# Challenges to overcome in addressing safety and security – a Swiss perspective

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# Unité

- Swiss association for personnel exchange in development cooperation (V4D)

- Umbrella organization of 20 NGOs

  - Monitoring the quality of the volunteer assignments

  - Representing the member organisations' interests at the national level

- Supported by Swiss Development Cooperation Agency (SDC)

# Scandals and cases of abuses

- **New public and politic scrutiny**
  Pressure from the government/ donors to take measures

- **Self-questioning**
  Are we adequately equipped and prepared ?

- **Collective thinking**
  Discussions started with other NGOs at the international level (European Forum meeting) and at the national level

# Principles

- **Human factor and power relations are essential**

  - Psychological and socio-cultural aspects should be taken into account;

  - Horizontal partnership is crucial;

- **Principles**

  - Accountability

  - Transparency

  - Effectiveness

# Responsibility of the sending Org
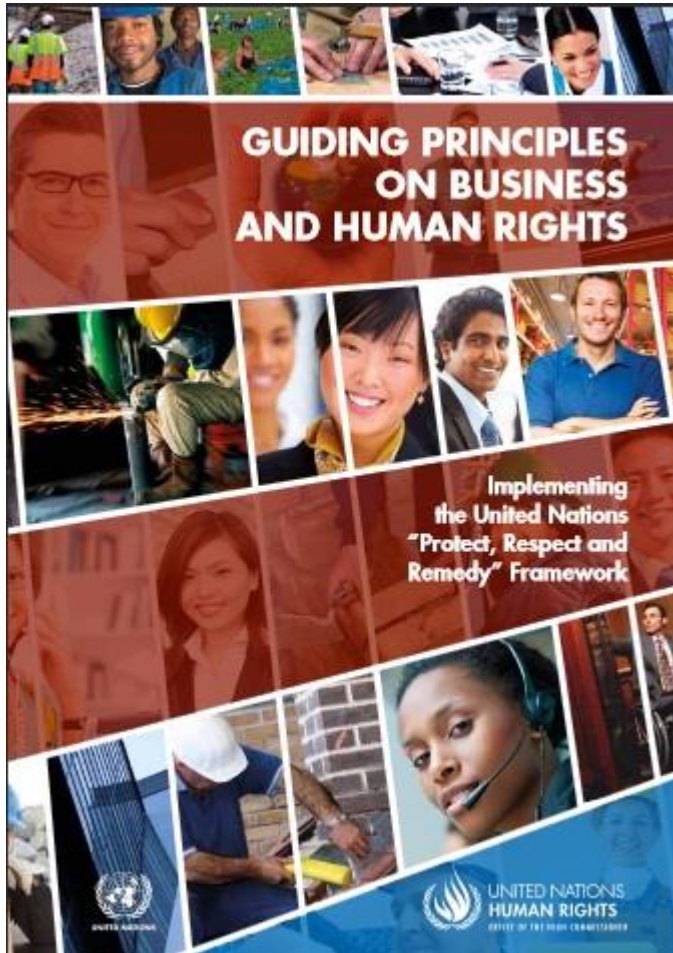
Local communities

Hosting org.

Volunteers

Sending org.

Lower sphere of influence

- Sending NGOs have a moral responsability all along the chain. It is our duty and *raison d'être* to protect the most vulnerables.

# Responsibility



"The responsibility to respect human rights requires that business enterprises:

**- Avoid causing or contributing to adverse human rights impacts through their own activities, and address such impacts when they occur**; (…)

**- Seek to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to their operations, products or services by their business relationships, even if they have not contributed to those impacts.** (…)

**-** *(should have)* **A human rights due diligence process to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their impacts on human rights."**

# **Measures**

- Before the assignments

  - Partnerships conventions
  - Volunteer assessment
  - Volunteers work contracts
  - Code of conduct
  - Safety and security concept with clear procedures
  - Preparation, training

# Measures

- During the assignment

  - Support experts, tools, workshops
  - Reporting tool with protection of whistleblowers
  - Monitoring, penalty and remedy

- After the assignment

  - Evaluation, Reporting
  - Knowledge management

# Question 1

- Do volunteers have a lower or higher risk compare to salaried expatriates staff members ?

- Lower
    - They are better integrated among local communities and may feel more accountable to them;
    - Volunteers may feel and may be seen as less prestigious;
    - Strong commitment.

- Higher
    - Volunteers may have less accountability to sending organisation;
    - Volunteers may be less experimented (less assignments).

# Question 2

- Can small organisations put all these measures in place and what could be done together?

- Challenges
  - Whistleblowing online tool
  - Collecting enough best/ worst cases
  - Developping tools and concepts
  - Diversity of standards
  - Finding or funding specific training
  - Dealing with the reputational risk of an increase of cases

**MERCI !**