



## Operational Case Report

# World Christian Ministries (1001691)

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### About the charity

World Christian Ministries was registered with the Charity Commission in 1991 with objects to advance the Christian religion and relieve poverty and sickness in developing countries.

### Why the commission got involved

In July 2014 the charity made a serious incident report (RSI) to the commission. The report included details of an identity fraud committed against a partner organisation in Uganda, which resulted in the loss of around £30,000 to the charity. The money had been intended for a project to help vulnerable widows and their children.

The trustees did the right thing in reporting this serious incident us. We got involved to ensure the charity was in a secure position moving forward.

### What we found

We found that the charity had received regular reports, in line with their monitoring policy, which suggested that the funds had been properly applied and which purported to come from the partner in Uganda. The reports included photographs and receipts.

The fraud was exposed after a separate contact in Uganda mentioned that the partner responsible for the project had been admitted to hospital some time ago. The charity became suspicious about who they had received the email updates from and attempted to call the partner. They eventually established that he had been in hospital and the project had not progressed. The charity suspected that all money that had been transferred to the project since August 2013 had been lost.

The charity's staff immediately informed the trustees and payments to the partner's account were suspended. The charity instructed the partner to report the fraud to his local police and the incident was also reported to Action Fraud in the UK.

In addition, a trustee and a member of staff flew to Uganda to investigate the situation further and establish whether the relationship with the beneficiary and the funding of the related project could be continued. As part of this, the charity's IT security policy and monitoring of overseas projects was reviewed.

In light of these steps, we were satisfied that the trustees were taking effective and appropriate action in dealing with the incident.

## The action we took

There was no need for us to take further regulatory action in this case, as we were satisfied that the trustees were responding properly to the incident.

However, we did remind trustees of the need to consider our guidance on [Charities working internationally](#) when reviewing their processes.

## Lessons for others

Trustees have a general duty to take reasonable steps to assess and manage risks to their charity's activities, beneficiaries, property, work or reputation. Reporting serious incidents that have had, or risked, a detrimental impact on the charity demonstrates that the trustees are complying with this duty. If a serious incident is not reported to us, we may consider that failure to be mismanagement and take regulatory action. Full guidance on submitting serious incidents, and how to do so, is available on [GOV.UK](#).

Your charity can be more exposed to fraud when working overseas. You should think about how you can protect your charity from this kind of criminal activity. Trustees working abroad should follow our [Charities working internationally](#).