



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Community consultations take place in Bobo Village, Indonesia. Photo by CRS staff

# Strengthening Partners in Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse through Protection Mainstreaming (SPSEA)

IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, HAITI, INDONESIA AND THE PHILIPPINES  
FUNDED BY THE USAID BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

## OVERVIEW






CRS is implementing a three-year project that helps to strengthen the capacity of 38 local or national organizations in the disaster-prone countries of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Indonesia and the Philippines. In close collaboration, CRS helps local partners to operationalize their policies, systems and structures to effectively prevent and address issues of sexual exploitation and abuse, or SEA, within their organizations and the communities they serve. Specifically, partners receive support to:

1. Develop policies and procedures to mitigate, identify and respond to allegations of SEA from staff and affected community members.
2. Implement protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, or PSEA, in their recruitment and orientation practices for staff and volunteers.
3. Establish feedback mechanisms in disaster-prone communities.
4. Establish referral pathways related to SEA for all affected groups.

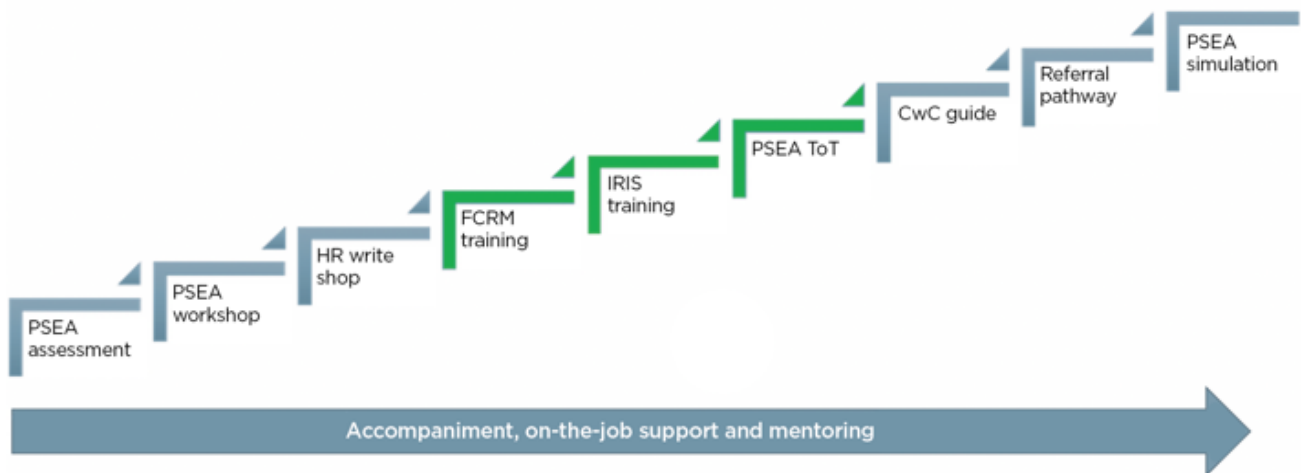
## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

CRS and our partners have achieved significant success across project objectives. Haiti, Indonesia and the Philippines exited the project after two years of implementation.

In the DRC, the project is in its second year, while in Haiti, Indonesia and the Philippines, where the project has ended after two years of implementation, CRS and our partners have achieved significant success across project objectives. The end-of-project evaluations in the three countries demonstrated improvement among all partners in almost all project areas. Key achievements include:

-  82 policies and procedures were developed or strengthened, of a target of 60.
-  721 partner staff, of a target of 430, were trained on PSEA and related topics, with 80% of participants scoring above 70% in retention tests.
-  The average score of partner capacity assessments rose from 51% to 83% over the course of the project. At least 28 out of 32 partners scored 70% or higher on the SEA capacity assessment.
-  29 out of 32 (91%) organizations have established a feedback, complaints and response mechanism, each of which included communication plans and standard operating procedures.
-  18 organizations created referral pathways for protection services in their local areas.

## MODEL OF SUPPORT






## PROJECT APPROACH

CRS uses multiple approaches with partners to strengthen capacity, including a comprehensive capacity assessment, workshops to gain leadership buy-in, learning events on key project areas, and a PSEA simulation to test partners' outputs and project deliverables. Critical to the project's impact is ongoing accompaniment and mentoring for partners by CRS teams in country.

## PROJECT RESOURCES

As part of the project, we have developed a comprehensive toolkit for **national and local organizations**. It is primarily designated for use by the 38 national organizations involved in the SPSEA project, but it is also being used and tested by other country programs and partners across CRS. And, it has been shared within the sector more broadly.

The toolkit is organized into two sections: Training and program implementation. The purpose of the toolkit is to:

-  Compile training and programmatic tools and good practices from the SPSEA project and the sector for local partners to use and apply in their work.
-  Provide resources to assist in designing and conducting trainings on core elements of PSEA.
-  Support organizations to mainstream PSEA in their practice.

The toolkit is available in [English](#) and [French](#), and in Bahasa Indonesian on request. The pilot version of the toolkit is being updated upon further testing, learning from the final year of implementation, as well as inputs from peers in the sector. Version 2 will include guidance for nongovernmental organizations supporting local partners to enhance PSEA/safeguarding. This will include further details on the model of support, accompaniment and monitoring tools, case studies on conditions for success, and key challenges and strategies to overcome them.

## LESSONS LEARNED AND BEST PRACTICES

The following highlight key learnings and promising practices:

- ✓ Invest greater effort to inform leadership attitudes on PSEA. Although some attitudes changed, partner staff expressed concern that the change was superficial, and that further work was needed to engage leaders by focusing on moral reasons as well as financial incentives to pursue PSEA.
- ✓ At least three to five years of support are needed for project learning, and for outcomes to be applied and sustainable. Additional time allows for more in-depth learning and implementation of project objectives.
- ✓ Plan for dedicated staff time of both partner focal points and CRS staff. One full-time CRS staff member is recommended to support three to five partners, depending on their size, structure and existing capacity. Factor in costs for partners to apply the learning, as most do not have flexible funding sources.
- ✓ Structure accompaniment that links to deliverables. Accompaniment sessions can focus on a specific topic, for which partners receive support to develop their outputs. In a report for the partner, document the progress, challenges and required follow-up. Link outputs to a small disbursement of funds upon completion.
- ✓ Cluster partner accompaniment sessions to encourage cross-organizational learning and motivation. Clustered accompaniment sessions encourage the exchange of successes, challenges and progress, while creating healthy competition between peer organizations.
- ✓ CRS' participatory approach and equitable partner relationships facilitated learning and efficiency in application. Partners expressed appreciation for the team's technical skills, communication style and flexibility. They also reported that the approach to capacity building key to the project's success.