



SAFETY FIRST: PROTECTING DISPLACED FAMILIES ESCAPING THE TRAUMA OF WAR

Over two million people, mostly vulnerable women and children (including orphans, the elderly, those with serious underlying medical conditions and disabilities) have been forced to flee their homes in the Ukraine to escape an unrelenting and particularly savage invasion.

This figure is rising rapidly as the conflict escalates in targeting residential areas of towns and cities. Families are leaving behind loved ones, livelihoods and almost everything they own, in search of safety, shelter, food and water in neighbouring countries.

Some families have no relatives in these countries to rely upon for shelter, support or protection while they try to recover from exhaustion and the horrors they have experienced, what they have lost and been forced to leave behind in a hurry. Sadly, this is the biggest refugee crisis since WW2. What's happening is a humanitarian travesty.

Managing safe passage to a neighbouring host country is only part of their long and difficult struggle to survive.

For many who reach a host country exhausted and distressed, surrounded by crowds of others in similar crisis, not knowing where they are going to sleep, or what to do next, their problems are only just beginning. In situations like this, trafficking is a major risk.

These refugees continue to be in real danger of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, especially from those posing as good Samaritans offering transportation, a room to stay, supplies and support. Many will offer lifts or offer private accommodation. Of the refugees, there are many unaccompanied and separated children. There are reports already emerging of criminal gangs taking advantage of young women and children in desperate circumstances.

Refugees arriving in two of the largest Polish cities of Warsaw and Krakow for example, are actively being moved on further to smaller towns and villages due to overcrowding.

Statistical evidence demonstrates that women are especially at a higher risk of sexual harassment, violence and human trafficking in these situations and in places where refugee camps are being hosted.

There has been an enormous outpouring of goodwill, solidarity and hospitality from the UK and EU countries in particular.

The British Government are also actively making plans for the temporary protection of Ukrainian refugees alongside the EU. This includes encouraging the public to register their willingness to accommodate refugees in their homes.

Many well intentioned host countries, including those bordering Ukraine, are scrambling to gather resources and do their very best, but they are rapidly running out of resources due to the sheer volume of people they are helping.

The humanitarian suffering and needs of these displaced refugees is immense and beyond anything that most western politicians or members of these organisations have ever experienced in their lifetime.

Local organisations in these host countries are also struggling to keep families who arrive together, by housing them in private homes, schools, churches, guesthouses and sports arenas, but their efforts are largely uncoordinated. They have few resources and little if any experience in providing assistance on such a vast scale.

Currently the civil authorities in these cities and many others lack the resources or expertise in tracking and monitoring these vulnerable people. Without accurate reliable information, the scale of the potential threat and the need for protective intervention is difficult to identify and monitor.

Presently, there is no co-ordinated or effective system of oversight on a pan European level to ensure that the right safeguards are in place to protect those who are in most need and at most risk.

What can be done and whose responsibility is this?

OUR SOLUTION

Through years of experience in operating in the field in developing countries and in areas of conflict around the world, we have developed the practical know-how in the form of a sustainable solution which can be adapted in any environment or evolving situation.

This versatile solution promotes effective and robust safeguarding processes and plans which are subject to rigorous and constant monitoring, to ensure the protection of vulnerable displaced refugees against sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH) and to ensure that they are supported empathetically.

Our safeguarding toolkit provides a means for promoting prevention through educational awareness, amplifying the voices and experiences of human rights abuses so that they are recorded, acknowledged and harnessed within a process of driving accountability.

Our toolkit has been designed to strengthen the ability of host countries to deal with such matters within disposed communities directly.

OUR APPROACH

We offer a victim focused approach which can be delivered in any host country while providing effective central oversight and co-ordination, helping to make sure that vital child protection services continue.

It provides valuable support to those working tirelessly to help care for refugees in providing life saving supplies and essential psychological and mental health.

Our approach supports and bolsters the active contribution by women and women's rights organisations on the frontline of the response during this crisis.

It is an effective and objective means of providing free access to meaningful justice and redress for those refugees and their families who have been adversely affected by war and related violations of human rights and international conventions.

It ensures proper representation for victims in a language and format that they may understand providing a less intimidating environment.

It avoids the uncertainty and hardship that may inevitably be endured by genuine victims through lengthy delays and administrative processes.

It provides a broader range of satisfactory remedies for genuine victims in a more meaningful, cultural context.

It helps to identify and target those most in need at an early stage.

It assists in promoting the rule of law and justice systems in local countries and at the same time, actively promotes the UN's Social Development Goal 16 (the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels).

It facilitates oversight and accountability with the relevant authorities in country or in the UK.

It has been designed to provide a legacy outcome, by ensuring that the internal safeguarding structures, policies and practices of humanitarian organisations are 'up to scratch' and aligned in accordance with international standards of human rights.

IF YOUR ORGANISATION WOULD LIKE TO FIND OUT MORE
ABOUT OUR UNIQUE 7-STEP MODEL, PLEASE CONTACT
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It helps to maintain and strengthen the reputation, standing and trust of the organisation in the eyes of national and international governments, regulators and the media.

It provides a valuable and sustainable toolkit for any genuine NGO or corporate social responsibility policy in making an immediate impact where things can and do go wrong.

It serves as a future template that can be redeployed in a similar way by the same organisation to tackle unfortunate incidents with confidence and integrity as or when they occur.

