

Safeguarding of Beneficiaries

Date of Policy: 10th May 2021

Section 1: Definitions

For the purposes of this document, we have defined what each of the terms below are understood to mean.

Beneficiaries: beneficiaries of SolidariTee-funded aid.

Legal aid: the provision of advocacy, advice, or representation as a result of an individual's displacement from their previous location of residence, either in order to access their rights or protection services, to access a certain legal status, or to access family reunification. For the purposes of this document, legal aid may entail telephone or online services including, but not limited to, informational posts, email, or instant messaging, in addition to in-person services.

Aid: any initiative funded and primarily provided by actors external to, and with the intention of improving the lives of, those in the intended community.

The refugee crisis: the poor material conditions and precarious legal situation which many asylum seekers and refugees face in Europe. This term is used in line with common parlance and not to indicate that the arrival of asylum seekers is in itself a crisis, consistent with SolidariTee's belief that the asylum-seeking population in Europe can receive much more dignified reception, were there to be more compassionate, properly managed and sustainable policies in place.

Voluntourism: a form of volunteering in which the primary beneficiary is intended to be the volunteer, and in which there is little regard given to the needs and potential harm caused to beneficiaries as a result of such volunteering, frequently resulting in detrimental or undignified initiatives.

(White) saviourism: the form of thinking that those in marginalised groups, or who face systemic oppression, and are in receipt of humanitarian aid, are unable to see an amelioration in their situation without significant intervention from those in more privileged settings, often resulting in inappropriate, undignified, disempowering and even harmful involvement of those from the Global North.

Section 2: Mission

SolidariTee's mission is understood to be as following:

- (1) Furthering the provision of long-term aid and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers anywhere in the world.
 - (a) In particular, but not exclusively, to do this by making grants to other charities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who provide legal aid or other forms of support to such refugees and asylum seekers, with a particular focus on ensuring empowering, long-term change and avoiding undue duplication of efforts;
- (2) Empowering students with the tools and confidence to stand up for the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, displaced persons and other vulnerable migrants throughout their future personal and professional lives, by building their capacity and confidence to make long-term change, and creating a community of like-minded individuals invested in the same cause;
- (3) To advance the education of the public in general about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.

Although these objects aim at creating positive social impact within the realm of the refugee crisis, it is understood that there may be unintended consequences to SolidariTee's attempts in furthering the provision of long-term aid and assistance, and that aid and advocacy may have negative consequences if not responsibly planned. As such, this Safeguarding of Beneficiaries policy aims at regulating a number of SolidariTee's policies and procedures in line with the principle of Do No Harm¹.

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https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/donoharm_pe07_synthesis.pdf

Section 3: Safeguarding of Beneficiaries - Grant-Giving

SolidariTee is able to examine and ensure safeguarding of beneficiaries through, principally, the NGO selection process, the amendments of the project proposal which SolidariTee is able to request as part of its grant-making, and donor reporting and agreement. The following initiatives are to be taken throughout the process:

1. NGO Selection Process

Throughout the selection process in determining which NGOs will receive grants (consisting of written submissions followed by interviews), SolidariTee will seek at all times to ensure that any NGO and/or project which is being funded provides aid in a way that is safe, non-exploitative, respectful of its beneficiaries, and provided by suitably trained and/or qualified individuals and teams.

- I. Questions regarding safeguarding of beneficiaries to be asked during the NGO selection process:
 - a. Does the applicant check the criminal record of team members, and if so, how?
 - b. Does the applicant offer training, or ensure that members of the team are trained prior to joining, in the following areas?
 - i. child protection
 - ii. prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)
 - iii. gender-based violence (GBV)
 - iv. first aid
 - v. responding to mental health crises?
 - c. Does the applicant have a rigorous training and application procedure to pass prior to onboarding?
 - d. Does the applicant have a community feedback referral mechanism that allows for complaints handling from beneficiaries?
 - e. Does the applicant have established referral pathways for SEA and GBV concerns?
 - f. Does the applicant ensure female focal points in the NGO for GBV / SEA concerns?
 - g. Does the applicant have their own safeguarding of beneficiaries policy and communicate this via training / onboarding / signing the policy upon joining?
 - h. Does the organisation take steps to ensure that all team members are made aware of the potential pitfalls in providing aid, the inherent power imbalances within aid provision, and of the importance of maintaining a professional relationship with beneficiaries?

2. Project proposal and potential request for amendments

- II. Where the initiatives listed above are not currently implemented by the applicant, SolidariTee may request that the applicant plan to implement a number of safeguarding activities, potentially including these in the donor agreement.

3. Donor Reporting and Monitoring

- III. Points of interest for safeguarding of beneficiaries to be included in the donor report:
- a. Whether there was a need for separating team members based on their criminal record and/or actions whilst working with the NGO, and if so whether a disciplinary process was followed.
 - b. What training was provided during the implementation period and estimated impact of this training.
 - c. Whether the referral pathways received any serious incidents, and if so, how these were handled.
 - d. The staffing of the team, including information on focal points, and gender breakdown.
 - e. Annexes including NGO policies.
- IV. Inclusions in the donor agreement:
- a. That serious safeguarding concerns might be grounds to terminate funding of the NGO.
 - b. That SolidariTee retains the right to spot-check NGOs in case of serious suspicion of safeguarding concerns.
 - c. That any safeguarding incidents are reported to SolidariTee within 2 weeks of the incident occurring.

Section 4: Safeguarding of Beneficiaries - SolidariTee Activities Unrelated to Grant-Giving

1. Safeguarding of beneficiaries: building the capacity of students

It is understood that SolidariTee attracts a number of volunteers who are interested in also volunteering with the NGOs funded by SolidariTee, or seeking out other beneficiary-facing volunteering opportunities. As such, SolidariTee seeks to make reasonable efforts in ensuring that such volunteering opportunities are undertaken responsibly, including but not limited to the following initiatives:

- I. Offering SolidariTee-wide talks and trainings on responsible volunteering, and warning against 'voluntourism';
- II. Combatting 'saviourist' narratives internally via SolidariTee-wide talks and trainings;
- III. Making this policy available to all SolidariTee volunteers;
- IV. Committing, as a board of trustees, not to directly refer or recommend SolidariTee volunteers to any one specific NGO as a blanket policy in order to avoid NGOs who have or are hoping to receive SolidariTee funds becoming pressured into taking on unqualified volunteers. All SolidariTee volunteers who would like to volunteer with an NGO must make an application individually and without SolidariTee interference.

2. Safeguarding of beneficiaries: raising awareness

- I. Refraining from posting photos of beneficiaries in all communications materials, unless the individual in question has elected to maintain a public profile working on advocacy for the refugee crisis;
- II. Refraining from using language that is demeaning or undignified towards beneficiaries (see Regional Social Media Communications Guidelines available to all SolidariTee volunteers).

Section 5: Responding to concerns:

SolidariTee is committed to continual learning, and to responding to feedback in a proactive, self-reflective way. We take any safeguarding concerns very seriously, and encourage anyone with feedback on this policy, or who has experienced a safeguarding concern relating to SolidariTee's activities, or that of the NGOs SolidariTee is funding or has funded in the past, to get in touch.

Our Board of Trustees can be reached at boardoftrustees@solidaritee.org.uk, and any queries will be responded to within 10 working days. For concerns regarding the safeguarding of students and/or event attendees, please email alexa@solidaritee.org.uk to access these specific policies or to raise any concerns you do not wish to address to the entire board.