



PROJECT SOTERIA

Preventing perpetrators of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from working in the aid sector

THE SITUATION

Aid organizations employ highly mobile international and national staff to work in fragile environments, delivering development and humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of some of the world's most vulnerable communities.

The globalized nature of humanitarian and development work, combined with the urgency with which staff often need to be recruited and deployed, presents challenges for aid organizations in conducting thorough screening of staff both before and after their hiring.

Perpetrators of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) have exploited positions in the aid sector to harm the very people they are meant to protect and assist.

Without full awareness, good detection mechanisms, effective reporting and practical communication channels for the aid community, sexual offenders can continue working and moving within the sector, putting children and vulnerable adults at risk.



PROJECT SOTERIA

PROJECT AIMS

Project Soteria is bringing law enforcement and aid sector organizations large and small together to:

- Prevent sexual offenders from using their positions to access and offend against children and vulnerable adults; and
- Strengthen the capacity of law enforcement to investigate, prosecute and arrest those who abuse aid recipients.

While Project Soteria predominantly focuses on prevention – reducing the risk of sex offenders working in the aid sector – it also aims to ensure that the strongest mechanisms for detecting, investigating and reporting cases of SEAH are in place.

To this end, the project seeks to build on and complement other ongoing initiatives aimed at improving safeguarding in the international aid and development sector, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, the Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance, the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme and other projects funded by FCDO. An advisory board of representatives from government, law enforcement, the United Nations, legal experts, the private sector, civil society and survivors of SEAH in the aid sector also informs the project. It builds on the work of a successful assessment phase for Soteria carried out in 2019-2021.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Project Soteria is working to:

- Strengthen the capacity of law enforcement to investigate reports of SEAH in the aid sector, maintain and manage criminal records and increase awareness of SEAH in general.
- Leverage the full range of INTERPOL's global policing capabilities – from INTERPOL notices to a dedicated crime analysis file – towards increased understanding and prevention of cases of SEAH committed by aid sector personnel.
- Collaborate with the aid sector to prevent and detect cases of SEAH by facilitating information exchange and enhancing recruitment mechanisms that both detect past offenders and deter potential offenders.

Timeframe: May 2021 to May 2025

Budget: Up to EUR 9.3 million (£8.25 million)



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