Zero Violence Brave Club by creating an approachable, safe and accompanied space for dialogue in the classroom where children can share their concerns around aspects or actions related to violence, abuse or belittlement towards

a person. It is a space where we value and celebrate people who treat others well and take courageous steps to protect them. According to international scientific criteria on violence prevention, the space convenes dialogues on prevention, which teachers develop based on the Theory of Preventive Socialization of Violence (Soler-Gallart, 2017).

When a case of abuse, harassment or violence is detected, the intervention protocols outlined by the Ministry of Education of the Valencian Community are applied to each case. Four main actions are used to develop the Zero Violence Brave Club in our school:

### **1. The Zero Violence Brave Club in the Classroom**

The Zero Violence Brave Club in the classroom is a space for dialogue where children talk about and analyse aspects of their daily lives in light of what we learn from scientific evidence: What does it mean to treat someone well? What is true friendship, and how do they behave? What does coercion look like? How can we act when we want to protect another person, or how can we keep improving in our protection of others?

If a child acts with violence, harassment or abuse towards another person, they cease to be part of the Club. It is made visible by removing their *Brave Club Card*, and the group rejects their behaviour. This is fundamental: behaviours are disapproved, but not people and the girls and boys practice this differentiation without difficulty. This practice helps reinforce the dialogues that surface within the group. All children have infinite opportunities to transform their behaviour and belong to the Braves Club if they commit to non-

violence and treat others well. Often, this commitment has resulted in standards for treating others being established with the wider class. In this case, all the pupils in the classroom participate in an egalitarian dialogue to decide on the content and nature of these standards.



The pupil's real-world actions demonstrate their ability to reject violence and foster high-quality relationships in childhood. This human kinship is a mechanism to protect one another and fosters a desire for egalitarian, peaceful and healthy relationships. The children use terminology such as *making a shield* to come together to help or defend a friend, or doing the *magic curtain* when they ignore a boy or girl who is not treating them well at that time. They learn to be brave and put this lesson into practice when they want to report incidents in the playground where other children are subjected to things against their will. At assemblies, in dialogue spaces in the classroom, at the beginning of the day or at the end of the week, the Zero Violence Brave Club creates contexts where breaking the silence and standing against aggressions of any kind. However small they may seem, they are valued and celebrated. We want our pupils to be agents for change in action, as the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm proposes, to transform our contexts into safe environments. Ideas such as the *magic*

*curtain* or *the shield of friends* evoke the first Jesuits: brave, thoughtful and active.

The following are some reflections teachers shared with us when we evaluated the impact of the Zero Violence Brave Club in the school. They demonstrate how the pupils in the classroom have changed their attitudes, reflections and actions:

'Pupils are not afraid to tell us things. Now that they feel supported by their peers, they tell us about negative situations or things that made them or their peers feel unhappy.'

'Children feel acknowledged and are happy with themselves when they defend someone or report a situation of abuse.'

On the other hand, we have had success in rejecting violence within the group and fostering an unwelcoming environment for these types of attitudes:

'Pupils are becoming aware of the impacts of their negative actions or behaviours towards others and are realising that anyone who behaves this way will face rejection. This is the starting point for dialogue and reflection on actions that are neither wanted nor permitted, with the class group clearly stating its disapproval of this behaviour.'

Significantly, we have found that even young children transfer the skills and the new culture of protection that they have learnt in school through the Zero Violence Brave Club to other spaces and contexts that form part of their socialisation and development:

'Our pupils take our assemblies out of their classrooms and teach their

friends of different ages that, in their school, problems are solved through dialogue. This very thing happened last summer. A group of boys and girls of different ages were arguing about a problem, and they decided to hold an assembly to discuss it. When one of the parents approached (they were having dinner a few meters away), the children said there had been a problem but had already solved it by holding a small assembly.'

We even have evidence that this skills transfer has positively impacted the well-being of children from different schools and other vulnerable people. They benefit from the caring mindset and the confidence to break the silence that our pupils have learned in the Zero Violence Brave Club. By acting in this way, they make an abuse-free life possible not only for themselves but also for others.

## **2. Zero Violence Dialogic Training Spaces: Dialogic Scientific Gatherings**

When we initiated the training and implementation of the Zero Violence Brave Club project in classrooms, we experienced increasing cases of violence and mistreatment. In reality, this violence already existed—what had increased was its visibility and its denunciation. We opened our ears to voices that wanted to be treated differently, that wanted new ways to care for one another and create high-quality friendships.

Last year, we began to hold dialogic scientific gatherings on Zero Violence with families. This SEA is centred around reading the leading research on abuse and methods to prevent and overcome violence. It occurs in a dialogue where all

voices are equal, and the educational community can share its learnings. The chapter chosen was *Children and Violence*, from Yale's Guide to Understanding Your Child (Mayes & Cohen, 2003). Families were very grateful for the opportunity to have a Zero Violence Brave Club at their children's school in a society which is seeing an increase in violent and abusive relationships from a very early age. One father became emotional, explaining that he couldn't imagine anything better than finding a school that would work on a project such as this. In the dialogic scientific gathering, this father revealed that he had been a victim of bullying throughout his school years, suffering severe abuse and that for much of his life, he had lacked true friendship. He explained to us with deep gratitude that 'supporting these gatherings and the Zero Violence Brave Club is vital for people like me, who want our daughters and sons to have much better opportunities than we had ourselves.'

## **3. Increasing the Club's Visibility for a Zero Violence Culture**

Since the beginning of the Zero Violence Brave Club, the school has focused its efforts on promoting these safe spaces by creating a motivational atmosphere and environment that reminds pupils and teachers of how to act and who our role models are daily. Around the school, we have put up posters and key phrases that portray courageous actions and directly remind classmates to respect their own bodies and those of others. A girl from the first grade explained to us what they did in her class:

'We made a big shield for the class. One of us takes it home over the

weekend to celebrate the Brave Action of the week. The class chooses the winner, promoting and reinforcing the courageous action so other children can copy it.'

One of the first impacts was that a light was shone on instances where children were treated poorly. Victims were empowered with a *shield of friends* who provided security against aggressors, and children who were kind and supportive and behaved well towards others grew in stature. We have also painted a large mural in the schoolyard to celebrate these courageous actions, featuring Jesus as a role model for bravery.



Teachers have observed that the Zero Violence Brave Club has increased feelings and attitudes of solidarity. Victims and those who defend them feel less alone. For example, one of them explained:

'In the Club, pupils build alliances to protect one another. The other day, a girl felt intimidated by another girl from a different class who was always picking on her in the schoolyard. Some classmates invited her to join their group to make her feel protected.'

#### 4. Spaces of Dialogue on the Preventive Socialisation of Violence

One of the main objectives is to make violence completely unappealing. We

know that today's society has its historical baggage, and the media often celebrates people with contemptuous and violent attitudes and behaviours. We must work to dismantle these within our schools. The Zero Violence Brave Club allows us to do this, not just from an ethical perspective. Lived experience and language foster desirable values such as kindness, solidarity, friendship and love; people cultivate conduct consistent with these values, which are the emblems of our Jesuit school.

Within the accompaniment space in the classroom, we have organised thematic assemblies to open a conversation around the preventive socialisation of violence between boys and girls. Pupils study a video, text, song, etc., that provokes dialogue and reflection on situations of violence, bullying, sexual abuse, and the misuse of social media; on the other hand, they are encouraged to seek friendship, positive role models, healthy relationships and combat the feeling of loneliness experienced by victims and those who defend them.

The Zero Violence Brave Club allows everyone to rally against violence, which is crucial, according to scientific evidence. This is the only non-violent way to end violence. Internationally, this scientific approach is commonly referred to as "being an Upstander"; that is, being a person who, when faced with a situation of abuse, breaks the silence, denounces it and stands alongside the victim. This is what we discuss in these dialogic spaces. Zero Violence Brave Club works to make brave people universal: everyone, everywhere, takes action against violence.



## New Dreams

We received the *Mi Colegio se mueve* Award from the Fundación SM in the “Coexistence” category in recognition of the significant impacts of the Zero Violence Brave Club, which has been shown to reduce abusive relationships and foster high-quality relationships. The Province of Spain has also acknowledged these achievements, publishing an article in *Infos SJ* (2019), the society’s official bulletin in the Province. Likewise, *Educate Magis*, the global community of educators in the Global Network of Jesuit Schools, has disseminated these achievements (Partal Montesinos, 2019).

With our rollout of the Zero Violence Brave Club, we are now in an improvement and reflection phase where we are looking at its transferability and the thoroughness of its

application across all classrooms. It is significant for us to unite families, pupils and teachers in the work of achieving lives free of violence to educate people who, in the future, will fly the flag of zero tolerance towards violence in their contexts. We hope that whenever a person from our educational community is present, the environment will be safe. They will be the ones to do something and ask for help. They will always be with you; they will not hide abuse; they will act like St Ignatius of Loyola, a role model as an Upstander who defended two women from sexual abuse (Racionero-Plaza, 2021). Every child has the right to have a protective environment and high-quality relationships. This is not just a dream for us in our school; we are already applying proven measures to make this a reality.

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**Note:** The following video shows a summary of the application of the Zero Violence Brave Club in our school: <https://acortar.link/mtuWO1>

*Original in Spanish*  
*Translation by Nils Sundermann*





## Changing Lives in Kangemi: The Impact of Upendo and Uzima Safeguarding Projects in Nairobi's Slum, Kenya

**Verah Masenge & Edward Osabwa**

*St. Joseph the Worker Parish, Kangemi, Nairobi*

Kangemi is an informal settlement located in Nairobi, Kenya. It is estimated to have a population of approximately 100,000 residents, most of whom live in poverty. The population continues to fluctuate due to rural-to-urban migration. This has resulted in overcrowding and a range of social issues, including poor sanitation, prostitution, high HIV/AIDS prevalence, ethnic tensions, child abuse, criminal gangs influenced by delinquent youths, substance abuse, and alcoholism fuelled by the availability of illicit brew. In addition, child labour and gender-based violence are common.

In response to these challenges, the Jesuit Fathers and brothers from the Eastern Africa Province established St. Joseph Catholic Parish in Kangemi in May 1985. This parish remains the only Catholic presence in the area, serving over 10,000 people. The Jesuit Fathers and brothers in Kangemi have significantly impacted the impoverished and marginalised individuals in the community. Their dedicated work is rooted in promoting justice for all, and they run several programs to support this mission.

One of the programmes is the St. Joseph Upendo Orphaned and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Education Programme. This program provides holistic support to orphaned and vulnerable children in the Kangemi slum of Nairobi. It was initiated in 1995 to offer love and care to those in need. The program targets explicitly orphaned, abandoned, sexually exploited, marginalised, and vulnerable children from the slums.

Another initiative is the St. Joseph Technical Secondary School, established in 2015. It aims to provide quality secondary education to the most vulnerable adolescents living in Kangemi slum. Additionally, this program offers vocational skills training in areas such as Hairdressing and Beauty, Electrical Installations, Fashion and design to empower youth from needy families with livelihood opportunities.

The third program implemented is the Uzima Programme, which focuses on empowerment. "Uzima," meaning "life" in Swahili, represents their commitment to improving lives affected by various challenges such as HIV/AIDS. The programme provides psychosocial support

through counselling services, nutritional assistance through food subsidies for families affected/infected with HIV/AIDS, medical support through referrals for victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), livelihood empowerment for vulnerable women and youth, as well as transportation aid for SGBV victims seeking justice.

Through these initiatives, the Jesuits make a real difference in Kangemi by providing essential support and empowering individuals often overlooked or forgotten by society. The situation in Kangemi before the programme was dire. Young boys and girls faced constant threats of abuse, both physical and sexual, within their homes, schools, and public spaces. The effects of such abuses were devastating, destroying the futures of these innocent children and perpetuating a cycle of violence and despair. Something needed to change, which came in the form of the Upendo and Uzima's Interventions.

### **Enhancing Community Safety: The Vital Role of Boda-Boda Riders and Parents in Protection Work**

To address these complex issues, the programme adopted a comprehensive approach. One primary strategy was to engage with boda-boda (motorbike) riders. Unfortunately, some of them were involved in perpetrating sexual abuse against young girls. The objective was to transform these individuals into allies by providing them with training on preventing abuse and safeguarding vulnerable children in Kangemi.



*Child protection officer during boda-boda riders training on children's rights and safeguarding.*

It is disheartening that these groups would exploit the socio-economic circumstances of young women for their own gain. However, the transformation that has taken place within this group is truly remarkable. Through informative discussions and awareness-raising events, the boda-boda riders have been enlightened about how their actions profoundly affected the lives of children in their community. They realised that instead of being perpetrators, they could become protectors. Gradually but surely, these riders began to change their mindset and actively contribute towards putting an end to abuse.

Through our programmes, we have significantly impacted the community by providing parents and guardians with vital training on safeguarding and child protection. We have worked closely with paralegals and community health volunteers to increase awareness of child rights. As a result, cases of abuse are being identified and referred to the Uzima Program. This not only ensures that survivors receive the necessary support and medical treatment, but it also initiates legal action against the perpetrators. Our dedicated paralegals have been instrumental in accompanying survivors throughout the legal process, ensuring that

justice is served bringing closure to those affected.

### **From Darkness to Light: Stories of Community and Personal Transformation**

Another story of our programmes' impact is the story of a young lady named "Jane." Jane came from a family of four and tragically lost her mother, leaving her father as the sole provider and caregiver. He was struggling to make ends meet and ensure the well-being of his family. Jane's father was overwhelmed, resulting in neglect and abandoning his parental roles that he simply couldn't handle. Thankfully, someone who wanted the best for Jane referred her to Upendo.

When our team visited Jane's home, we discovered a heartbreaking situation. Often, their house would be locked, and Jane and her siblings would go without food. The level of neglect was severe, and it became clear that immediate action was necessary. We enrolled Jane and her two brothers in our programme to provide them with educational opportunities and support. Additionally, we placed them with loving foster families who could offer them the care they needed.

Since then, our program has been there for Jane every step of the way. We supported her from primary school through secondary education, ensuring she had all the resources necessary to succeed academically. And now, in September of this year, we are thrilled to share that she has successfully joined college.

Jane's story is just one example among many of how our program makes a real difference in the lives of vulnerable children like her. Through education opportunities and loving care, we aim to

break cycles of neglect and empower these young individuals toward brighter futures.

These stories are a testament to the transformative power of the Upendo and Uzima Programme. By engaging the boda-boda riders and empowering the community through awareness, the programme has successfully created a sense of hope and resilience within Kangemi. The community is now aware of the importance of safeguarding children and has stepped up in reporting cases of abuse, leading to swift interventions and justice for the survivors.

### **Current Priorities in Safeguarding and Dreams for the Future**

At St. Joseph's Development Programmes, our top priority is ensuring the safety and protection of all individuals within our organisation. To achieve this, we have implemented a comprehensive safeguarding program. This program includes appointing a designated Safeguarding officer and assistant safeguarding officer and forming a Safeguarding committee consisting of both males and females.

We believe in the importance of continuous training and education on safeguarding. Therefore, we provide annual training for our staff members to ensure they have the necessary knowledge and skills. Additionally, we hold sensitisation forums for children, youth, parents, and boda-boda riders to raise awareness about safeguarding.

To promote transparency and accessibility, copies of our safeguarding policy are readily available to all staff members. We prominently display policy statements throughout our premises, which contain

contact information for designated officers in case of suspicion or actual abuse.

When it comes to recruitment, we take safeguarding seriously. Applicants are informed that a certificate of good conduct is required during the application process. Moreover, during interviews, we prioritise candidates who demonstrate an understanding of good safeguarding practices.

To fulfil our mission, we have established a clear vision for the future and have outlined several goals. Our first objective is to strengthen our training

programs by offering comprehensive instruction to beneficiaries and students. Furthermore, we intend to secure additional funding to ensure thorough investigation and follow-up of abuse cases. In addition, we are committed to expanding educational opportunities for a diverse group of individuals, including boys, girls, young men, women, and youth. We firmly believe that education and awareness are powerful tools that empower individuals to safeguard themselves against potential perpetrators.

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*Original in English*



## Protection with Indigenous Cultures: Safeguarding Rooted in Kinship and Culture at Mother Teresa Middle School, Canada

**Curtis Kleisinger & Terri Cote**

*Executive Director and Principal at MTMS*

At Mother Teresa Middle School (MTMS), we call ourselves family. MTMS is a middle school located in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. The school mission statement reads: "Recognizing Truth and Reconciliation, MTMS ignites a love of learning and empowers students to embrace their personal and cultural identity while overcoming obstacles and growing their spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, and physical well-being". The MTMS team journeys with students from middle school to high school while students are pursuing further education, all the way to employment.

### A New Narrative and Networks

Promoting and cultivating a new culture of protection, care, and respect among Indigenous cultures is a lived experience. It is deeply rooted in trust, great love for each other, Mother Earth, and a willingness to engage in traditional ceremonies and cultural ways with Indigenous people.

Elder Harry Francis' words, "Love one another and Help one another" - "sákihitók mina wicíhitók", resonate with all that is MTMS. Elder Harry is Cree, a member of the Piapot First Nation in Saskatchewan, Canada, and a Knowledge Keeper for the

File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council area. The authentic, trusting relationships at MTMS have become the conduit for creating safe, vulnerable spaces and places to encounter the Creator God and each other.

The Universal Apostolic Preferences - Showing the Way to God, Journeying with Youth, Walking with the Excluded and Caring for Our Common Home are animated in and through the journey with Indigenous brothers and sisters in our MTMS Family. By walking together, hand in hand, the culture of Mother Teresa Middle School and community has been enhanced in ways unexpected. Brad Lavallee, *oskâpêwis*, from Piapot First Nation in Saskatchewan and a friend of MTMS, reminds us that "we are spiritual beings having human experiences". At our core, this means being human and promoting a new culture of protection and care for Indigenous people.

Indigenous grandmothers' love, trust and wisdom continue to guide our ways of proceeding. Their voices and gentle reminder, "If we are walking a good path, community members will find us and show us the way", did not disappoint. The historical context and individual experiences of the grandmothers and their

families are foundational to the MTMS story and the transformative, cultural, and spiritual experiences which have been profound for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous peoples.

### **Historical Truths**

The impact of Indian Residential Schools resulted in trauma that continues today and spans generations. Those touched by the experiences lost their language, identity, culture, family connections and trust. The struggle with addictions and mental health is indisputable. Fortunately for the MTMS Family, lasting bonds have been created, primarily by practising active listening and learning from their lived experiences. Listening to the voices of students about what they want to learn and how they want to learn it and exposing them to Indigenous role models from within the community is at the heart of creating a new narrative.

The “truth” in Truth and Reconciliation lies within the personal stories of many, both adults and children, whose lives have been significantly affected by the Indian Residential School system. Senator Murray Sinclair, a First Nations lawyer who served as the Chairman of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission, said at the issuing of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, “We have described for you a mountain. We have shown you the path to the top. We call upon you to do the climbing” (Sinclair, 2015). At MTMS, we believe that in community, we are doing the authentic climbing that Murray Sinclair speaks of through relationships, a focus on identity and culture, and intentional, strategic programming rooted in language, culture,

and land-based learning. We are honoured to be able to do the climbing that Sinclair speaks of with the guidance, direction, and love of incredible Indigenous leaders and Elders in our community.

Sinclair notes, “The road we travel is equal in importance to the destination we seek. There are no shortcuts. When it comes to Truth and Reconciliation, we are forced to go the distance” (Sinclair, 2015). At MTMS, going the distance is seeking the *magis* - a deeper engagement rooted in spirituality, intercultural relationships, experiences, and dialogue. At the heart of our call to serve is our intentional engagement in the Roman Catholic tradition, Ignatian Spirituality and, at the same time, in traditional prayer and ceremony with Elders, community leaders, students, and their families. The gifting of spirit names to MTMS staff in a sweat lodge ceremony hosted by Elder Harry Francis speaks to the relationships shared and the belief that our heads, hearts and hands are working together for the common good. The encounters with Indigenous people, Mother Earth and Creator God have moved us all close to the heart of what it means to be human, cultivating a new culture of protection and care.

### **Education for Reconciliation**

At MTMS, the drum and the buffalo continue to teach. Evan Whitestar, who is Cree from Pasqua First Nation in Saskatchewan, Canada, and the MTMS Indigenous Advocate and *oskâpêwis* (Elder’s helper), is a drum keeper, song maker and community man. A spirit of togetherness best describes the impact that his time and teachings have had on the students and staff. The heartbeat of MTMS can be heard in the hallways and

classrooms; it is the beat of a traditional hide drum that students gather around to drum and sing with Evan, but more importantly to heal, understand oneself and connect with one another.

The first drum, proudly displayed in the hallway at MTMS, was crafted from a buffalo hide that was scraped in community with Indigenous artists and leaders behind the Buffalo Peoples Arts Institute, Lorne Kequahtoway who is from Zagime Anishinabek - Sakimay First Nation in Saskatchewan and Joely Big-eagle Kequahtoway who is from Whitebear First Nation also in Saskatchewan, during Bringing Back the Buffalo programming. The spirit of the drum continues to bless MTMS and the youth who gather around to drum, sing, and dance and who are working not just to improve their own lives but also to find ways to serve and inspire their community.

Evan Whitestar is our teacher and guide when it comes to cultural protocols and the sharing of traditional teachings. In the spirit of togetherness, the learning of cultural protocols, the Ways of the Pipe, the Grandfather Teachings, honouring Mother Earth, and the journey with Evan's family has given the MTMS family many opportunities to partake in ceremonies, feasts, sweet grass and sage picking, drumming, Powwow's, including singing and dancing, designing, and creating traditional regalia as well as wakes and funerals. Cultural teachings are part of our academic day, demonstrating their importance to MTMS students, their families, and the community. New life and emerging energies continue to promote a new culture of protection and care and are

the intercultural connections and dialogue that happen naturally during these named experiences. The voices of MTMS students, in their written reflections in response to the question, "What has the drum meant to me?" clearly illustrate that safeguarding is not about one single event but a process of building relationships and creating spaces where students feel safe, loved and valued. Abby, an MTMS 7<sup>th</sup> grade student, shared, "The drum can do so many different things. It can heal, protect, and even make people feel like they belong. It makes people feel welcome. The drum makes me feel powerful when I sing". Dom noted, "The drum taught me to love myself and others and taught me patience. I learned that when you allow yourself around the drum, great things can happen that will take you far." Another student, Chad, wrote, "The drum represents pride, confidence, strength and resilience. The drum has taught me how to act and how to be a young man." The voices of MTMS students are powerful and illustrate that at MTMS safe spaces are being created where hope-filled futures are being nurtured by caring adults and community people who delight in the beauty, story, and individuality of each child while capitalizing on their strengths.

Evan is also a member of the leadership team, and in this role, he shares traditional teachings and stories with the MTMS Board of Directors. Taking care of Evan means ensuring that he is acknowledged and compensated fairly and adequately for sharing his teachings and the knowledge and experience he brings.

Creating a new culture of care and protection happens in the community, and together, we are finding ways to bring the teachings to where we live. Indigenous



artists Lorne and Joely continue to help the MTMS family by doing so. They continue to share teaching about the history of buffalo and lead students and staff in various workshops, including beading and moccasin making. The time together always begins with a smudging ceremony of sage, in which all are invited to participate. With their guidance, love and teachings, students and staff create beautiful works of art to be proud of. Still, more importantly, we gather to learn traditional Indigenous knowledge and teachings and about our connection to the buffalo. Joely always reminds us that the buffalo is resilience and strength - the buffalo is a symbol of resilience and is directly tied to identity. These teachings are at the heart of our journey with the youth we serve at MTMS. In MTMS values, safeguarding is reflected in the environment, teachings, experiences, and opportunities created in a team with a network of caring and committed individuals.

Opportunities to engage in traditional ways of life and authentic land-based learning experiences that are fundamental to culture begin by building relationships with community members. Engaging MTMS youth and staff in a Summer Leadership Retreat with the Indigenous Community of Grandmother's Bay in Northern Saskatchewan was an encounter with people who are living examples of what it means to "collaborate at Gospel depth for the protection, care, and renewal of Creator God's creation" (Society of Jesus, 2019). The food source at Grandmother's Bay has been the same for hundreds of years. The Grandmother's Bay community shared their language (Swampy Cree), cultural traditions in the arts, ways of living off the land, including

trapping and fishing, and their deep respect for Mother Earth and all she has to offer. Caring for the Common Home is steeped in the culture and traditions of the people of Grandmother's Bay, who are part of the MTMS family. At MTMS, safeguarding is more than having policies in place. It is about learning from and with each other, in the spirit of growing into the human beings Creator God calls each of us to be.

### **Sports and Reconciliation**

A new culture of protection and care is where opportunities exist for growth and development, and barriers are removed, and full participation and engagement for Indigenous youth to participate in sport. MTMS students taking part and competing in sports locally, at the North American Indigenous Games and possibly, one day, the Olympics presents opportunities for identities and strengths to grow from internal and external experiences. Bringing back medals to their home communities sees youth learning about their culture and strengths, growing their skills, exercising leadership, and finding individual and team success. The human capital gained from these experiences will serve MTMS students well into the future when they graduate from high school, pursue further education and ready themselves for the workforce.

### **Intercultural Connections and Dialogue**

Sharing in ways of prayer and engaging in intercultural dialogue has brought the MTMS family together in our desire around the shared purpose and mission of educating youth to be Spiritually Alive, Intellectually Competent, Loving, Committed to Doing Justice, Open to Growth and a Person for Others. Engaging



in Spiritual conversations has created pathways for discovering that these universal values unite us as a family. At the same time, they transcend the curriculum we teach, how we interact with one another, and how we solve problems. This is how we create experiences and walk hand in hand as one family and as companions on the journey.

At MTMS, we have come full circle. In humble ways, we continue to learn and be inspired by the Indigenous brothers and sisters with whom we journey, including former students. Draydin Cyr, Cree from Pasqua First Nation, finished his middle school education in the Jesuit tradition at MTMS in 2014. He completed high school at Athol Murray College of Notre Dame in Wilcox, Saskatchewan and graduated in 2018. He chose to study at the First Nations University of Canada in Regina, Saskatchewan. Draydin completed his teaching internship at Mother Teresa Middle School in the Winter of 2023 and received his Bachelor of Education in the Spring. He accepted a teaching position for the Fall of 2023 at Notre Dame, his high school alma mater. He is a history teacher and Indigenous Advocate who is, at heart, a young man of competence, conscience,

compassion, and commitment. He is faithful to his Indigenous roots and his people at Pasqua First Nation. He is committed to journeying with youth. Draydin is a leader and role model, particularly for those with Indigenous roots, who look up to him.

Authentic family bonds created through trusting relationships, active listening and engagement in ceremony are the threads that bind MTMS with Indigenous people. Students and family members who walk through the doors of MTMS know that they are safe, loved and enough. In the spirit of reciprocity, we find the sacred in two worlds, where hope, engagement and well-being pave the way and create opportunities for future Indigenous leaders. MTMS leaders know where they come from; they are proud and practice traditional cultural ways through ceremony and, at the same time, are educated and ready to serve in the community. Father Greg Boyle SJ reminds us, "It's connection and kinship that ultimately heals people." We believe our climb together, promoting a consistent culture of protection and safeguarding youth, is one of healing and hope.

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**Note:** For more information on Mother Teresa Middle School, please visit <https://mtmschoolregina.com/>. You can also follow us on Social Media @mtmsregina

*Original in English*



## The University as a “Safe Space”: Rebuilding Trust through Networks of Care and Social Justice

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### Introduction

The Philippines is governed by two laws on anti-sexual harassment, namely the Anti Sexual Harassment Act of 1995 and the Safe Spaces Act. The Act of 1995 defines sexual harassment in an education or training-related context and sexual harassment in an employment setting. In both instances, the abuse of moral ascendancy, authority, or influence over another is an essential element of sexual harassment. The Safe Spaces Act, which took effect on August 3, 2019, expands the concept of sexual harassment by prohibiting the act not only in schools and workplaces but also in streets, public spaces, and online. The law also fills a gap in the earlier iteration. It categorises sexual harassment, peer-to-peer and subordinate-to-superior harassment, and not just those which take place within relationships of power. Additionally, the Commission on Higher Education, through its administrative issuances (CMO 1-2015 and CMO 3-2022), requires the establishment of policies and guidelines on Gender and Development as well as policies and mechanisms on the investigation of and

penalties for sexual harassment in higher education institutions.

The University took initial steps to institutionalise prevention and protection measures through the creation of a University Gender Focal Point Committee in 2018 and the conduct of preliminary consultations on drafting a new anti-sexual harassment policy for the University in 2019.

Internal drivers for reform from both administrative offices, student organisations, and concerned individuals also produced policies, research, and responses from the University, including:

1. Review by a Technical Working Group on processes for attending to acts of misconduct of a sexual nature in the Loyola Schools (LS)
2. Formulation of a LS Gender Policy Statement
3. Research on “Mainstreaming Gender and Diversity in the Loyola Schools: Perspectives, Practices and Prospects” funded by the Institute of Philippine Culture and the University Research Council
4. Creation of the LS Gender Hub

The fledgling initiatives were tested the following year (2019) as the University undertook three major reform initiatives to respond to reports of sexual harassment, particularly on social media, involving members of the University Community:

1. ***Independent Audit*** – An external consultant reviewed the policies and processes related to anti-sexual harassment in the University as an educational institution and workplace. The review informed the content of an updated anti-sexual harassment policy for the University. The findings of the Audit were shared with the University Community.
2. ***Drafting of the University-wide anti-sexual harassment policy*** – A technical working group appointed by the University President led the crafting of the University-wide Code of Conduct and Administrative Rules on Sexual Harassment, Inappropriate Behavior and Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct to comply with the Safe Spaces Act and to respond to the recommendations from different stakeholders. The final policy can be accessed at: <https://www.ateneo.edu/central/policies/code-of-decorum>
3. ***Creation of the University Decorum and Investigation System (UDIS)*** – As stipulated by the Code and Rules, the following offices were established to constitute a wholistic system to address sexual harassment:
  - a. The University Gender and Development Office
  - b. The University Office of Decorum and Investigation

### c. The University Gender Hub

#### **University Office of Decorum and Investigation (UODI): Ensuring Due Process**

The University Office of Decorum and Investigation [UODI] receives formal complaints and informal reports of sexual harassment, inappropriate behaviour, and other forms of sexual misconduct. UODI initially processes formal complaints against employees of the University to determine if there is a *prima facie* case. Complaints sufficient in form and substance are forwarded to the Committee on Decorum and Investigation [CODI] for the formal investigation and recommendation of disciplinary action, if any, to the President for approval. The UODI has counterpart offices in the academic units that receive and process formal complaints against the students.

Reporting incidents remains to be a challenge. To encourage persons who experience sexual harassment, inappropriate behaviour, or sexual misconduct, and even those who witness these incidents, to come forward - the University has a CODI Alert form available online that can be used as a reporting guide. Anonymous reports are accepted, although they often limit the ability of the University to respond to the information effectively. In some instances, the offended party chooses not to file a complaint for various reasons. Still, when the alleged incident is so grave, the University may stand as the Complainant provided other supporting evidence to prove the incident.

UODI releases a Semi-Annual Report every six months to inform the community about the formal complaints and informal

reports it received and processed during the period covered by the report.

### **University Gender and Development Office (UGDO): Ensuring A Whole of University Approach**

The main task of UGDO is to mainstream Gender and Development initiatives in teaching and learning, research, and outreach of the University. Aside from dialogues with formal committees and organisations, UGDO regularly engages *in conversation with different sectors* (sports, residence halls, student leaders, parents, Jesuits, teachers) to internalise stakeholdership of many complex and challenging decisions. *Continuous communication and reporting via regular channels* and at *frequent interface points* in the university calendar allows the University community to become familiar with the programs, activities, offices, and individuals involved in gender mainstreaming.

### **The University Gender Hub (Gender Hub): Safe Space for Survivors**

The story of the Gender Hub began with a call for the University to respond to the need for survivor support. The Gender Hub then developed its *care and case companion services* to support survivors of sexual harassment and any form of sexual and gender-based violence or SGBV. A small team of psychologists put together the Gender Hub's protocols for supporting survivors following the UN Case Management Guidelines for GBV Survivors, a survivor-centred approach to GBV. The team also created a first response protocol following Psychological First Aid (PFA) to guide members of the University community to respond to any report or

case of GBV and immediately link survivors to the Gender Hub for support.

The University's response of providing a support structure for survivors is anchored on a recognition that SGBV is a social problem. The University community, together with the institution's leadership, saw it as the University's ethical responsibility to respond to SGBV. This is not to say that SGBV is unique to the University; instead, it is to acknowledge that the University is embedded in the broader society where SGBV is systemic and normative. This meant that the University deeply recognised that members of the University community experience SGBV and that the ethical response is to care for any student, faculty, or staff who has experienced SGBV.

Recognising that SGBV is both a social problem and a *deeply personal and subjective experience*, the Gender Hub was created to provide a safe space for survivors to go through the psychological process of healing alongside the social process of justice. The Hub's protocol is to provide psychosocial support or care first to survivors before engaging in case management for the complaint process. *Case companionship* means providing accompaniment to survivors throughout the entire case process. *Case companions* commit to journeying with survivors from beginning to end.

### **Letters from Survivors**

To further understand what case companionship means, we share excerpts from two letters, one from a female student and another from a female employee who underwent the case process.

*Dear Ma'am Mira,*

*I just wanted to thank you so much... for being there for me throughout the entire process...*

*At first, I was honestly afraid of reaching out. On top of the experience itself, there were many questions: Can I trust them? What if nothing comes out of it? What if I receive backlash?*

*Thank you for gently quelling my fears. During our first meeting in the Gender Hub, you immediately made me feel safe. I felt like I could trust you with anything...*

*When I read the email about the committee's decision, I fell into tears – tears of relief, victory, and justice. This experience helped me have faith in the system once more...*

*Your kindness and presence throughout all this will be something I will remember even in the years to come. You went through the entire process with me as if it were your battle, too...*

*Thank you for handling this case in the best way possible. I am so blessed because I had you by my side during those trying times. Honestly, I couldn't ask for a better case companion.*

*Sincerely,*

*O\**

This letter from a female student who filed a sexual harassment case shows how she appreciated having a case companion throughout the case process. The letter also shows how difficult it is to file a complaint and that there is so much fear in reporting and a lack of trust in the University system for handling complaints. It is critical to make survivors feel safe and allay their fears. The Gender Hub is the entry point for survivors to the University system.

Hence, it is also essential to build trust in the system and in the capacity of the University to handle the complaint.

Below is another letter from a female employee who also filed a sexual harassment case:

*Doc Mira,*

*You have seen me during my most vulnerable moments. Thank you for helping me stay level-headed despite my anger, frustration, and exhaustion without invalidating my experience... You did wonders to calm the storm within me... The external fight was nothing in comparison to the internal battle... it was me alone losing sleep, having anxiety attacks, and night tremors. It took months just to get rid of the guilt and another few months to remedy each of the mental wounds inflicted. I wouldn't know where I would be without you, ma'am.*

*You have been with me with every step forward and every step back. With every "I hear you, P\*", I felt less alone in my fight. You played a major role in my recovery from this, and because of you, it's easier to be more optimistic about the future. I cannot thank you enough for all our sessions...*

*Please extend my gratitude as well to Atty. Alma Pavia and Doc Melissa Lao. Even if I don't exactly know what happens during meetings, I am resolved by the fact that so many offices are not only working on this case but working towards making the school a safe place.*

*To our Administrators,*

*There were still questions that I had... Things that I hoped would have been done differently, but I was consoled by the fact*

*that the school was doing its best in trying to keep me safe.*

*I acknowledge the difficulty of my case and even more so, the difficulty of having to make decisions for the welfare of everyone involved. He was as much of a member of this community as I am, no matter how horrendous what he did was...*

*Being asked what would make me feel safer, accommodating my requests, and even checking up on me made me feel that I was valued... I felt seen and I felt heard.*

*I cannot change anymore what happened to me. It is something that I would have to live with and eventually accept for the rest of my life. Hopefully, my case and my story will be used to make sure that this does not happen to another member of our community again... I cannot thank you enough for everything you have done for me this year. In your own way, you have saved my life.*

*Sincerely,*

*p\**

This letter shows a glimpse of a survivor's internal turmoil upon surviving an experience and going through a case process. It shows her personal journey of healing and recovery and how she has had to come to terms with living with an experience of gender-based violence for the rest of her life. This shows how important it is to have a companion in their healing journey and never feel alone in the process. The letter further indicates that the Gender Hub cannot provide support to survivors without the work of its partner offices in the University system, in particular, UODI and UGDO, and other offices and administrators. In her letter, the survivor recognised that so many offices are

working together not only to respond to her needs but to make the school a safe space.

### **Gender Hub Programs**

The Gender Hub, as the centre for gender-responsiveness in the University, has three core programs: *case response services*, *gender sensitivity training*, and *safe space conversations*. Case response services refer to *case companionship services* – accompanying and supporting survivors throughout the case process, and *care services* – journeying with survivors throughout their personal healing (with or without a complaint/case). Gender sensitivity training involves programs for raising awareness of gender issues and building gender-sensitive, gender-inclusive, and gender-responsive practices with all stakeholders (faculty, staff, and students). The Gender Hub offers a *first response training* to develop the capacity of first responders (partner offices, staff, student organisations, and other frontliners) to respond to reports or cases of SGBV using an adaptation of PFA - “Give your A.L.L.” - Attending to them in a safe space, Listening to their story, and Linking to support. Lastly, safe space conversations include holding space for conversations around gender issues, marginalised groups, including LGBTQIA+ students, and events and activities such as celebrating Women's Month and Pride Month with the university community.

### **Lessons and Reflections**

The Ateneo de Manila University Decorum and Investigation System, with the UGDO, UODI, and the Gender Hub, strives to build a university system of care. What has supported efforts in building this network

of care and social justice is the political will and support of university leadership and the commitment and push from community stakeholders (students, faculty, and staff). The explicit statement of university commitment through the Gender Policy and the Code and Rules has institutionalised the work of responding to and addressing SGBV. The investment in resources in putting up a dedicated office for gender-responsiveness, with its own physical space and team of psychologists, has ensured survivor support. It is essential to highlight that the separation of roles and structures in the system allows the Gender Hub to provide complete care for survivors. At the same time, the UODI

handles case investigation, and the UGDO oversees the case process. The openness of partner offices to align processes, undergo gender sensitivity training, and adopt gender-responsive practices further supports this system of care. The integration of gender sensitivity in faculty, staff, and student formation completes the whole-of-university approach to respond to and prevent sexual harassment. It takes the commitment of each person and office to build a network of care, safeguard all members of the University community, and make the University a safe space for all. Our offices have been offering some initial benchmarking with Ateneo universities in the Philippines.

*Original in English*



## The Journey of the South Asian Team for Safeguarding (SATS)

**Ravi Sagar SJ**

*Lawyer and Coordinator of PCCP for South Asia, New Delhi*

In his letter dated 18th February 2023, keeping in mind the felt need of the church - namely safeguarding of minors and vulnerable adults (VA), the President of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia (POSA) reconstituted the South Asian Team for Safeguarding (SATS). SATS consists of Ravi Sagar SJ (Convenor) Konrad Noronha SJ (Co-Convenor), Licia Puthuparambil SMI, Namrata Menezes, Baskar Rao and Nirdosh Ekka. The task of SATS is to oversee the mission of safeguarding in the Jesuit Provinces of 'the Jesuit Conference of South Asia' (JCSA) and to promote a consistent culture of protection of children and VA in all institutions.

SATS is mandated to review the policies and protocols of each Province and their institutions, guide the work of safeguarding commissions of the provinces, conduct training programmes for the province protection officers, update them on laws and practices, advise major superiors regarding the issues regarding safeguarding, network with other Jesuit Conferences, report to POSA on the status of the protection of minors and VA within the Conference.

The Circular of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith - dated 3rd May 2011 - was issued to assist Episcopal

Conferences in drawing up guidelines for handling cases of sexual abuse of minors by clerics. Responding to the growing concern regarding safeguarding minors and VA, different Jesuit Provinces in India published protocols in 2011. Pope Francis established the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors in December 2013 to offer proposals and initiatives to improve the norms and procedures for protecting children and VA.

On 2nd February 2015, Pope Francis wrote to the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences and Superiors of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life concerning the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. He said, "Everything possible must be done to rid the Church of the scourge of sexual abuse of minors, and to open pathways of reconciliation and healing for those who were abused". He added, "It is the responsibility of Diocesan Bishops and Major Superiors to ascertain that the safety of minors and VA, is assured in parishes and other Church institutions."

On 18th May 2015, the former Superior General (Adolfo Nicolas) - writing to all Jesuit major superiors on 'Protection of minors and VA' - directed them to prepare guidelines that describe proper ethical and



professional conduct for all, offer systematic training and ongoing formation and prepare protocols that respond adequately to every allegation of sexual abuse. He asked the major superiors to conduct a survey in this regard and send the same to him by 30th November 2015, including the province's plans.

In May 2015, the then POSA constituted a Support Group consisting of Joy K, Raj Irudaya, Stanislaus Alla, Tresa Paul and Mary Scaria to review and update Jesuit Province Protocols. While reporting to POSA and networking with other Jesuit Conferences, the Support Group was also directed to advise Jesuit Provincials, monitor the Province Commissions' work, and offer them support for proactive measures.

Accordingly, the first meeting of the Support Group was held on 6th June 2015, and deliberated in detail the group's role, function and roadmap. Preparation of a standard Protocol/Policy for the conference came up strongly, and its possible contents were outlined. For this task, the support group gathered and shared the available resources and protocols among the members. POSA approved the plan of drafting a Protocol/Common Policy for the Conference.

The CBCI issued a Child Protection Policy and Procedures on 25th September 2015. CBCI Guidelines to deal with Sexual Harassment at the workplace were approved by the CBCI standing committee held from 21st to 23rd September 2016, Bangalore, and promulgated by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India on 14th September 2017.

The Support Group presented its plans in the JCSA meeting held in November 2015. A detailed deliberation shaped the draft of a common policy on the matter of Sexual Abuse and maltreatment of Children and VA, in Jesuit Centres of Activity. The Support Group met six times to review the various policies of the provinces and formulated a common policy for the Conference. The final draft of the policy was approved by the POSA on 30th November 2017.

In October 2018, the Project the Promotion of a Consistent Culture of Protection (PCCP) came into being and undertook to assess the situation within the Society. A Baseline Survey Report indicated the situation and position of safeguarding within the Society and its Provinces.

Rev. Fr. Arturo Sosa SJ - Superior General in June 2019, stated, "Because Safeguarding is intrinsically an issue of justice, I have asked the Secretary for Justice and Ecology (SJES) to take our responsibility to promote Safeguarding and implement the specific mandate of General Congregation 36...". Thus, a project PCCP came under the umbrella of the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat.

PCCP Team members Fr. John Guiney SJ (Project Coordinator, PCCP) and Michelle Hennesy came to India. They addressed the JCSA Meeting at Ranchi on 22nd October 2019, sharing the findings based on a Baseline Survey.

The PCCP duo also addressed the four zonal meetings between 23rd and 26th October 2019. The interface between the Support Group and PCCP on 27th October 2019 identified their way forward. The outcome of these meetings was that every Province should have a Child

Safeguarding Officer (CSO), and each Province should identify 3 to 5 persons to attend the 'Training of Trainers' (ToT) programme at the Zonal level, including Jesuits, their collaborators and other experts. Highlight was the need for yearly reporting and periodic reviews, etc., of the progress in this direction.

The Support Group was transformed into the South Asian Team for Safeguarding (SATS) on 7th November 2019. Joy K (Coordinator), Tresa Paul, Konrad Noronha, Joye James and Stanislaus Alla were the members. The convenor would also liaise with PCCP. The main aim is to coordinate the work in the Conference and help the members respond to the challenges.

The first meeting of SATS - held on 21st December 2019 at ISI Delhi - not only clarified its role in promoting a consistent culture of protection of children and VA in the South Asian context but also prepared modules and planned for the ToT Programme. In his letter dated 31st December 2019, POSA announced to all Jesuit Provincials regarding the ToT Programme in Delhi and Pune in June 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the plans. Consequently, the ToT's Programmes, planned to be held in Delhi and Pune in April, were cancelled. SATS met virtually on 1st June 2020 to explore alternative plans. Accordingly, on 23rd June 2020, a two-hour Introductory Session - "Towards Promoting a Consistent Culture of Care and Protection" for about 100 participants - was held for all those engaged in Safeguarding in every Province, followed by zone-wise sessions

from 1st- 4th July. A one-day training session was held for each zone.

These sessions were designed to capacitate the designated trainers in their specific region within six months to conduct sessions at all Jesuit institutions/centres. The goal is to equip them eventually to fulfil their role as Provincial Protection Officers (PPOs), Chairperson and/or Member of the Inter Grievance Cell or Internal Committee, Spokesperson/ Media person for the provinces, and to draft and maintain dossiers of the cases, etc. They were given a clear understanding of terms and definitions, Preventive Measures, Redressal Mechanisms, Forms (technical and legal), Government acts/laws, Canon Law and ecclesial regulations.

Even the Pandemic did not deter SATS from having its meetings and training. SATS met virtually in November 2020 to discuss in detail the outcome of the Baseline Survey conducted by PCCP. A training session was held on 29th November 2020 for representatives of Provinces and Regions on ecclesial/canonical procedures regarding safeguarding issues. Another training session on various topics was conducted on 13th December 2020, along with a review of the Safeguarding Policy.

As Ravi Sagar took charge as the convenor of the SATS team in March 2021, on 23rd March 2021, plans have been made on recommendations of POSA. Equipping the PPOs with the skill of Safeguarding is a vital aspect of Safeguarding. Hence, the Centre for Safeguarding at Pune was visualized to train the clergy, religious and laity in the mission of Safeguarding. While reviewing the Policy - 2017, there was a felt

need to ensure all Provinces/Regions have PPOs who will also be the CSO.

The Centre for Safeguarding at De Nobili College, Pune, was planned with its vision and mission drawing up its plans and activities. Diploma Courses in Safeguarding were offered in collaboration with Sophia College, Mumbai and other educational institutions.

On 13th May 2021, Superior General Fr. Arturo Sosa wrote to the whole Society on implementing minimum safeguarding standards in the Society of Jesus during the Ignatian Year. He urged all Major Superiors to ensure that by the end of the Ignatian Year, an auditing system exists in each Province and Region and functions effectively. He also proposed sending a report to the PCCP to share the progress made in implementing the Three Standards in the local context. During the Ignatian Year, we can all achieve this third stage of commitment.

SATS brought together PCCP members, PPOs, Provincials of South Asia, and the POSA through virtual mode on 21st July 2021. Through an extensive consultation, PCCP conducted a Global Audit on Safeguarding in six conferences. The outcome chartered a new course of action, which enabled all to understand the progress made in implementing the Three Standards - namely (a) Policy/guidelines for ethical behaviour and safe environments, (b) Protocols for dealing with allegations and case management, and (c) Training and Formation for Jesuits and Collaborators.

The implementation of protocols and Global Safeguarding Audit indicate positive trends. It is moving from being concerned (awake) to being compliant (aware) to being committed (action) to safeguarding. I am sure all Provinces, Regions, Sectors, Apostolic Works and Ministries will not only be awake and aware but also be active and have living safeguarding policies and structures.

*Original in English*



## Xavier Network Promoting a Consistent Culture of Care

**Emer Kerrigan**

*Irish Jesuits International, Ireland*

[Xavier Network](#) is a network of 14 members – Jesuit Mission Offices and Jesuit non-governmental development organisations (NGOs) – within the Social Justice desks of Jesuit Provinces across North America, 10 European countries and Australia. Through collaborating as a network, we increase the impact of our collective work with Jesuit Provinces in 87 countries across the Global South. Our members include: ALBOAN (Spain), Canadian Jesuits International (Canada), Entreculturas (Spain), Fundação Gonçalo da Silveira (Portugal), HUBEJE (Belgium), Jesuitenmission Austria, Jesuitenmission Germany, Stiftung Jesuiten weltweit (Switzerland), Jesuit Mission Australia, Irish Jesuits International (Ireland), Jesuit Missions UK (Britain), MAGIS Italy, Magis Americas (USA), Oeuvre des Missions Catholiques Française d’Asie et d’Afrique (France). Our work involves the development of projects in the Global South, Advocacy, and working in Humanitarian Emergencies.



We aspire to reflect St. Francis Xavier’s spirit of transformation and dialogue

between different peoples and strive for open, trusting and mutually respectful partnerships that can bear much fruit in serving the world’s poorest people. It would make sense that safeguarding has been on our agenda for each XN meeting over the last 15 years. The XN member in Ireland (Irish Jesuits International) initiated much of the advocacy, strongly encouraging the XN membership to adopt safeguarding protocols with their partners. Having witnessed the devastation and trauma that inefficient responses to child safeguarding have caused in Ireland, there was a clear opportunity to learn lessons from Ireland’s notorious historical abuse and do our absolute best to avoid that legacy for other countries we are supporting.

The shift **from conversation to action** was the real turning point for the Xavier Network. All the members were on board with safeguarding – there was no more convincing to be done. We agreed that much more could be done across our 14 Jesuit mission offices and Jesuit NGOs across Canada, Europe and Australia. We all agreed that we needed to support our partners in the Global South on their safeguarding journey. The question was just, HOW?

With our partners spread across 87 countries, how could we design a one-fit-all approach which our partners could adopt without cutting our support to some of the most vulnerable communities on the globe? We had ourselves in tangles debating the ethics of enforcing such requirements on the poorest communities in the world. Was it our place – to challenge local customs and local traditions – was it our place to ask more of our partners than their national legislation did? Some of our partners work in countries where the legal age of consent differs hugely – what is illegal in one country is not in another.

Changing our narrative within the XN was crucial – coming to a stage where we could all acknowledge our duty to ensure our funds aren't being used to facilitate abuse. This acknowledgement helped move us into a space of action by March 2019.

Many of us already had experience with safeguarding audits and were aware of the dangers of tick-the-box exercises. We knew we needed a means of evidencing procedures being in place and working effectively, not just insisting that our partners have a policy that might end up sitting in a drawer or a statement only visible on the Director's office wall. We also knew that whatever we developed had to be something that would fit within our current way of proceeding. We knew that if we created a separate validating process, it might start well but would risk fizzling over time – as it would be too cumbersome. We decided that any action would have to be integrated within our current proposal, reporting, and monitoring templates, consistent across all 14 member organisations with all our partners in the Global South.



After numerous discussions, Irish Jesuits International was assigned to a 4-month task between 2018 and 2019 to design an approach that would suit all our XN members and partners. At that time, the Promotion of a Consistent Culture of Protection (PCCP) project within the Society of Jesus hadn't yet been formed. Nor had the Father General's letter to Superiors outlining the 15 indicators of having safeguarding procedures in place been envisioned.

So, we developed **five minimum safeguarding requirements** at the field/apostolate level and validating questions. For a partner to access support from any XN member, they had to pass the validation exercise. If a partner cannot provide evidence that they have reached the five requirements, we hold funding until they can – or we provide funding restricted for safeguarding initiatives, only to help them get to where they need to be. These five minimum requirements are:

1. We and our partners must be implementing comprehensive child safeguarding policy and/or procedures signed off by the Director or leadership in the province.
2. We and our partners must appoint at least one designated person for child safeguarding at the project level.

3. We and our partners must give all new personnel an induction to the child safeguarding policy/procedures.
4. As a condition of employment, our and partner personnel must:
  - Provide at least one written reference from a previous employer or education body,
  - Provide a police certificate if police vetting is provided in that country
  - Sign an Acceptance Form indicating they've read, understand and will abide by the child safeguarding policy
  - Sign a Self-Disclosure form indicating if they have ever been convicted of a sexual or child safeguarding offence or are subject to an on-going sexual or child safeguarding investigation.
5. We and our partners must display a Child Safeguarding Statement in our offices where personnel can view it, indicating the contact details for the Child Safeguarding Officer (CSO), the Deputy CSO (if appointed) and the local statutory authorities.

To validate the above being in place, we have nine validation questions, such as:

- the number of new recruits in the last year
- the number of signed Self-Disclosure Forms on file
- the number of signed Acceptance Forms on file
- And if the numbers do not match, why not?

The approach was presented and adopted by Directors in March 2019, and a 'Commitment to Safeguarding' was signed by each XN member to commit to this approach.

Evidencing on the ground, where the children are, is our focus. It is all quite straightforward for an office at a higher oversight level to pass the validation exercise. The real challenge lies on the front line, at the apostolate/project/field level, where the children are in the Global South. This is where resources are tight, and personnel are stretched to their limits, serving those vulnerable and marginalised. How would they have the time, the energy, and the resources to address safeguarding, particularly when it is not required in-country by their statutory bodies? When we presented this approach to our partners in March 2019, we gave them nine months before the five requirements were enforced in January 2020. We expected significant backlash from our partners.

The response from our partners was not at all what we had expected. We got some push-back from oversight bodies, concerned much like we had been – about our right to challenge norms in a country or to insist on higher standards than a national legal framework did. What caught all the XN member organisations by surprise was that there was absolutely no push-back at apostolate, field, or school level in the Global South – these were the projects on the ground working directly with children. Instead - the request for more support was immense. Projects wanted help with policy review. Directors were asking for guidance on what type of person was best to appoint to the local safeguarding role, many having taken the function by themselves but feeling it would be better suited to a staff member engaging with the children, such as the social worker, or teacher, or a staff member with an HR or legal background. Many safeguarding representatives wanted help with templates – Codes of Conduct for

their personnel, what questions to ask in reference checks, what questions to ask in interviews, etc. Many projects asked for help around Self-Disclosures, particularly when their own country did not provide local or national Police Clearance.

Even if a partner had all these prevention measures in place, there was an acknowledgement that abuse could still happen in our organisations. Of utmost importance to our XN partners was that, ethically, they had done everything possible - as much as within their power - to prevent any of their staff from perpetrating abuse. This lies heavily with all of us, and we must ensure that we have done the best to our ability to prevent a perpetrator from having access to children within our organisations.

With safeguarding on the cusp of becoming an industry in itself - high consultancy fees, high-visibility little-impact conferences, few training courses available at a cost and in very few languages - it was clear from the onset that there was an acute need for more to be done at field level. Our challenge was not 'winning' partners over but resourcing them. More depth, *Magis*, was needed in the very place where the most vulnerable are - on the front line.

We developed a **free online XN Safeguarding [Resource Library](#)**, which has been a starting point for some partners. For others, it has been a means of reviewing their current policies and procedures to see if they want to adopt any content during their reviews. The Sample Policy section has been the most visited.

Seeing how our 'one voice' had worked with our minimum requirements, we recognised the crucial role Jesuit

Development Offices could take in having that 'one voice' at the province level amongst their apostolates. Building stronger bridges between a Province Safeguarding representative and their Development Office Director has been vital. The province roll out of a safeguarding strategy for all the apostolates within a Province can be developed into a concrete budget and proposal that a Development Office could approach donors. This approach has opened up an avenue of funding not previously imagined for some Provinces.

To ensure we are not tiring out our long-term committed external donors of the Society with safeguarding proposals, we have encouraged Jesuit Development Offices to adopt **the 3% approach** - a 3% budget line on every proposal written by every apostolate/social centre to every donor, pooled into a Province Safeguarding Fund that will facilitate a Province Safeguarding Representative and their Assistant to roll out annual safeguarding training at all levels, the priority being at the front line where the most vulnerable are.

**Annual training** - why? Turnover at apostolate level/social centres can be high, particularly in challenging environments and the international development sector. Also - the types of safeguarding training are wide-ranging - what you don't do one year, you may decide to do the next. A Province may focus one year on training country-level safeguarding committees on investigations. The following year might focus on a basic refresher on safeguarding for all personnel at the apostolate level and dispelling myths so that personnel understand how to respond to a concern and who to report it to. The following year



might focus on training the local representative within the apostolate on their role – how to respond and, equally, how not to respond to a person raising a concern.

We conducted a **XN Global Safeguarding Training Survey** and circulated the survey to our partners in 6 languages, receiving 1,273 responses (554 in Spanish) from 75 countries, which was an impressive 62% response rate. In summary, the survey showed that an overwhelming majority of respondents felt a need for further safeguarding training. The XN hopes to identify a path that would give our partners at field level access to online and offline content in various languages, guiding a local team to contextualise it to their own project with group discussion.

We realised our need to standardise our approach when visiting partner organisations – standardising how we validate the five minimum requirements in ways that can't be done remotely. We developed a safeguarding monitoring visit template which guides us in interviewing three different people within the partner organisation, namely, a) the safeguarding representative, b) personnel in a junior position and c) the client/ participant/ beneficiary, around their awareness of reporting and responding to concerns, with recommendations and action plans on any gaps identified.

We try to dispel the fear around having safeguarding cases. We look at our partners' procedures around incident reporting, post-incident risk assessments and action plans – and see if we can assist in improving procedures to ensure cases are managed professionally and timely, with the child's welfare taking priority.

Our conversations with our **XN partners in the Global South** have advanced dramatically since 2019. In the framework of the PCCP, the letter from Fr. General to Major Superiors in September 20 with 15 indicators to evidence the actual implementation of safeguarding standards at all levels was a critical milestone in our work in the XN. It gave way for our XN minimum requirements to be seen no longer as 'expecting too much' but as part of how we should work within the Society – part of our everyday work.

Our partners also changed from a stage of compliance to seeking advice on engaging proactively within the local community they serve. Our partners wanted to reduce violence suffered by the most vulnerable. How could we ever aim for the intellectual, emotional, spiritual, or social development of those we serve if we are not to address the trauma suffered by so many in their own homes and communities?

Through our **Safeguarding Champion Award**, we plan to highlight partners evidencing social impact regarding protection within the local communities they serve. Nominees are assessed based on:

- The project's ability to showcase their protection work
- Evidence of the impact the protection work is having, for example, reduced violence, increased reporting to police within local communities
- The potential for the protection work to be upscaled or replicated elsewhere and
- The change that has occurred in the location due to the intervention



The assessment criteria do not favour protection work with large numbers of beneficiaries if it cannot be linked to positive changes. We have much to learn from one another, and our Champion Award hopes to highlight this.

Cognisant of the proportion of personnel we're working with, who themselves are survivors of childhood abuse, care of the individual (*cura personalis*) is important in every aspect of safeguarding – from how we deliver training to case management to running protection awareness campaigns in local communities – even to the extent of who we appoint as safeguarding representatives. In this regard, we need to **be cautious of myths** that are so often spread in trainings. The premise that a child who has been sexually abused is more likely to grow up to be a perpetrator of sexual abuse in adulthood is scientifically inaccurate. Research indicates

there is no causal relationship between those two facts. Such myths only re-victimise the survivor. When we facilitate trainings or discuss safeguarding with colleagues, we need to ensure what we share is grounded in scientific evidence. Otherwise, we might be producing more harm than good.

As the XN, we hope to become better advocates for evidencing social change in local communities in the Global South, reducing violence in communities. We hope to support our partners better on successful actions – protection campaigns and programs that have been evidenced to reduce violence within different contexts, countries, and rural and urban areas. This is one of our key priorities for the future. 'Always with one foot raised', we accompany our partners in this safeguarding journey.

**Note:** if you want to learn more about the XN process or templates, please email [programmes@iji.ie](mailto:programmes@iji.ie)

*Original in English*



## Implementing Child Safeguarding Standards in Complex Environments: The Experience of Jesuit Refugee Service

**Brian Cranmer**

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The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation with a mission to accompany, serve, and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons so that they may heal, learn, and determine their future. Our work expresses the commitment of the Society of Jesus to stand with refugees around the world. JRS programmes are currently found in 58 countries, and our primary services provided are in the fields of Reconciliation, Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support, Education and Livelihoods. Occasionally, JRS provides emergency relief and basic health care. We never cease to advocate for the rights of refugees and to articulate the obligation to protect the most vulnerable among us. Currently, more than 800,000 individuals are direct beneficiaries of JRS projects, and more than 8,500 personnel contribute to the work of JRS, including staff, volunteers, interns, and religious and incentive workers.

In 2017, in response to the global call for improved standards in safeguarding in humanitarian organisations, JRS finalised and launched its Child Safeguarding Policy, based upon the core international standards of confidential reporting, safe

recruitment, training of staff, safe and efficient referral mechanisms and monitoring and implementation of procedures for preventing and responding to abuse. At the time, JRS already had a global Code of Conduct that all personnel signed upon joining the organisation. Although this document gave clear direction about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour as a member of JRS, it did not go into enough detail about the reporting structures for handling allegations of abuse, particularly of any of the various forms of child abuse. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), at the end of 2022, of the 108.4 million forcibly displaced people, an estimated 43.3 million (40 per cent) were below 18 years of age. Children are dramatically over-represented among the world's refugees. Therefore, a more targeted policy was needed to prevent harm to children, the most vulnerable people we aim to serve.

JRS recognises that in various humanitarian situations where forced displacement occurs, all affected persons (particularly children) are sometimes vulnerable to abuse and exploitation by personnel affiliated with humanitarian

agencies tasked with assisting them. Humanitarian environments often create unequal power relations between beneficiaries and humanitarian workers and present opportunities for exploitation, abuse of power and sexual abuse, necessitating measures to prevent this occurrence. The JRS Child Safeguarding Policy was our first step towards implementing a consistent global mechanism to prevent harm to vulnerable children and hold all personnel accountable for their actions. When reports are made in the community between community members, JRS refers to national agencies or other NGOs in the area.

### **The Rollout**

When initially launched at the International Office in Rome, training was arranged for all JRS headquarters staff, unveiling an action plan for rolling out the policy to all 10 Regional Offices and then at all Country Offices before reaching the field offices. Each JRS office was required to appoint two designated Child Safeguarding Officers, who would be the focal points for receiving complaints and giving induction, training and advice to JRS personnel in their respective locations. The Child Safeguarding Officers (CSOs) would be supported by the International Office, in particular by the International Child Safeguarding Advisor (CSA), who was appointed in 2017 to supervise this rollout.

All CSOs received basic training on their roles and responsibilities, and the CSA began a programme of policy rollout at all regional offices. A series of country visits took place in the following years, with 1-day (often 2-day) training workshops held

for all JRS staff, raising awareness around the global definition of the child, the rights of children as outlined under international human rights law, understanding abuse as it occurs in different cultures, learning about our responsibility as a member of JRS to be vigilant, to recognise abuse (or potential abuse) when it happens and the obligation to report (confidentially) to the designated focal points. By the end of 2019, prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, 36 separate trainings had been delivered in 16 countries on four continents to a total of over 900 personnel. For the following two years, the rollout of these trainings had to switch to virtual settings only, with some training taking place in-country, when possible, by the Child Safeguarding Officers themselves, with the help of the JRS global Child Safeguarding Training Manual, launched in 2021. As of September 2023, since the continuation of in-country training, we have delivered 49 separate trainings in 25 countries on five continents, with a total participation of over 1300 personnel.

### **Recognising and Overcoming Obstacles**

One of the significant obstacles faced during the rollout of the policy was staff turnover. At times, when a staff member who was a designated focal point left the organisation, there were failings in the appointment of another child safeguarding officer, and this caused gaps to arise in the system. This obstacle, once identified, was overcome in two ways: first of all, a CSO Induction/Handover document was designed and translated into the major working languages of the organisation (English, French, Spanish and Arabic) and disseminated globally to encourage a more fluid transition between outgoing and incoming Child Safeguarding focal points.

Also, it was recognised that the responsibility for implementing the policy had initially laid with Human Resources, but not all country offices had a HR officer. So, it was decided that to strengthen the safeguarding system, the responsibility for ensuring that all staff signed the policy and that all offices had child safeguarding officers in place must now lie with the Country Directors themselves.

The quality and sustainability of a sound safeguarding system depends not only upon solid leadership but also on accessible uptake of the principles and standards by *all* personnel, during and outside of work hours. What might culturally be viewed as unacceptable behaviour in one country might be deemed reasonably acceptable in another. That is why the minimum standards are essential; they are the ‘non-negotiables’. For instance, as explicitly stated in the JRS Child Safeguarding Policy, “any form of sexual or gender-based violence or abuse constitutes a violation of the fundamental values of JRS. In all cases, JRS prohibits its personnel to engage in sexual activity with a person under the age of 18, regardless of the age of majority or the age of consent in any local context, due to different social, cultural or religious reasons”. Throughout the policy’s rollout, there has been some resistance to the definition of the child being ‘anyone under the age of 18’ in different contexts and locations.

### **The Challenge of ‘Culture’**

In traditional societies, early marriage, for instance, has been practised and unchallenged for generations. Children as young as 9 or 10 years old have been ‘promised’ to an older man, whether for cultural or socio-economic reasons. This, of

course, is entirely contradictory to the goals of child safeguarding and, therefore, cannot be tolerated by JRS, regardless of local customary belief systems. It is a challenge to raise child protection standards and speak about the rights of the child in circumstances whereby children have not traditionally been viewed as full rights-bearers or considered even as a financial commodity. When tackling such issues on the ground, it is not the policy of JRS to enforce change but to facilitate discussion with communities about the negative impacts of traditional practices on women and vulnerable adults and to bring about positive change from the bottom up.

This is where the identity of JRS as an organisation is important. We advocate for the rights of the vulnerable, especially children. Therefore, we cannot make exceptions when it comes to the expectations we must place upon our personnel. And we do not. JRS has zero tolerance towards all forms of abuse. We might be limited in our capacity to challenge harmful practices, abuse and exploitation within the communities and broader societies in which we operate. Still, we have total power and responsibility to enforce higher standards and tackle abuse within the organisation.

Today, in 2023, all JRS offices globally have two child safeguarding officers in place. All personnel have signed the Child Safeguarding Policy and received either an induction or some form of training (virtual or in-person) on JRS Child Safeguarding standards, principles and protocols. There is no longer any excuse for abuse.

### **Beyond Child Safeguarding**

Since 2021, in response to a global push by the United Nations, all humanitarian and

development agencies must now also have a PSEA(H) Policy, which stands for Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse (and Harassment). Some organisations stop at PSEA, but JRS includes sexual harassment in this safeguarding policy. Again, this policy, as it is being rolled out globally, strongly prohibits any form of sexual misconduct (whether it be harassment, exploitation or abuse) by a JRS representative. It also emphasises mandatory reporting by all JRS personnel if they witness or suspect any form of SEAH by a colleague.

This policy has also been accompanied by the JRS Anti-Harassment Policy (which protects JRS personnel against abuse of any form by a colleague) and a Whistle-Blower Policy, which protects the identity, confidentiality and safety of anyone who reports abuse within the organisation, thus further strengthening the safeguarding system and overcoming many obstacles to reporting, particularly the fear of retaliation. These five policies make up the JRS Safeguarding Framework, which has a strong focus on preventing harm of any kind to children in our programmes as well as sexual misconduct of any kind by a member of JRS towards children, vulnerable adults and colleagues within the organisation, while at the same time protecting the identity and safety of the complainant.

At first, it was seen as taboo to report on a colleague. Or the fear of doing so got in the way. However, through the rollout of the policies and the accompanying training programmes, staff are now more aware of their responsibilities and rights. They understand why reporting abuse, challenging negative behaviours, and bringing about a culture of safeguarding

and protection within the organisation is important. We must have higher standards around recruitment, monitoring and implementation. We must expect better. And we are all responsible for raising those standards.

### **Where Are We Now?**

In 2023, we see a shift in how reporting is viewed. We see a positive move towards a global consensus that certain behaviours are unacceptable and must be stamped out in the organisation, as in any other organisation. There are positive signs that the culture is changing, and that has strengthened our identity. More reporting, for instance, does not mean that there is a rise in abuse (whether it be abuse of children, vulnerable adults or staff). It just means that we are standing up to it now in ways that we were not equipped, or perhaps willing, to do so in the past. The more we report and investigate (and take disciplinary measures, including dismissal if founded), in unison with continued implementation of safeguarding standards, the stronger the deterrence against abuse and exploitation.

From the perspective of the organisational cultural changes that have taken place as a result of the rollout of the Child Safeguarding Policy (and now the PSEAH Policy as well), what is notable and must be acknowledged as a major success story is the initiative taken by so many country offices and projects to conduct their own training, not only between staff but with local and national implementing partner agencies. In several countries, there have been dozens of cases of JRS personnel replicating and/or adapting the standardised child safeguarding training modules at the project level, empowering

community-based and self-help organisations globally. The trickle-on effect of this transformative momentum that has taken shape has a tremendously positive impact among and within the communities that JRS serve, especially within refugee camps and IDP settlements. For instance, in JRS MENA (Middle East and North Africa Region), JRS Child Safeguarding Officers have translated all of our safeguarding documents into Arabic and then again into local languages and adapted the content to suit the customs of the region, sensitively and professionally reaching out to local organisation and community groups with which we partner.

In addition, having promoted and practised these safeguarding standards for the past six years, JRS internationally has been credited by the United Nations and other international partners, mainly because it works in highly complex environments where best practices are not

always easily achievable. But we still have a long way to go. Administratively, JRS International is in great shape regarding safeguarding practices. We are building a global organisational culture of prevention and response and have increased our internal capacities a thousand-fold. We must continue engaging with communities and raising awareness of our reporting channels and referral mechanisms to better serve and advocate for the vulnerable. We must mainstream protection into all our programming as we build upon the accepted and established foundations of internal safeguarding principles and protocols. Let what we say and do inside the organisation reflect outward so that we are seen and known by others to be steadfast in our readiness to denounce and eliminate abuse of all kinds, especially towards children.

**Note:** JRS International is reviewing and revising its safeguarding policies and preparing to relaunch them globally in 2024. If you wish to view any of our safeguarding policies or discuss any aspect of this article in more detail, don't hesitate to contact the JRS International Safeguarding & Accountability Advisor.

*Original in English*



## Frameworks for Protection in the Fe y Alegría Federation

**Dani Villanueva SJ**

*General Coordinator, International Federation of Fe y Alegría*

### 1. Collective Action in Fe y Alegría

Fe y Alegría is an educational and social work of the Society of Jesus founded in 1955 by Father José María Vélaz SJ in Caracas, Venezuela. It is currently active in more than 22 countries across Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia. Around one million people participate in our educational and social programs across this extensive network today. Over 40,000 people collaborate in the running of the network, and our schools coordinate with more than 100 religious congregations.

The vastness of this movement for popular education and social promotion can be explained by the fact that it is an International Federation of operationally independent national organisations. This largely marks our way of proceeding when it comes to decision-making at assemblies and in implementing common policies or programs. These latter primarily rely on the support of local committees and teams coordinated by a limited staff at the International Federation.

Fe y Alegría's institutional complexity reflects its enormous diversity, not only in geographical terms but also linguistically and especially culturally. The participatory dynamics of our movement mean that

progress is never without its complications; however, this facilitates buy-in to the organisation's mission and ensures the sustainability of local procedures, which, in some cases, have been running for almost 70 years.

Most of the individual Fe y Alegrías form part of the public education networks in their own countries and are accredited within the national legal structures and the requirements set by the Ministry of Education. It adds greater complexity to attempts to standardise and harmonise (not homogenise) procedures at the federation level.

In this context of diversity and autonomy among the members of the Fe y Alegría network, since 2000, the Federation has adopted common strategic plans, allowing it to build the network and develop collective and joined-up projects. Currently, we have a Global Plan of Federal Priorities that sets our scope on fostering synergies internationally. It comes in the form of 13 initiatives led by teams spread across the different Fe y Alegrías and an international team that supports and guides collective strategy. One of these initiatives is protection, which prioritises child protection and guarantees

spaces free from any form of violence in the contexts where Fe y Alegría operates.

## **2. The Dynamics of Protection at the Federation Level**

Our understanding of what child protection entails has undergone various stages of development, along with evolving perspectives in the different cultures and countries where our movement is active. In 2015, in Nicaragua, the Council of National Directorates published a joint manifesto expressing the importance of child protection for the first time. Three years later, in 2018, the Montevideo assembly approved an International Policy Against Abuse. This policy forged a pathway to prevent child abuse and promote a cultural shift in Fe y Alegría, establishing guidelines for the prevention of abuse in each of the work's educational and social centres. It should be noted that this is a mandatory policy for all of the movement's individual Fe y Alegrías.

In 2021, the Federation's Committee for the Protection of Children and Adolescents was established, and the executive for protection was created. As we delved deeper into the subject, we saw the need for external certification based on international standards. In June 2021, the Federation was awarded the "Keeping Children Safe" Level 1 Certification, and the proposal was made to certify each national Fe y Alegría gradually.

It is essential to underscore the political will required at each and every Fe y Alegría to take on this joint commitment to child protection. If this is absent, it is hard to imagine how we can progress as a collective body to realise the future that can be glimpsed on the horizon.

## **3. Certification**

Our first task was to assess compliance with international standards of protection in each Fe y Alegría, which led us to pursue a two-fold approach:

1. We appointed a Child Protection Officer in each Fe y Alegría to take the lead on updating policies and preparing for Certification across all the countries in our network. Since then, the executive for protection has worked with the national directorates and the network of child protection officers to conduct trainings and meetings to monitor progress. We estimate that it will take us two years to certify all of the Fe y Alegrías.
2. Recognising the urgency and importance of the issue, we created the Global Plan for Immediate Action on Protection against Abuse. This plan includes protocols, procedures, and materials to be implemented immediately across all levels – centres, national and regional offices. Our goal is to implement this in less than one year.

## **4. The Results**

As a result of the above process, Fe y Alegría has a Network for Child Protection at the federation level in which 100% of the National Protection Officers of the various federated Fe y Alegría participate. More than 80% have received training in the development and updating of Child Protection Policies (2022) and the plan for the implementation of the Organizational Child and Adolescent Protection Policy (2023).



This network is a key element for implementing strategic decisions made in the councils with the National Directorates. Collaboration with the Communication Officers Network is also essential. We work with them to run trainings on crisis management, taking a proactive stance to disseminate the work on child and adolescent protection carried out by the movement.

Currently, 95% of Fe y Alegría have prevention and care policies and protocols adapted to their local environments, and most are making progress in updating the Organizational Child and Adolescent Protection Policies to conform with international standards.

I believe that these successful outcomes are due to the high level of consensus required in our political decision-making, combined with the fact that middle management at the Fe y Alegrías has been given a role of responsibility, thus ensuring effective implementation at the local level. Our ultimate success will depend on our ability to make an impact in each school.

Our goal is that by 2024, 100% of Fe y Alegrías will have implemented the Global Plan for Immediate Action to establish prevention and protection measures at the school level and that three-quarters will have distributed and trained all their staff in their policies.

## 5. Some examples

All this reflection will be of little significance if it does not lead to each Fe y Alegría taking action to design, compile and execute harm prevention measures, as well as training and awareness initiatives

on child protection with teachers, students and families. The diversity of the movement makes it difficult to generalise, but let us look at three examples:

- a. Fe y Alegría Nicaragua, through the project “Prevention of gender violence and promotion of safe environments and healthy coexistence”, convenes meetings based on the Dialogic Model of Conflict Prevention and Resolution. They have succeeded in protection initiatives such as the Club de Valientes Violencia 0 and the Dialogic Scientific Gatherings. Implementation with students began in 2021, and community members led the initiative.
- b. As part of the program “Schools of Care,” Fe y Alegría Dominican Republic runs a campaign every April as part of Child Abuse Prevention Month. The campaign is called “*Cuidado con el cuidado, quien cuida no abusa*” [“Caring carefully, people who care do not abuse”] and involves staff, volunteers, students, families and the wider community.
- c. Fe y Alegría Guatemala, El Salvador, Venezuela and Panama work within the United Nations guidelines, ‘Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse’ (PSEA), alongside some of the other partner organisations such as UNICEF, the US Embassy and others. Evaluations of our protection policies show that we comply with all eight PSEA standards, putting these institutions in the low-risk category. Other Fe y Alegría have followed suit in incorporating PSEA guidelines into their policies.

It also bears mentioning the many other child protection programs that focus on places outside the educational centre

setting where children face the risk of abuse, mainly in family and community settings. A good example is the worldwide program *La Luz de las Niñas*, in which Fe y Alegría participates with other partner organisations. Their two-fold objective is to raise awareness about violence targeting girls and to care for victims who have suffered abuse, as well as to influence public authorities to develop policies and initiatives that protect children in every capacity.

## 6. What is Our Model?

It would be naïve to attribute these results solely to the strategies that we have designed. Undoubtedly, the repeated abuse crises in the Society of Jesus' environment have influenced the speed and growing political will to roll out these procedures. In fact, in 2023, in the wake of recent crises, we additionally established a Crisis Committee to monitor and support ad-hoc decision-making on specific cases of child sexual abuse and mistreatment.

Thus, we could say that we have a complete picture of the Federation's model for work on child and adolescent protection:

1. Launching of the policy for full certification across the Federation: By 2025, all federated Fe y Alegría will be in the latter stages of their level 1 and level 2 'Keeping Children Safe' certification.
2. The proposed Global Plan for Immediate Action: By January 2024, the Federation will have an international network of teams working on child and adolescent protection. All Fe y Alegrías will have put in place staff training, employment procedures, risk analysis and mitigation procedures, routes and channels to report on abuse, and monitoring and reporting systems.
3. Communicative response protocol at the federation and country level: Comprehensive monitoring at the federation level, preparing press releases and leading the national response strategy through the Fe y Alegría communications network.
4. Defining the system of key actors in child and adolescent protection at the federation level: In addition to the executive and the committee for protection, the Federation's Network for Child Protection and a Crisis Cabinet for Protection were created as a rapid and coordinated response team.

## 7. Our Learnings

This roll-out of child and adolescent protection procedures with a clear focus on the prevention of child abuse has resulted in many learnings that bear consideration:

1. Children and adolescent protection is a priority for the Federation and must be incorporated locally by each member of Fe y Alegría.
2. Priority implies bolstering our activities by establishing leadership groups, procedures, teams and resources to implement these activities efficiently.
3. A common approach, guided by international protection standards, and precise implementation routes are essential to ensure applicability across the various Fe y Alegrías.
4. Systems-based training and the systematisation of procedures form the basis for successfully implementing child and adolescent protection policies. Training provides

skills, knowledge and strategies that, with minimal adaptation to local contexts, facilitate safe learning spaces.

5. The protection of childhood and adolescence is a cornerstone of Fe y Alegría. Therefore, we must:
  - a. Maintain protection as a permanent and active item in our work agendas in Fe y Alegría's International Federation and the national organisations.
  - b. Prioritise economic and human resources for the management of protection initiatives.
  - c. Foster a shared commitment between the Federation and the national levels and between national and local levels.
  - d. Encourage participation across various levels of the educational community – from leaders at the top of the Federation to the children and adolescents with whom we work.
6. A broad institutional commitment involves everyone interacting with children and adolescents in schools. This level of commitment addresses the various forms of contractual relationships among those who collaborate in Fe y Alegría. It goes to the depth of how they relate with Fe y Alegría on an identity level.
7. Dismantling the culture of violence, breaking the silence surrounding it and denouncing cases of abuse are the most complicated steps in child abuse prevention procedures. It involves facing the vulnerability that cuts across us on a personal and community level. Uncovering and reporting abuse comes with added layers of complication in contexts

where those making abuse allegations are met with aggression. The challenge for institutions is to bolster measures to protect their staff and volunteers.

8. Above all, our main challenge is implementing child and adolescent protection policies at an organisational level. To achieve this goal, we must make it a priority at the national and educational centre levels, which involves:
  - a. Prioritising human resources
  - b. Prioritising economic resources
  - c. Managing our time to prioritise the creation of abuse prevention activities.
  - d. Modifying structures and
  - e. Dismantling the culture of violence.
9. The involvement of children and adolescents is critical. In the policies we promote, it is essential to incorporate the voices of children and adolescents. Their perspective will illuminate our understanding of the violence they experience in the community and guide the development of strategies suitable to their needs to prevent and/or repair the harm caused.
10. Disseminating policies is pivotal to supporting prevention. The message must be honed to each of the various levels within educational communities to be fully understood.

## 8. Next Steps?

The article began by outlining our operational model as an International Federation because this is key to understanding how we approach the issue of protection. We are not a multinational organisation but an international network

of national organisations. As such, the International Federation operates in a subsidiary role to the provinces and local organisations, which are the real actors with their institutional and legal frameworks at the national level.

Our next step is to better understand the role of the international Jesuit networks in the systemic approach to protection, given our focus is broader than national and provincial levels and we don't take direct action at those levels. It means that even though our international networks may be vital to promoting collective policies and procedures, we believe that our networks should play a more significant role in response procedures and should more often be included in the coordination

spaces alongside provinces and conferences.

Our next focus will be to connect our work with the rest of the actors and coordination spaces in the Society of Jesus and the Church. Currently, the leaders of the Latin American apostolic networks are already part of the network of provincial protection officers. Our dream is to link up with structures within Provinces, secretariats within the Curiae, and networks within the Society of Jesus so that real collaboration will build a coordinated and more effective response to Promoting a Consistent Culture of Protection. Thinking and acting as a collective body in protection – when responding to complaints, training and working together – will help us realise the *Magis*.

*Original in Spanish*  
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