

# CLOSING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP

## Better Protecting survivors/victims of SEAH

*A project of the CHS Alliance and ISS/Erasmus University with funding from the Government of The Netherlands*

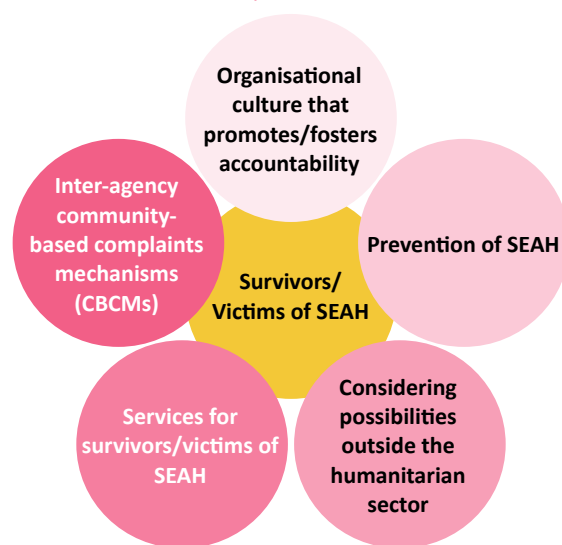
### THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP

Humanitarian organisations have long committed to being accountable to the crisis-affected people with whom, and for whom, they work. This commitment is articulated in the **Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)**. Translating the intention of accountability into practice continues to pose huge challenges for aid actors.

The sexual exploitation, abuse, and/or harassment (SEAH) of crisis-affected persons by aid workers is among the most egregious failures of accountability. Every time a survivor, victim, volunteer, or staff member does not feel confident, or know how, to report abuse safely, we are failing. Every time a complaint or report is made, but not effectively addressed, we are failing.

This accountability gap must be addressed by individual organisations and collectively across the humanitarian community by using a range of different approaches.

Different Approaches are Needed to Prevent and Respond to SEAH



### CLOSING THE ACCOUNTABILITY GAP

The CHS Alliance and the International Institute of Social Studies at Erasmus University (ISS), with funding from the Government of The Netherlands, are undertaking a 3-year **project to test new ways to address the accountability gap for survivors/victims of SEAH in 3 contexts: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt)**.

Aid organisations that join this much-needed pilot initiative will be able to better demonstrate how they are meeting their commitments to accountability, as well as contributing to – and being part of – a wider initiative to improve the way the sector responds to complaints and reports of SEAH.

Closing the broader accountability gap, through the lens of survivors/victims of SEAH, requires considering various aspects. Areas for improvement in each context will be identified through an assessment that considers the following:

- Listening to affected people;
- Looking at individual organisations' current accountability efforts;
- Considering organisational cultures;
- Examining collective efforts on accountability; and
- Better understanding how accountability is embedded in the societal context.

Ways to address identified gaps will be tested in each context by involving affected communities, the aid sector, and other relevant stakeholders from within and outside the humanitarian sector, including research, human rights, and women's organisations.

Lessons from these tested approaches will be used to influence broader policy and practice across the humanitarian sector globally.

# PROJECT OVERVIEW 2021-2023

## ASSESSING THE CURRENT STATE OF PSEAH/AAP IN-COUNTRY TO IDENTIFY ACCOUNTABILITY GAPS

Various methods will be used to identify gaps:

- 1. Listening to affected people and other national/local** actors through Participatory Action Research (PAR) and community perception surveys.
- 2. Assessing organisational-level accountability** through a desk review of literature and using the results of the different options available to organisations under the CHS Verification Scheme: 1) Self-assessment; 2) Independent Verification; and/or 3) Certification.
  - The CHS Verification Scheme options help organisations (UN, NGOs, Red Cross/Red Crescent) understand how well they are implementing the CHS, including in terms of PSEAH and localisation.
    - » The review of organisational systems/policies help understand how communities, staff, and partners perceive an organisation's accountability.
    - » The CHS Alliance will support interested organisations in the pilot country to complete the self-assessment option, including an improvement plan setting out steps to improve the organisation's accountability over the following 2 years.
- 3. Considering organisational culture** through conversations with CEOs/country directors.
- 4. Examining collective accountability at country level** using the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) collective results tracker.

## NATIONAL WORKSHOPS

4th Quarter 2021

- **Consider the assessment findings and identify (new) ways to address accountability gaps** looking both inside and outside the humanitarian system.
- **Establish national project advisory groups** to review the testing, learn, and adapt to improve accountability for affected communities and survivors/victims of SEAH.

## CO-DESIGNING, TESTING, AND ADAPTING NEW APPROACHES

2021-2023

- **Test and adapt** innovative means to improve accountability looking both inside and outside the humanitarian sector.
- **Share findings and learning** globally.

## CONTRIBUTING TO IMPROVED ACCOUNTABILITY GLOBALLY

2021-2023

**Learning from the 3 pilots** will help improve accountability systems at the international level to better protect affected populations and survivors/victims of SEAH

## GLOBAL LEARNING EVENT

Quater 4, 2023

**Share lessons from the project,** review findings, and define next steps to continue improving accountability to victims/survivors of SEAH

Continue to learn and adapt based on feedback from survivors/victims of SEAH and affected communities

Address organisational culture through in-country dialogues to address findings to improve accountability