Security Risk-Sharing in Partnerships:

Practical barriers and pathways for intermediaries

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Global Interagency Security Forum (GISF)

About the Global Interagency Security Forum (GISF)

The Global Interagency Security Forum (GISF) is a member-led NGO forum that works to strengthen the safety and security of aid workers globally. GISF drives collaboration among key stakeholders, strengthens security risk management capabilities, influences global policy, and equips NGOs with the specialised resources, evidence, and tools to effectively manage security risks. With its membership of over 155 NGOs, GISF bridges the gap between operational realities and high-level policy discussions, ensuring aid workers can deliver life-saving assistance in even the most challenging environment.

About this article

Localisation has reshaped aid policy for more than a decade, yet security risk remains unevenly shared in partnerships between international, local, and national actors. Based on a targeted literature review and case studies developed through practitioner interviews, this paper examines the practical barriers to more equitable security risk-sharing, focussing on how INGOs and other intermediary organisations shape the conditions under which security risk is shared, transferred, or left unmanaged. It finds that these barriers stem from structural, financial, and cultural features of how partnerships are designed, financed, and operationalised. In response, the paper highlights emerging practice and sets out practical pathways for moving from risk transfer towards shared responsibility.

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Contents

Acronyms

Alliance UA CSO - Alliance of Ukrainian Civil Society Organisations

FEDE – Femmes et Développement [Women and Development]

GISF - Global Interagency Security Forum

HCT - Humanitarian Country Team

HEAT - Hostile Environment Awareness Training

HLF – Help Localisation Facility

ICRC – International Committee of the Red Cross

INGO – International Non-Governmental Organisation

INSO – International NGO Safety Organisation

L/NNGO - Local and National Non-Governmental Organisation

SDC – Swedish Agency for Development and Cooperation

SRM – Security Risk Management

SV – Stichting Vluchteling (Netherlands Refugee Foundation)

UN – United Nations

USAID – United States Agency for International Development

1 Introduction

Over the past decade, the push for localisation has put partnerships with local and national actors at the centre of aid policy reform. Through the Grand Bargain framework and its successive iterations,[1] donors and international organisations have pledged to shift resources, leadership, and decision-making authority towards local and national aid actors. Successive policy initiatives including the Charter for Change,[2] Pledge for Change,[3] and the creation of the Risk Sharing Platform[4] have reinforced this trajectory, and as a result an increasing share of aid programming is now delivered through or alongside local and national NGOs (L/NNGOs) (Cabot Venton et al., 2022). In humanitarian emergencies where access is limited and risk is high, people's ability to obtain vital assistance often depends on these partnerships (Stoddard et al., 2019).

While these policy frameworks increasingly frame localisation in the language of partnership and shared responsibility, emerging evidence points to persistent gaps in how security risk management (SRM) is practised across international-local partnerships:

- Recorded attacks against aid workers have overwhelmingly affected national personnel[5] and, despite this, joint risk assessments are still uncommon practice in the sector (Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN) and Humanitarian Outcomes, 2025).
- Most technical security resources are not tailored to specific local and contextual needs,[6] and personal safety and security training is largely designed for and delivered to internationally deployed staff (Breckenridge et al., 2023).
- L/NNGOs operate with markedly weaker access to dedicated security budgets, insurance, and protective resources than their international counterparts (HPN and Humanitarian Outcomes, 2025; de Geoffroy et al., 2017), while duty of care commitments that protect international personnel rarely extend to their local partners (GISF and Humanitarian Outcomes, 2024).
- L/NNGOs remain significantly under-represented in the coordination structures through which collective security information, analysis, and access negotiation flow (GISF and Humanitarian Outcomes, 2024; HPN and Humanitarian Outcomes, 2025).

These patterns suggest that the rhetoric of equitable partnership has not yet translated into corresponding shifts in how exposure is distributed, how responsibility is allocated, and how security

1 Following its launch at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, the Grand Bargain was reviewed and revised through the Grand Bargain 2.0 framework (2021–2023), which narrowed priorities around localisation, quality funding, and participation, and subsequently through the Beyond 2023 framework, also referred to as the Grand Bargain 3.0 framework, which retained these priorities while expanding focus on anticipatory action, innovative financing, nexus approaches, and risk-sharing.

2 See the eight commitments underpinning the Charter here: **https://charter4change.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/charter4change-2024-.docx-1.pdf**

3 See details of the Pledge's three commitments, including notably on equitable partnerships, here: **https://pledgeforchange2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/P4C-statements-2.pdf**

4 The Risk-sharing Platform was launched by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), InterAction and the Netherlands in early 2022, focussed on beginning work towards development of a risk-sharing framework.

5 See the Aid Worker Security Database's summary statistics on major attacks on aid workers, which show a growing trend of attacks on national aid workers versus their international counterparts: **https://www.aidworkersecurity.org/incidents/report**

6 GISF and Humanitarian Outcomes (2024, p.8) notes that "resources and materials are still predominantly in English and pitched to the Western-centric international community of organisations."

capacity is extended. What maintains this gap is not a lack of commitment but the operational and institutional structures underpinning current aid partnerships. Funding arrangements, contract terms, partnership models, and security decision-making processes all shape whether risk-sharing is meaningful in practice. They determine who is involved in assessing risk, whose costs are covered, who can adjust activities when conditions change, and who is responsible when residual risks materialise.

While donors and system-wide structures play a key role in shaping risk distribution, intermediaries – notably international NGOs (INGOs) and UN agencies – can reinforce inequitable risk-sharing dynamics when partnerships transfer risk to local and national partners without providing the resources, flexibility, information, and support needed to manage those risks safely. This article examines those challenges, drawing on risk-sharing literature and practitioner case studies from interviewed organisations at different stages of the journey. To this end, it asks:

- What intermediary policies, practices, and incentives create or reinforce barriers to meaningful security risk-sharing with local and national partners?
- Where are promising practices emerging, and what can be learned from organisations at different stages of the journey?
- What practical steps can intermediaries take to begin closing the gap between security risk-sharing commitments and operational reality?

This article is structured in the following way:

- **Section 2** examines the practical barriers to equitable risk-sharing.
- **Section 3** turns to emerging practice, showing how different organisations are trying to make security risk sharing more explicit, practical, and equitable in their partnerships.
- **Section 4** sets out practical pathways for intermediaries, drawing directly on the case study findings.

A note on definitions and scope

This article follows the Risk Sharing Framework's definition of 'risk-sharing' as "a reasonable sharing of the burden of preventive measures and reasonable sharing of the responsibility for risks should they materialise," applicable across the entire delivery chain from back donors to local implementing organisations (Risk Sharing Platform, 2023, p. 3).

It also acknowledges the critical role of donors but focusses its analysis primarily on the role of intermediaries, examining the policies, practices, and institutional cultures within international actors that shape the distribution of security risk to their L/NNGO partners. Intermediaries in this article refer to organisations, often INGOs or UN agencies, that receive donor funding and channel it to local or national partners, while shaping the terms under which those partners deliver assistance.

Stoddard et al. (2019) also identify eight interlocking risk areas in humanitarian partnerships: security, fiduciary, legal and compliance, operational, financial, informational, reputational, and ethical. These overlap in practice, with decisions in one area often producing consequences in another. This article engages with the full range where relevant, but its focus is primarily on the security dimension of partnerships and the physical safety of L/NNGO staff.

2 Practical barriers to security risk-sharing

GISF's study on the state of SRM practice (GISF and Humanitarian Outcomes, 2024, p.8) identifies a "moral hazard" at the centre of current partnership practice: fear of liability discourages international actors from investing directly in their partners' security systems, even where they rely on those partners to operate in high-risk environments. The result is a pattern in which they "transfer the risk without the mitigation capacity, while keeping partners at arm's length" (GISF and Humanitarian Outcomes, 2024, p.8). This distance is not a failure of goodwill but simply reflects the incentives intermediaries face. They carry legal and reputational risk for grants, and thus closer involvement in partners' operations can increase that exposure.

Risk transfer of this kind is therefore not the product of isolated decisions, but rather it is sustained by the way that international partnerships are structured, financed, and operationalised. Each of those dimensions produces its own barriers which influence each other. Structural barriers shape how partnerships are organised and where authority sits. Financial barriers determine whether L/NNGOs can resource the security risks that they face. And cultural barriers sustain assumptions and behaviours about whose risk matters and whose voice is heard.

This section outlines seven key barriers in the structures, practices and behaviours through which international-local partnerships are designed, financed and managed, and how these shape the distribution of security risk in practice.

2.1 Security not built into partnership design

A first barrier is that security risk-sharing is often not built into partnerships from the start. Partnership agreements usually focus on deliverables, budgets, fiduciary controls, reporting requirements and, increasingly, safeguarding. But security risks faced by partner staff are often dealt with later, informally, or not at all. GISF (2020) notes that security rarely features prominently in partnership agreements or budgets, despite the different risk profiles of INGOs and L/NNGOs, and local partners largely reported a lack of conversations about security, dedicated budget lines, or even basic security requirements with their international counterparts.

Stoddard et al. (2019, p. 5) make a similar point, asserting that SRM in partnerships is often included in a "perfunctory" way, with little discussion or cooperation. The most common approach is a basic review of SRM systems, the appointment of a security focal point within the local partner organisation, and sometimes general security awareness training. But more substantial support, such as emergency medical training or HEAT courses, remains much less common (GISF and Humanitarian Outcomes, 2024).

The consequences of this show up across the partnership cycle. Joint security risk assessments, for example, are rarely carried out before programmes begin (HPN and Humanitarian Outcomes, 2025). This can leave intermediaries and local organisations working from separate, and often mismatched, understandings of the threat environment. In their Bangladesh case study, Pellowska and Fipp (2023) found that risk assessments were often carried out separately by different actors, rather than jointly. Where local partners were involved, they were often treated mainly as sources of information, not as equal partners in the analysis.

This reflects a wider tendency for partner security to be filtered through existing INGO systems, rather than shaped around the risks local partners actually face. In practice, this can create the appearance that security has been addressed, without resolving the more important questions of who is exposed, what support they can access, and how residual risk will be managed. As one INGO interviewee described, partnership processes can reduce security to a basic tick box exercise: "Do you have a safety and security plan? Here's a link to a template," and they noted in practice that "the partner will simply be ticking the box to say they've got one."[7]

2.2 Unequal decision-making authority over security risk

A second barrier is that many of the decisions that create or increase security risk for local actors are not made by them. Programme locations, delivery timelines, visibility and branding requirements, procurement choices, staffing models, targeting criteria, and engagement with state or non-state authorities can all affect the exposure of partner staff. Yet these decisions are often made within funding and management structures where INGOs and donors hold greater authority (Roepstorff, 2019).

This imbalance is reinforced by the predominant partnership model across the sector. Many international-local partnerships are set up through sub-granting or contracting arrangements that position local organisations as "implementing partners" rather than co-designers, and risk parameters are decided with limited consultation. This limits their influence and negotiating position over project design and over the decisions that shape implementation (Robillard et al., 2021). As one INGO interviewee observed, risk appetite can feel "imposed externally and from the top."[8]

In these arrangements, international actors often focus more on risks posed by local partners than on risks posed to them (Stoddard et al., 2019). The result is a selective form of risk awareness. Fiduciary, reputational, and operational risks to the international actor are often more visible than the security risks faced by local staff. This helps explain why local partners often come to see INGOs or other intermediaries as donors, rather than as equal partners in risk management (Stoddard et al., 2019).

A manager for AMAI, a local partner of ChildFund in Brazil, speaks to a family in Minas Gerais State

Jake Lyell/ChildFund

7 Interview with INGO.
8 Interview with INTERSOS and Stichting Vluchteling staff.

2.3 Compliance and fiduciary risk prioritised over security

A related barrier is that international-local partnerships are often shaped by compliance and fiduciary obligations before security risk is meaningfully considered. The Risk Sharing Platform (2023) ties this at systemic level, observing that back donors tend to prioritise fiduciary and reputational risks, while direct implementers often focus more on security and operational risks, with intermediaries pulled between the two. In turn, much of the capacity-building linked to localisation focusses on helping local and national actors meet "international standards", especially around administration, accounting, and compliance (Robillard et al., 2021). Barbelet et al. (2021) link this to a wider emphasis on "upwards accountability" to donors and international organisations.

Rather than helping local organisations build on their own strengths and ways of working, these processes can push them to look and function more like their international counterparts. GISF's guide on partnerships and SRM (2021, p. 16) makes this point directly, noting that "this 'top-down assessment' assumes that the INGO's approach to security risk management is better than that of the L/NNGO – which may not be the case." The problem, then, is not capacity strengthening itself, but the assumption that capacity flows in one direction. As de Geoffroy et al. (2017) similarly caution, requiring local and national actors to follow the same norms, standards, and procedures as international organisations can weaken their comparative advantage and reduce complementarity across contexts.

This compliance-heavy understanding of capacity also shapes how partnership risk is managed. Stoddard et al. (2019) note that partnership negotiations are often led by staff in finance and compliance functions, where security risks to partner staff may not be central to the discussion. Because donors and intermediaries set many of the contractual requirements, these priorities can cascade downwards through due diligence assessments, partner vetting, audit obligations, reporting templates, sanctions clauses, and other compliance controls. These high compliance requirements can create significant financial and operational risks for local and national actors, and lead to "distorted incentives to adopt poor financial, procurement and security management practices" (Barbelet et al., 2021, p. 51; Stoddard et al., 2019).

2.4 Security costs for local partners are underfunded

Security risk-sharing is also limited by how partnerships are funded. In their independent review of the Grand Bargain framework, Metcalfe-Hough et al. (2023) found that, although key donors and INGO signatories continued to highlight their commitment to risk-sharing, progress remained limited, especially on financial risk. Indeed, most funding in international-local partnerships remains short-term, activity-driven, and inflexible, and often excludes fixed and indirect costs. This limits local partners' ability to strengthen the systems they need to manage risk over time (Milasiute, 2023).

The result is that local and national actors are often expected to deliver aid in high-risk environments without the financial backing that safe delivery requires. Even where security is recognised, the support available often does not match the realities faced by partner staff. Fairbanks (2018) notes that local actors generally receive fewer resources and training opportunities, partly because international organisations assume that familiarity with the local context is the same as having adequate SRM capacity. But knowing the context is not the same as having the policies and resources needed to manage security risk over time.

Stoddard et al. (2019) also found that payment-on-results models, tightly earmarked budgets, heavy reporting requirements and underfunded support costs can create cash-flow problems for L/NNGOs. These pressures can push L/NNGOs into negative coping strategies, such as taking on riskier projects, cutting back on security provisions, delaying staff payments, or reducing costs in ways that increase exposure. Poor budgeting for basic support costs, such as vehicles or fuel, can also push staff towards less safe transport options (Stoddard et al., 2019).

The same issue comes up with insurance and support after an incident. L/NNGOs often struggle to get proper insurance for their staff (Fairbanks, 2018), and many also need clearer support around injury compensation and psychosocial care (GISF, 2020). Yet these costs are not always built into partnership agreements from the start, and thus any support is determined on a case-by-case basis and only when something goes wrong.

On top of this, the current funding environment is making these pressures worse for local and national actors. Many already struggled to maintain dedicated security roles because of inflexible funding and low overheads, and recent sector-wide cuts have made this harder to sustain (Stoddard et al., 2025). At the same time, GISF (2020) notes that fear of losing funding, competition between L/NNGOs, budget rigidities, and pressure to reduce overheads can deter local organisations from raising security concerns or asking for additional support. This leaves them with a strong incentive to absorb security costs quietly, rather than voicing what they need to manage risk safely.

2.5 Information and coordination gaps

L/NNGOs are not always included in the spaces where security risks, access constraints, and operational thresholds are discussed. GISF and Humanitarian Outcomes (2024, p. 41) found a “near-universal sentiment” among interviewees that local and national NGOs were underrepresented in many coordination mechanisms led by international actors. Even where these mechanisms are formally open, participation is still mostly made up of international organisations, with smaller numbers of local actors included through the invitation or encouragement of international partners (GISF and Humanitarian Outcomes, 2024). While L/NNGOs are increasingly represented in forums such as Humanitarian Country Teams and Inter-Cluster Coordination Groups, their participation can still be symbolic or limited (Ullah, 2026).

The barriers to participation are often practical, but their effects are structural. Robillard et al. (2021) note that local actors can face physical, political, security, language, and staff-time barriers to joining international coordination mechanisms and may not always know that these spaces exist. Barbelet (2019) similarly found that coordination practices in DRC and Bangladesh could exclude local actors rather than support complementarity, particularly when international organisations dominate the forums and discussions are mainly held in English. For security, this means local partners are often be disconnected from the spaces where shared threat analysis, access constraints, and risk thresholds are discussed.

This is a major problem because L/NNGOs hold knowledge that is highly relevant to security analysis. Indeed, GISF (2020) highlights local partners’ contextual knowledge, networks, understanding of community norms, negotiation capacity, and role in sustaining access as important SRM resources. Yet these strengths are often underutilised or under-acknowledged by international partners.

There is also a notable visibility gap around incidents affecting partner staff. Most INGOs and UN agencies do not systematically record incidents affecting implementing partners and contractors (GISF and Humanitarian Outcomes, 2024). This makes it harder to build a reliable security picture of a context. Risks that are not captured in incident data are much harder to analyse, resource or address through collective mitigation. As a result, local partner exposure is much less visible, even where some form of joint risk assessment takes place.

2.6 Trust and transparency issues

Security risk sharing depends on trust and transparency, yet many partnerships do not create the conditions for L/NNGO partners to speak openly about the risks they face. GISF (2020) is very direct on this point, asserting that lack of trust is “potentially the most important obstacle” to address security risks in partnerships, and that it leads to a lack of transparency about L/NNGOs' risks and their ability to manage them. Local organisations can be discouraged from raising concerns about risk exposure, where doing so could make them appear less capable, more expensive, or harder to work with, particularly in short-term, project-based partnerships.

Pellowska and Fipp's (2023) Bangladesh case study illustrates how these imbalances can prevent genuine transparency about risk. They show that local actors sometimes hold back when raising threats or challenges because they perceive that it could lead to funding loss, investigations, or damage to future partnerships. They also highlight how some risks become difficult to discuss when they fall outside donor rules or compliance boundaries, with one local NGO respondent in their study noting: "We can only talk about risks that they allow."

Despite this, it is important to flag that transparency gaps can also run in the other direction. Local partners are not always clear about what support they can request from international partners, whether for security budgets, duty of care, insurance, training, equipment, incident support, or operational pauses. GISF and Humanitarian Outcomes (2024, p. 55) note that "INGOs often do not know what their local partners lack or need, while local organisations do not always know what they are entitled to ask for." If L/NNGOs are not sure about what is negotiable, many of their needs to address security risks might not be flagged.

2.7 Limited accountability when risks materialise

A final important barrier is the lack of clear accountability once security risks materialise. Stoddard et al. (2019, p. 23) draw a sharp contrast between fiduciary and security risk, noting that while INGOs are accountable to donors for financial losses, "no such accountability chains exist for security risk". This accountability gap is central to ongoing duty-of-care debates in SRM spaces. On this, Stoddard et al. (2019) note that while there is broad agreement that international partners have an ethical responsibility to minimise risks to L/NNGO partners, this is limited by concerns around legal obligations and liabililty, leading to a significant tension between INGOs' legal and ethical responsibilities toward their local partners.

GISF (2020) similarly notes that there is no agreed international understanding of NGOs' duty-of-care obligations towards partners, with many of their L/NNGO interviewees stating that they were unfamiliar with the concept. Some INGOs have developed initiatives at their own cost to support L/NNGO partners, including access to incident insurance, but these actions are not systematised (GISF, 2020). de Geoffroy et al. (2017, p.6) show how this unevenness plays out after incidents:

> "In the event of a security problem, local actors often do not have the same protection or solutions as international actors. This difference in treatment, notably during evacuations, is often viewed as an injustice and raises important ethical questions."

Partner security may be recognised as an ethical concern, but the responsibilities that are triggered when incidents occur remain unclear, selective, and inconsistently funded.

3 Mapping the journey toward risk-sharing: examples of actors addressing barriers

The barriers outlined above show why equitable security risk-sharing remains difficult to achieve in practice. They are not simply technical gaps that can be solved through better templates or one-off training courses. Yet these barriers are not fixed. Some INGOs and intermediaries are beginning to test ways of strengthening partner security in their relations with L/NNGOs, often facing internal resistance and with hard lessons learned along the way. But they share a common goal of moving beyond risk transfer towards more deliberate forms of shared responsibility.

The following examples should therefore be read as organisational journeys rather than seen as best practice. Each organisation is starting from a different partnership history, risk posture, and institutional set-up. Some are working through internal culture change, others through partner-led capacity strengthening, revised language around duty of care, or more open conversations about what partners can ask for.

3.1 Trócaire's incremental approach to building partner security

Trócaire is an Irish Catholic aid organisation that works almost entirely through local and national partners across a range of fragile and conflict-affected contexts. As a Grand Bargain signatory and Charter for Change member, Trócaire presents itself as a partnership-led agency that significantly surpasses the Grand Bargain's 25 per cent benchmark for direct funding to local actors (Trócaire, 2022). Its 2021–2025 Partnership and Localisation Strategy focusses on partner voice and influence, capacity strengthening based on partner needs, reciprocal accountability, and improved access to quality funding for local and national partners (Trócaire, 2021). Charter4Change (2024) has also recognised Trócaire for its "well-designed processes of accompaniment and support to local actors in the design and implementation of programmes."

From initial resistance to major shifts

Yet integrating partner security in their approach has proven to be one of the more difficult dimensions of localisation to operationalise. Trócaire's security lead recalled that colleagues outside the partnership teams would describe it as: "we hire a subcontractor, the subcontractor does the work, and they're responsible for all those little bits."[9] Partners were expected to sign waivers stating that they were responsible for various things, including security. When partner security was first raised with country directors, "the response back was very commercial: [...] These are normal operating entities, they've signed off that they're able to do this themselves."[10] They credit their Divisional Director for keeping the work alive at that point, describing the Director as "strong enough that [they] were able to say, push on and let's see what we can do with this."[11]

What has helped push partner security forward since is the establishment of a Partnership Hub five years ago, supported by a dedicated team that includes a part-time partner-focussed security role. A Partnership Advisory Group also brings partners into discussions about Trócaire's own minimum requirements and helps identify where these are negatively affecting partners' capacity and bandwidth.

9 Interview with Trócaire's security staff.

10 *Ibid.*

11 *Ibid.*

Partnership security in practice

The Partnership Hub has provided an important entry point for Trócaire's security team to push partner security further into organisational practice. Over time, the work has moved beyond asking partners to submit SRM plans towards more direct support, including training, and helping partners build and strengthen their own security structures. Group trainings now bring together managers from several partner organisations working in the same area, recognising that many face similar security challenges and can learn from one another. In one case, partners in Ethiopia brought together by a Trócaire-convened training set up a WhatsApp group to share security incidents and threat information, partly because INSO coverage was not available to them in that context.

Two deliberate shifts in language have accompanied the structural changes, both now embedded in Trócaire's security policy. The first repositioned partners as the foundation of Trócaire's security pyramid. The shift was intended to make Trócaire staff more conscious of how much the organisation relies on partners to access dangerous operational contexts, and how that reliance often transfers more risk than is generally recognised. The second was the idea of a "circle of learning", which frames partner security as a two-way process. Local partners are not just recipients of security support. They are often managing difficult environments in ways that Trócaire can learn from, and their lessons can be shared across the wider partner network.

Responding to a trust deficit

Partners have responded to the new approach with both interest and caution. As Trócaire's Africa-based global partnerships adviser put it, it is a bit of "yes and no."[12] On the one hand, some partners value the fact that security is being raised at all, particularly where they feel other INGOs have previously left them exposed to risk. On the other hand, local partners who have managed difficult threat environments for years were rather sceptical of formal risk assessment tools or heeding outside advice about their risk environment. As the adviser put it, partners sometimes responded by saying, "you don't know, because you're here for a week and then you'll fly off."[13]

Indeed, trust issues run deeper than the training space itself. According to Trócaire's partnership advisor, some partners have been reluctant to share risks at all, mainly because they worry doing so will affect their funding or the communities they serve. Trócaire's security team has had to invest significant effort to repeatedly reassure partners and flag that they can ask for what they need without repercussions.

Dealing with financial barriers

Funding the partner security work has been Trócaire's hardest fight. Several proposals that included elements of partner security have been "knocked back," and a recent set of US-bound proposals "all crashed" after the dissolution of USAID in 2025.[14] Internally, the security team does not have full visibility on proposal development, since the teams that draft proposals rarely include partner security in their submissions, leaving the security team to push from outside the process.

Like the majority of security functions, they are a small team and very aware that they are unlikely ever to have the capacity to impact a huge number of proposals. They have gained traction, and it continues to be a clear growth area in the organisation. The majority of its partner security work is funded through unspent allocations from one of its most flexible donors. This has made it possible for Trócaire to spend four times more on training partners in 2025 than it did its own staff. The security team is actively using shared lessons from a GISF-led community of practice on partnerships to adapt and target training across their organisation to influence and support the process in a financially sustainable way.

12 Interview with Trócaire's security staff.

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*

Areas for further improvement

The team is also clear about where its gaps remain. Partner security in human rights contexts is one area where Trócaire does not yet feel fully equipped to respond to. As the Trócaire's security lead put it, "you really need to be a human rights security specialist to have that toolkit up and running."[15] More broadly, partner security as a category of practice still sits at the margins of how partnerships are funded and managed across the sector. The security lead's expectation is that donor pressure will eventually shift the picture, in the same way safeguarding has become embedded across the sector because it "embarrasses organisations" when it goes wrong.

The senior security lead was also direct about the limits of the work. Asked whether any of it has been mapped out into a strategy, Trócaire's security lead said: "We don't have any targets. We are literally just going forward, and we can achieve what we can."[16] Asked whether the work would survive if the senior lead and the security adviser left the organisation, the answer was unambiguous. "Would it fall apart this year? Yes, 100 per cent. It would fall apart for about six months and then it would be back on track."[17]

Despite these limits, Trócaire's security team sees the work as moving in the right direction. Partner security is now part of the organisation's security policy language, linked to the Partnership Hub, and increasingly raised in donor and proposal discussions. The process remains dependent on a small team and is still uneven across the organisation, but it has created a clearer internal basis for continuing the conversation. In the security lead's words, the focus is on what can be achieved with the resources available, and how to push it "a little bit further."[18]

Trocaire's Global Security Advisor (Partnership & Access) delivers security awareness training

15 Interview with Trócaire's security staff.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.

3.2 Testing shared risk analysis: the INTERSOS, Stichting Vluchteling and FEDE experience in Mali

For INTERSOS, an international humanitarian organisation based in Italy, equitable risk-sharing is seen as foundational to its broader localisation framework. Its approach is grounded in complementarity, working with national and local partners in ways that recognise their knowledge, access and role in the response, rather than treating them as mere service providers for their programmes. As INTERSOS' localisation advisor explained:

> "On one side, you want to be there to work with a partner to support in case there is need of support for this analysis. On the other side, you don't want to replace them. You don't want to underestimate the local knowledge. You don't want to replace [by] imposing your own tools and systems."[19]

In practice, this commitment has taken shape through longer-term support to partners. In Mali, INTERSOS' relationship with FEDE (ONG Femmes et Développement), a national NGO focussed on improving the livelihoods and opportunities of women, young people, and marginalised groups, has developed over roughly four years, across multiple grants and initiatives. On the security side, this included detaching a regional security expert to work directly with FEDE's team on security policy development, analysis and strengthening internal systems. Over time, this helped build FEDE's confidence around SRM and contributed to the development of its own robust duty-of-care framework.

From FEDE's perspective, these efforts helped make their relationship with INTERSOS sit apart from more transactional forms of partnership that they were used to. FEDE described it as a strategic relationship built around co-design, mutual support, capacity strengthening, rather than simply project implementation. As one FEDE representative put it, "il ne s'agit pas de déléguer les risques au niveau de l'organisation nationale"[20] ['it is not about delegating risks to the national organisation'].[21]

Designing the workshop

The risk-sharing pilot workshop organised by INTERSOS in Bamako grew out of this existing relationship and continued commitment to support partner security. It was not designed as a one-off exercise, but as a way of bringing FEDE (the national partner), INTERSOS (the intermediary), and Stichting Vluchteling[22] (SV) (the donor) into a collective discussion to map how risks were being experienced by each actor in their programme, where responsibilities sat between them, and what forms of support, flexibility, and shared mitigation were needed across this tripartite partnership.

Two design choices were particularly important. First, SV's presence at the workshop was a deliberate choice to ensure that risk was discussed across all parts of the delivery chain. Fortunately, this was made feasible by the donor's own posture around risk: "for us it was feasible with SV because it is a donor that has a partnership attitude and encourages this kind of best practices."[23] Second, FEDE's director recognised early on that her presence might make field staff less comfortable raising criticisms or difficult issues, so she joined only for the opening and closing sessions so they can speak more candidly about challenges.

The workshop opened with a scene-setting contribution from the coordinator of Mali's national NGO coordination forum, who offered an overview of the challenges around equitable risk-sharing in the country to help anchor the discussion. Participants then identified the main risks they faced in high-risk areas of Mali, along with possible mitigation measures. They then organised these inputs into a matrix covering access, security, operational, fiduciary, financial, ethical, and reputational risks,

19 Interview with INTERSOS and Stichting Vluchteling staff.
20 Interview with FEDE staff.
21 Translated by author from the original French.
22 The Dutch-based foundation is known internationally as the Netherlands Refugee Foundation.
23 Interview with INTERSOS and Stichting Vluchteling staff.

recognising that these often overlap in practice. The discussion then opened with concepts of risk equity and risk justice, and with reflection on how each organisation's internal barriers shape both exposure and perception of risk. As INTERSOS' localisation advisor put it, "everyone has internal barriers that may compromise our exposure to risk and our reaction or perception to the risk." A key principle was that no actor's risk appetite should be imposed on the others. After this, participants worked through the main risk categories in groups before bringing them to a three-actor "hub" representing FEDE, INTERSOS, and SV. This allowed the group to ask what each actor could do to mitigate a given risk, and where responsibility should sit.

What the workshop surfaced

The main outcome of the workshop was less a new set of risk-sharing commitments than a validation of the partnership practice INTERSOS had been trying to build with FEDE over time. For INTERSOS, the workshop confirmed that effective discussions on risk-sharing depends on providing a fail-safe environment where partners can raise constraints without fearing that the relationship or future funding will be put at risk. As INTERSOS' localisation advisor reflected:

> "When you have open communication, when you do the proposal development together, and the design together, the targeting together, the choice of the approach together, all the risk discussion is already there."[24]

This view was echoed by the other actors. SV reached a similar conclusion from the donor side, noting that "there were no specific requests that were going beyond what we were already doing."[25] FEDE described the relationship in even stronger terms, stressing that: "Aujourd'hui, il n'y a pas de différenciation entre FEDE et Intersos"[26] ['today, there is no differentiation between FEDE and INTERSOS'],[27] implying that they start from the same basis and are not operating on different levels.

The three parties have since moved toward more joint positioning on project design and timing flexibility and have established an open channel for raising risks or challenges as they emerge. SV's access advisor pointed to a fuel shortage in Mali as an example of how this flexibility works in practice: "the partner just reaches out to see if they can use some extra budgets or be flexible to pre-position some fuel. Those kinds of things. It just moves very organically."

Remaining gaps

The pilot also surfaced two unresolved issues. The first had to do with insurance and residual risk, which remains difficult to translate into concrete partnership commitments even when the underlying relationship is strong. SV has acknowledged the gap on its own side and the workshop fed into a broader learning process for the foundation around risk-sharing. SV is now developing a risk-sharing and duty-of-care framework alongside work to make its risk appetite more explicit, with the aim of providing greater clarity on what the foundation can commit to when residual risks materialise. At present, these decisions are still taken largely on a case-by-case basis.

Tied to this was the ongoing issue with determining risk appetite. For INTERSOS' localisation advisor, this is a harder structural problem as risk appetite is already difficult for an INGO to define. But it becomes even more complicated when local partners have historically accepted higher risk thresholds set by donors or intermediaries. As they explained, when partners are asked what residual risk they would accept, they may assume the answer is whatever the donor or intermediary expects them to accept. In other words, "you are really shifting all the residual risk lower and lower. And this is really a problem."[28]

24 Interview with INTERSOS and Stichting Vluchteling staff.

25 *Ibid*.

26 Interview with FEDE staff.

27 Translated by author from the original French.

28 Interview with INTERSOS and Stichting Vluchteling staff.

Looking ahead

INTERSOS read the pilot as a reminder that equitable risk sharing cannot focus only on strengthening local partners. As its localisation advisor put it, "we are focussing so much on training local partners. Great, it's needed. But we need to train ourselves, and the donors need training on how risk spreads, the risk transferring dimension." SV framed the same point more practically, stressing that international partners need to "unlearn" some of its practices and simply "start talking about risks" without making it "a very heavy and formal process" but instead integrate risk into regular communication and build trust with the local partners in the process.

FEDE's leadership brought this back to the human quality of the relationship: "les organisations peuvent mettre sur papier tout ce qu'elles veulent, mais les individus… si ces hommes et ces femmes n'ont pas une volonté, n'ont pas un engagement confirmé, ça va toujours demeurer problématique"[29] ['organisations can put anything they want on paper, but if the people implementing it do not have the will or commitment, it will always remain problematic'].[30]

3.3 Building a locally led duty of care standard with international reach

The Alliance of Ukrainian Civil Society Organisations (Alliance UA CSO) was launched in September 2023 by 16 Ukrainian CSOs to strengthen local leadership in the humanitarian response, advocate for more equitable partnerships with international stakeholders, and expand the role of Ukrainian civil society beyond emergency aid into recovery, reconstruction, and civil defence (Refugees International, 2025).

Within this broader agenda, the Alliance's work on duty of care has been one of the most distinctive strands. Many Ukrainian organisations entered the response without dedicated security staff, and with limited support from international partners on staff safety. Working with the Swiss Embassy in Ukraine and the Humanitarian NGO Platform in Ukraine, the Alliance helped develop a Minimum Package on duty of care, a locally led standard for staff protection.

The package responded to two interrelated problems. As the Alliance's director explained, many local responders "did not recognise that this is really necessary to protect themselves," because they were focused on supporting affected communities and saw risk as part of humanitarian work.[31] At the same time, international partners "did not cover a lot of activities or… very important things for security."[32] For the Alliance, duty of care therefore had to be framed both as a responsibility to staff and beneficiaries, and as part of working with international partners "in equal footing everywhere, in security as well."

What the Minimum Package includes

As a first step, a research review examined existing duty-of-care practices and challenges through interviews with donors, INGOs, L/NNGOs, and CSOs, with the aim of defining a set of minimum standards for duty of care support for local responders in Ukraine (Humanitarian NGO Platform in Ukraine, 2025). The review framed duty of care as a "moral" obligation that should extend beyond an organisation's own staff to implementing partners, and argued that it should cover not only equipment, safety and security management, and mental health support, but also aid delivery, coordination, and fair partnership principles (Humanitarian NGO Platform in Ukraine, 2025, p. 17).

The package itself identified five duty-of-care priorities for Ukraine: health and life insurance for NGO/CSO staff and volunteers; psychosocial support; individual first aid kits; personal protective equipment; and training on the use of these measures, alongside basic safety and security management (Humanitarian NGO Platform in Ukraine, 2025).

29 Interview with FEDE staff.

30 Translated by author from the original French.

31 Interview with Alliance UA CSO staff.

32 *Ibid.*

According to the Alliance's director, the package is not intended as a fixed template. Organisations are expected to combine its elements "like a puzzle," depending on their risks, capacities and operating environment. This flexibility is important given the diversity of Ukrainian civil society, from frontline community organisations operating under direct fire to larger organisations with substantial in-house SRM capacity. The package was therefore designed to accommodate this range rather than standardise it.

From recognition to funding practice

One of the clearest impacts of the Minimum Package is that it has helped move duty of care from an abstract principle into something that can be named, budgeted, and negotiated in funding discussions. The Alliance's director highlighted that it is now "a recognised document by [the] HCT, by donors, by international actors." She also pointed to its uptake by some international partners as an important sign of progress, recalling that some had told the Alliance: "We implemented your Minimum Package in our work with communities, with our local organisations. It was not easy for us, but we managed."[33]

A key factor in this shift was the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), which supported the research and also funded an insurance pilot that became the seed of the broader package. In the Alliance's view, this donor's backing helped create momentum: "SDC started this, and this is [seen] like a challenge, you know, so they challenge others."[34] What had previously been a "rare" inclusion in grant proposals is now beginning to be a mandatory requirement in some funding processes.

The Ukraine Humanitarian Fund[35] has become a prime example of a successful practice where partners are mandatorily covered for duty of care expenses. This trajectory receives robust support from the UK, which funds frontline actors, while Germany has already successfully implemented initiatives that fully cover these needs, notably through the German-funded Help Localisation Facility (HLF)[36] and the EMPOWER project. Such steps have underscored the importance of this issue for UN agencies as well; for instance, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) actively supports its partners in protecting their personnel. All of this has triggered a "domino effect" and fundamentally shifted the wider discourse - today, within Ukrainian humanitarian circles, questioning or ignoring the duty of care is unequivocally seen as "bad tone" and a sign of being an unreliable partner.[37]

This uptake has not only happened at policy level. The package is also being tested and adapted through practice. The Alliance has worked closely with international partners including Nonviolent Peaceforce and INSO, and local actors supporting field organisations. These partnerships have helped collect data on how the package is working in practice, and the evidence being collected is informing what needs to be updated. As the Alliance's director put it, this is a useful example of "international-local partnership" because it links international support with field-level testing and local experience.

Persistent challenges remain

Despite this significant conceptual shift, it must be acknowledged that not all key stakeholders and donors have fully adopted this package of recommendations, underscoring the need for continued, targeted advocacy efforts. For the Alliance's director, one key angle to take is focussing on cost-effectiveness: "It's better to know what specific partners need for themselves" before problems escalate.[38] At the same time, however, calculating the overall cost of the package remains difficult, as needs vary significantly across organisations and different operating environments across Ukraine.

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33 Interview with Alliance UA CSO staff.

34 *Ibid.*

35 See more about the country-based pool fund here: **https://www.unocha.org/ukraine-humanitarian-fund**.

36 The Help Localisation Facility (HLF) is a global programme funded by the German Federal Foreign Office and implemented by Help – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe, which provides flexible funding and optional capacity-strengthening support to local humanitarian organisations. See more about the programme: **https://hlf.grantplatform.com/**.

37 Interview with Alliance UA CSO staff.

38 *Ibid.*

Recognition and ownership of efforts directed at the duty of care remain deeply sensitive issues that directly impact social cohesion. Unfortunately, there are cases where initiatives or research in this area are utilised by international actors not to genuinely support local organisations, but rather to extract their unique expertise to raise their own profiles and institutional capacities. It is absolutely crucial that the needs of local partners remain at the center of these processes. Otherwise, such one-sided extraction of experience without proper recognition of local leadership is not only exhausting for local actors but also creates a "frankly toxic" dynamic in partnerships.[39]

Moreover, two components have been especially difficult to operationalise. The first is mental health support, which remains heavily stigmatised. In response, the Alliance has used more indirect entry points, including a non-violent communications training pilot run with the Dignity Space and external facilitators under Chatham House rules. This framing helped engage participants who had previously resisted support when it was presented explicitly as mental health.

The second challenge concerns volunteer organisations. For some volunteer groups, duty of care language can feel like a constraint rather than a protection, particularly when they need to reach areas that other actors cannot access. As the Alliance's director explained, volunteers felt that "some things are very good, but some things are very dangerous for us."[40] A local organisation, the Relief Coordination Centre (RCC), has responded by creating dialogue spaces with volunteer organisations and supporting context-specific solutions, including a Kharkiv-based volunteer insurance initiative developed with SDC.

Next steps and adaptations

The package is now being revised (to be released sometime in 2026) in response to Ukraine's changing threat environment. Drone warfare has created risks that the original version did not fully anticipate, including the direct targeting of humanitarian personnel, and vehicles and buses carrying beneficiaries. The Alliance's director described Ukraine as "quite a technical war," where threats are constantly changing: "we now have these drone attacks a lot and these drones more and more dangerous."[41] The package is now being updated in response to this changing threat environment. As the Alliance's director put it, "we don't want to create [...] rules for years and years. We understand that we need to have these updates, like when it's necessary."[42]

The Alliance has also pursued a dual-track approach. Alongside international advocacy with donors and partners, it has pushed for national recognition of humanitarian staff protection. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine has signed a multi-country declaration on the protection of humanitarian staff, which the Alliance's director sees as evidence of political will at state level.

Because Ukraine is currently in the focus of donor attention and has access to resources, it is capable of serving a powerful advocacy role not only for itself but also for organisations from other countries. Often, in crisis regions with less support, local actors are forced to remain silent about their own security needs, as their primary focus is on survival, maintaining their operations, and securing basic funding. This leadership mission of Ukraine is being successfully realised, particularly through the National Reference Group under the Grand Bargain initiative, where Ukraine - by demonstrating its own successful experience in personnel protection - acts as a powerful advocate for local actors on a global level.

At the same time, one lesson does travel across contexts. The Alliance's director concluded that duty of care should not be treated as a separate issue for "local" and "international" staff, but as part of how humanitarian actors understand their responsibilities to one another.

39 Interview with Alliance UA CSO staff.
40 *Ibid.*
41 *Ibid.*
42 *Ibid.*

4 Pathways Forward

The case studies above show that progress on equitable security risk-sharing rarely follows a single template, with each organisation taking a different route shaped by its history, partnership model, and institutional culture. Yet a set of practical pathways recur across the three cases and resonate with what the wider literature recommends.

As INTERSOS' localisation advisor put it:

> "I've often heard that risk transfer is used by some INGOs in high-risk contexts as an excuse not to go for localisation, because they say we don't want to transfer risk. While we really think it's possible to mitigate [this], it's really important to understand how risk dynamics work. What is the imbalance?"[43]

The pathways below identify practical shifts that are already reflected in emerging practice and highlight where INGOs and intermediaries can begin to move towards equitable security risk-sharing with their local partners.

4.1 Build shared security risk analysis into partnership design

The Risk Sharing Platform (2023) recommends developing a shared and holistic picture of risk across the delivery chain. This means treating risk analysis as a collective process, rather than a technical exercise owned by one partner. Likewise, Oxfam and Charter for Change (2023) argue that all stakeholders should jointly identify and assess risks from the outset of programme design, including the mitigation measures and capacity-strengthening support needed to manage them.

In practice, this requires partners to understand not only the risks they each face, but also their different risk appetites, as well as their individual challenges of implementing the response. The aim is not to create another compliance process, but to ensure that decisions about where, how, and through whom programmes are delivered are informed by a shared understanding of each partner's risk profile.

The INTERSOS-FEDE-SV risk-sharing workshop shows what this can look like when risk analysis becomes a genuinely jointly owned process. Rather than being handled internally by one organisation or reduced to a formal assessment submitted as part of a due diligence process, security risks were discussed openly across the partnership including with the donor. This allowed security considerations to inform project needs more directly and provided the partnership with the built-in trust and flexibility to adapt as security risks naturally evolve. For intermediaries who do not have this level of strategic partnership, practical entry points include involving partners in risk analysis before key proposal decisions are fixed, and engaging donors early on in partner security where the security risk profile is significant.

43 Interview with INTERSOS and Stichting Vluchteling staff.

4.2 Create conditions for honest conversations about security risk

GISF's partnership guide recommends that INGOs take "responsibility to consider contextual pressures weighing on partners" and ensure that "partners feel able to voice their opinions and concerns without fearing repercussions" (GISF, 2021, p. 19). It is not enough to ask pointed questions about risk if the partnership does not create a safe space for local partners to speak openly and honestly.. This requires following the Trócaire example of providing clear reassurances that raising security concerns will not negatively affect the partnership. It also requires paying attention to inherent power imbalances in the relationship, as well as power dynamics within partner organisations themselves, and addressing those issues early on.

Risk conversations rarely happen just because a meeting is convened. They have to be actively enabled, through separate discussions with field staff, neutral facilitation, repeated check-ins, and clear signals from senior leaders that disclosing risk is responsible practice rather than a sign of organisational weakness. The format for these discussions should follow the partner's preference rather than a fixed template, since L/NNGO staff "may feel more comfortable discussing their challenges and concerns in face-to-face meetings rather than through written communication" (GISF, 2021, p. 30). It also means to carefully consider who should be in the conversation, and whether headquarters, country office or field staff should be present (GISF, 2021).

4.3 Keep risk-sharing processes practical and proportionate

Risk-sharing processes need to be practical and accessible for local partners. The Centre for Humanitarian Action's study recommends keeping risk-sharing processes "as simple and informal as possible" to avoid further burdening local partners with more paperwork, and it also calls for risk updates to be integrated into regular meetings, project reports and monitoring visits, alongside informal channels for partners to report changes in the risk environment (Pellowska and Fipp, 2023, p.42). This is particularly important for L/NNGOs already managing heavy compliance and reporting requirements.

Instead, risk-sharing discussions should be factored into existing core partnership moments, including proposal development, programme inception meetings, budget reviews, monitoring and evaluation visits, after-action reviews, and possible donor check-ins. The test is whether the process helps partners make better decisions and access support more quickly. If it only documents risk without changing what is funded, adapted or escalated, then it is highly unlikely to shift risk distribution in practice.

4.4 Resource the mitigation measures partners identify

Risk sharing has limited value if it does not lead to shared resourcing. The Risk Sharing Platform (2023) explains that risk sharing includes both the reasonable sharing of preventative measures and the reasonable sharing of responsibility when risks materialise. This means that shared analysis needs to be linked to budgets, decision-making authority, and concrete support.

For intermediaries, this requires treating partner security costs as part of programme delivery rather than as optional extras or overheads. These costs can include security training courses, protective equipment, safe transport, communications, insurance packages, psychosocial support, staff time for security planning, relocation, or post-incident assistance. For donors, it means allowing these costs to be included as separate lines in budgets, accepting flexibility when the risk environment changes, and supporting multi-year investments where local partners need to build their institutional SRM capacity.

4.5 Support partner-led security capacity

Capacity strengthening is also central to risk sharing. GISF's partnership guide (2021) argues that these should be based on collaboration, mutual learning, and shared responsibility, rather than one organisation assessing another against its own model of good practice. This avoids the risk of it becoming a one-way process where the local organisation's capacity is being built up to mirror the INGO systems for the sake of upwards accountability, even where their own approaches may be more appropriate to the context. Trócaire captures this two-way principle through its "circle of learning" framing, which recognises that the intermediary can learn as much as the local partner.

Putting this into practice means starting from the partner's own risk analysis, operating model, and priorities. This can include technical support, but it should not be limited to training or policy templates. It may involve accompaniment over time (as in the INTERSOS example), peer exchange between organisations working in the same context - see Trócaire example), additional support to adapt existing procedures, or funding for staff time to strengthen internal systems. In some contexts, it also means recognising capacities that international actors lack, including local access strategies and community relationships.

4.6 Align compliance requirements with partners' capacities

Risk sharing also requires more proportionate compliance practice. Oxfam and Charter for Change (2023) argue that donors and intermediaries should adapt compliance thresholds to the size of grants and organisations, reduce duplicative due diligence processess, and incentivise joint risk assessments with local partners. This matters because compliance requirements can themselves create further risk, particularly when they delay funding, overload staff, or require local organisations to absorb responsibilities without sufficient support.

The practical question INGOs and donors should ask is whether each requirement genuinely reduces risk, or whether it simply transfers the administrative burden downstream. Proportionate compliance does not mean lowering standards. It means recognising that compliance requirements need to be feasible, context-sensitive and aligned with the capacities of the organisations being asked to deliver.

4.7 Strengthen institutional ownership for partner security

Risk sharing also depends on more institutional ownership inside the intermediary organisation. Partner security should not sit only with one security focal point or team, especially if the decisions affecting partner risk are made across programme, finance, compliance, grants, and senior management functions. It should be an organisational commitment, with shared responsibility and practical collaboration between local and international organisations (GISF, 2021).

In practice, this means embedding partner security into the functions where those decisions are actually made, identifying internal champions with enough authority to keep partner security on the agenda. It has to be built into proposal and budget processes, partnership agreements and incident reporting, so that it becomes visible in everyday decision-making rather than dependent on a single initiative. Trócaire's experience shows both the value and fragility of this, where partner security has become embedded in its partnership approach but remains reliant on a small team to keep it moving.

4.8 Plan for residual risk before incidents occur

Even strong mitigation measures will not entirely eliminate security risk. A more equitable approach therefore needs to address residual risk before incidents occur. The Risk Sharing Platform (2023) makes clear that risk sharing includes both preventative action and shared responsibility when risks materialise. In practical terms, partners should know in advance what support will be available if an incident occurs. This may include medical support, evacuation or relocation assistance, legal support, psychosocial support, insurance, communications support, advocacy with authorities, or rapid budget adaptation.

The Ukraine Minimum Package on duty of care offers one model for making this more concrete by setting out core components of duty of care that partners and donors can use in planning and funding discussions. The INTERSOS-FEDE-SV workshop pilot also pointed to the importance of naming residual risks more explicitly, particularly where existing donor approaches do not yet cover the full consequences of operating in high-risk environments.

4.9 Treat security risk-sharing as a continuous adaptive practice

Finally, risk sharing should be treated as an ongoing practice. Security risks change quickly, and arrangements that support partner security need to change with them. The Risk Sharing Platform (2023) emphasised the importance of learning and adaptation as an integral part of the process, while the Centre for Humanitarian Action argues that joint risk assessments should be continuous and sustained by regular communication betweem formal reviews (Pellowska and Fipp, 2023). The study presents this as part of "agile management" framework, defined by 'sprint' cycles where reviews and exchanges are carried out more regularly, strengthening collective risk awareness, facilitating responsiveness and building a culture of learning (Pellowska and Fipp, 2023, pp. 36-37). Building this into practice means agreeing in advance what will prompt the partnership to revisit its security arrangements, identifying clear 'trigger points' that start renewed conversations around security (GISF, 2021).

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