

EPISODE 1: JACOB/ROGER

THE PEOPLE WHO INSPIRED THE PODCAST...

‘Jacob’ was inspired by Roger Alonso, a former life-guard, and experienced Team Leader on Save the Children’s search and rescue vessel.

Roger is a committed humanitarian worker, matter-of-fact about his duty to save lives. “You can’t put a price on a human life, there are people dying and we have a duty to rescue them.”

He does still fear what might happen if they’re too late – all too aware of the consequences. “Sometimes you arrive too late to a rescue – the boat has collapsed. And women and children - who are often in the centre of the boat or below deck - they are going to be more exposed to drowning. I hope we will not to be too late”.

The fears are real. Alonso will always remember one particularly horrific 24 hours when they came across two overcrowded dinghies that had capsized. Many lives were lost.

“We found a mother in utter shock, unable to speak after losing her baby.”

And then there is the night from the

podcast, one that Roger will never forget. “Two young children witnessed their mother die.”

He recalls the little, crucial details: Carefully wrapped in plastic and sewn into her headscarf, the children’s mother, all too aware of the dangers of their voyage, had written some phone numbers. “We felt around the scarf and we found them – they were folded perfectly into a tiny package, and wrapped very tightly with plastic. We unwrapped them and there were all these numbers, people who could help her children.”

These tiny, carefully-wrapped packages meant that there was a positive outcome for these children after such a traumatic journey. “We found her husband – he was working as a cultural mediator for another refugee charity, and we were able to reunite him with his children.”

Roger will never forget his time on the Search and Rescue vessel:

“It has been very dramatic. Sometimes the waves were a foot deep over the deck. We had to move people all over the boat to get them out of the water. Alonso and the



Roger Alonso
TEAM LEADER

crew did what they could to keep spirits up: “One of the crew, when the waves got to around three metres high, he would always start singing. Loudly! We keep singing with the passengers too.”

Save the Children believes no child should drown at sea. Our search and rescue vessel in the Mediterranean saved the lives of refugee and migrant children making the dangerous crossing to Europe. On board the ship we provided emergency healthcare, identified the most vulnerable and at risk children, and helped them access the services they needed once onshore. By the end of the 2017 season, we had saved more than 1,000 children.

