Example 2.1.9 - Narrative Risk assessment

*Note: This is a real example of a narrative risk assessment used as part of the shelter pilot programme in Slovakia as part of the Ukraine 2022 Ukraine response.*

# **Purpose**

This document provides a risk assessment of the shelter pilot programme in Slovakia. The risk assessment is based on:

* A field visit to Poprad to observe the process of family registration.
* Conversations with programme team including Slovak Red Cross (SRC) Programme Manager; International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Shelter Delegate; SRC Poprad volunteers.
* A desk analysis of key documents including tripartite agreements; household verifications template; monitoring template; application forms and registration form.

# **Limitations of the assessment**

The analysis predominantly focuses on the overall programme design with a particular focus on the registration, selection, application, and monitoring of the programme – the payment process has not been fully assessed.

# **Key risks identified, mitigations in place, further suggested mitigations.**

1. **Limited understanding of the process creating false expectations among refugees or causing delays / bottlenecks in the process.**

**Suggested mitigations:** Volunteers across all branches are provided with a thorough briefing / training process at the outset of the programme. This covers:

A core script on what info to share with refugees when they arrive at the branch for a registration;

Answers to frequently asked questions including handling difficult situations (e.g. dealing with upset families not admitted to the programme)

Info note for the volunteers explaining key definitions and concepts that are in the registration form e.g.

1. **Humanitarian Service Points (HSP)s do not have sufficient human resourcing capacity to ensure timely and effective running of the programme (e.g. payments conditional on a positive monitoring visit) leading to delays in payments which could adversely impact the relations between RC / refugees landlord.**

**Suggested mitigation**: Assess the capacity in each branch vis a vis the duration of each step in the programme process (e.g. registration, housing standard visit, monitoring visits etc.) to ensure realistic and managable workload on each branch and adjust programme expectations accordingly.

1. **HSP staff and volunteers do not have training to effectively and efficiently implement programme, this includes, for example:** 
   1. To save time, rather than asking each question in the registration form, volunteers assume some answers; this could lead to inaccurate assessment of eligibility. Where additional questions to better understand refugees' needs are asked, such practice could skew our understanding of broader refugees' needs and misinform design of future potential programming.
   2. There is a risk that volunteers have challenges with maintaining their impartiality and objectivity as they feel emotionally invested in the situation.

**Suggested mitigation:**

Training package for volunteers and staff in place covering: roles and responsibilities at each stage of the programming; expected behaviors from staff and volunteers; FAQ sheet detailing answers to common questions or common problems identified during the pilot; rationale behind each programme stage (e.g. registration, monitoring visits etc) to build an understanding why these are in place. As SRC does not yet have a Code of Conduct in place, the briefing should also cover expected behaviours based on RC principles)

1. **In exceptional cases, families can receive support for additional 3 months. There is not yet clarity on what constitutes an exceptional cases. A process for assessing such cases is yet to be designed.**

**Suggested mitigation:** Design a process and criteria for assessing vulnerable cases that apply for additional support. Suggest assessment and outcome for exceptional cases are documented for quality assurance and audit purposes and to ensure continuous enhancement of the process.

1. **Refugees and SRC are not able to secure suitable accommodation.**

**Mitigation:** To manage expectations, refugees are briefed on the details of the programme and their role to proactively search for accommodation.

**Suggested mitigation:** map alternative accommodation options in the region; explore the root causes for inability to secure accommodation (e.g. high expectations? Discrimination due to ethnicity / disability? Limited number of suitable properties in this particular location?) and consider adjusting programme design / putting in place additional processes to prevent exclusion / offer support in searching in wider geographic area.

1. **Challenges with finalizing rental agreements through letting agencies where letting agencies require admin fee / management fee.**

**Suggested mitigation:** The programme team could consider repurposing part of the top up payment after 3 months / part of the payment for housing repairs to cover letting agency fee and reflect this in the tripartite agreement.

1. **Due to inflation across the rental market, programme is unable to cover rental payments / can only find limited number of suitable properties, ultimately limiting the number of refugees we can support.**

**Suggested mitigation:** Continuous monitoring of market prices through feedback from HSP and refugee families complemented by a regular (every 3 months?) analysis of rental market prices by programme team to proactively identify challenges around covering the full rental amount and, where needed, consider adjusting the programme payments accordingly.

1. **Marginalised groups (e.g. minorities, disabled) may face additional challenges when it comes to securing a rental agreement due to social stigma and prejudices.**

**Suggested support:** Programme team could consider reaching out to IFRC Regional Office Europe Protection Gender and Inclusion (PGI) Delegate to seek advice and support with effectively mitigating the risk.

1. **Support to refugees adversely affects social dynamics in local community and unintentionally fuels negative sentiments towards refugee population and towards SRC, undermining ability to operate the programme.**

**Suggested Mitigation:** Proactive communications strategy on the SRC programme support to refugees to counter negative narratives and rumors; regular community engagement to understand and effectively counter negative sentiments. Programme team could also consider seeking support from CEA Delegate in ROE.

1. **Sexual Exploitation Abuse and Harassment (SEAH): Service users are exposed to sexual exploitation and abuse, resulting in harm to individuals, loss of trust in the Movement, loss of donor confidence and ultimately undermining our ability to operate.**

**Mitigations: Declaration from refugees and landlords / host families in tripartite agreement stating they have not been criminally convicted.**

**Suggested mitigations:** Consider requiring all HSP staff working on the programme to sign a code of conduct and to be vetted / to provide criminal record check. Programme team could also consider including questions that could help identify potential survivors or SEAH / Protection issues when conducting monitoring visits.

1. **SEAH: HSP staff and volunteers do not have training and skillset to identify, or effectively and sensitively respond to potential suspicions to SEAH and / or to SEAH disclosures from survivors.**

**Suggested mitigations:** HSP staff to be provided with training to be able to identify and effectively respond to potential disclosures and / or suspicions to abuse and exploitation. This should include training on how to react / what immediate support to provide when they deal with a disclosure, including how to respond sensitively; where to report potential suspicions and allegations.

# **Additional questions**

**Additional 3 months support for vulnerable households:**

* What does this look like in practice from a financial and legal process perspective? For example, does this require amendment of tripartite agreement?
* If so, who would process it, at what stage. Who is responsible for scheduling additional payments, when does this need to happen to avoid payment delay after 6months?

**Inability to secure suitable property in programme locations / nearby:**

* In cases where refugees and SRC are not able to secure suitable rental accommodation, for how long would the refugee family be kept in the database? Would they be excluded from the programme after a certain period of time?
* If so, what is the process to communicate this?

**Steep rise in rental prices:**

* At what point would we revise the set prices? Who is responsible for monitoring these?

**Availability of suitable accommodation:**

* Where we find that number of suitable properties in a particular location is not sufficient, could we expand the geographic scope of the programme / include additional branches?

**Programme design:**

* Are there differences between programme design in Slovakia vs Poland and are we planning to harmonise this?

1. **Suggested next steps**

**Host family assistance:** the team should consider conducting a risk assessment of the host family support process to gain assurance all key risks have been identified and adequately managed and to identify opportunities for further enhancement of existing controls.

**Assessment of payment process:** The payment process should undergo a risk assessment to identify key areas of risk exposure and put in place mitigations to manage these.

**System for risk oversight**: The team could consider putting in place a system of oversight over key risks and their impact on the programme, how these are mitigated, who owns key actions. To do this, the team could consider utilizing a risk register to capture and systematically track and oversee these.