Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 2024 © UNHCR / Juan Pablo Terminello
As gang violence spreads across Haiti, displaced families face dire shortages of food, shelter, and medical care.

Protection Field Coordination Toolkit

Chapter 12: Understanding Protection Programmatic Approaches and Interventions

Global Protection Cluster

Chapter 12: Understanding Protection Programmatic Approaches and Interventions

Overview

The following section of the Protection Field Coordination Toolkit provides Cluster coordination teams with an introduction to specific programmatic approaches or modalities that are used in Protection Cluster responses.

These interventions are delivered by partner organisations of the Protection Cluster. The Protection Cluster can support the quality delivery of these programmes and activities through supporting coordination between organisations/agencies and providing needed information and consolidating relevant technical guidance.

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NOTE: This chapter does not cover the entire breadth of protection programming and activities. The Protection Cluster is made up of a diverse range of operations and approaches that work together to deliver a quality protection response. The GPC welcomes inputs by partner organisations to this chapter to ensure that it is up to date and reflects best practice in protection programming.

The GPC has provided links to external websites and documents. As external resources are regularly updated, the GPC cannot guarantee the original links will work. People are encouraged to use the title for a key word search or contact the GPC for any resources where the link no longer works.

12.1 Locally-Led Responses

Protection Clusters support the principle of locally led protection responses and leverage the capacities of the cluster to support local actors' engagement in their access to information, resources and coordination support. This section is a reminder of the commitments that have been made to support the localization agenda and steps that Protection Clusters can take to apply these commitments in practice.

This section covers:

- A summary of the global commitments made by the GPC towards the localisation agenda.
- Tips to apply the Conceptual Framework for Localization in Humanitarian Coordination.
- Guidance, technical resources, and training modules on localisation.

Core Concepts and Principles of Localisation

Protection can only be achieved when those affected by a crisis are included and can participate directly in decision-making processes. Local humanitarian actors are the first to respond when disasters strike and often have access to areas that international actors do not. Their presence within communities before, during, and after crises means they are generally best placed to link immediate response efforts to longer term resilience-building, preparedness and recovery. Given their ability to provide contextual knowledge, implement local-context specific programs and provide culturally sensitive services based on their understanding of the challenges and needs of people, local humanitarian actors play a key role in delivering protection and assistance on the ground. Working with and investing in these local actors as equal and strategic partners, is a priority for an effective response to any humanitarian situation.

The Global Protection Cluster, among others, made the commitment at the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in May 2016 to "empower national and local humanitarian action" and thus, to work towards greater localisation. The GPC is committed to promoting local NGOs, as key drivers both to an inclusive humanitarian system and to vibrant civic spaces envisioned in the UN SG Call to Action for Human Rights.

While the principle of localisation is widely endorsed, there is still a need to increase meaningful participation of and partnerships with local actors to co-design responses and address humanitarian challenges faced by people in need of protection. However, the modalities to develop localised responses are multifaceted and often slow to take root within our institutions. This goes well beyond directing additional resources to national NGOs to deliver services and encompasses the development of various forms of partnerships with local civil society actors and the strengthening of community-based approaches.

Role of the Protection Cluster

The Global Protection Cluster and its four Areas of Responsibilities seek to meet the commitments made with regards to localisation and ensure that protection response strategies and coordination mechanisms are guided by the principle – "as local as possible, as international as necessary."

How well are you preforming?

Protection Clusters can implement these quick diagnostic tools to see how well your response is performing on the principles of partnership.

- Self-Assessment Tool on Principles of Partnership: Cluster Review
- Self-Assessment Tool on Principles of Partnership: Partnership Review

Shared leadership between international and local and national actors produces stronger engagement and representation of a diversity of actors, and ultimately better coordination outcomes. Cluster coordinators have a responsibility to promote, model and monitor principled partnerships amongst local/national and international actors.

As outlined in the Inter-Agency Toolkit on Localisation in Humanitarian Coordination, Protection Clusters can act in all five dimensions of the Conceptual Framework for Localization in Humanitarian Coordination.

Five dimensions of the Conceptual Framework for Localization in Humanitarian Coordination	
Dimension	What this means for coordination
Governance and Decision-Making	Local actors should have equitable opportunities to play leadership and co-leadership roles at national and sub-national levels; and have a seat at the table when strategic decisions are made (e.g. Strategic Advisory Groups or Steering Committees).
Participation and Influence	Local actors should have the opportunity to influence the Cluster's decisions. To do this, they need equitable access to information and analysis on coverage, results etc; and the opportunity and skills to effectively and credibly convey their thoughts and ideas.
Partnerships	Coordinators should be promoting a culture of principled partnership both in the way it interacts with its members; and the way in which members interact with each other. In some cases, this requires transitions from sub-contracting to more equitable and transparent partnerships, including recognising the value of non-monetary contributions by local actors (networks, knowledge).
Funding	Local actors should receive a greater share of the humanitarian resources, including pooled funds, where applicable. Where they have the institutional capacity to manage their own funds, local actors should be able to access funds directly.
Institutional Capacity	Whilst technical capacity strengthening is important, coordination groups should also actively encourage more systematic and coordinated opportunities to receive support to strengthen operational functions, as part of the overall sector strategy to scale up services.

Key Resources and Tools

Title	Type	Language	Year
Inter-Agency Toolkit on Localisation in Humanitarian Coordination – GPC CP AoR	Guidance Document	ENG	2022
IASC Localisation Policy Guidance: Strengthening Participation, Representation and Leadership of Local and National Actors in IASC Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms	Guidance Document	ENG	2021
GPC Policy Paper on Advancing the Localisation Agenda in Protection Coordination Groups	Policy Paper	ENG	2022
GPC Humanitarian Coordination and the Cluster Approach: A Quick Guide for Local Actors	Guidance Document	ENG, ESP, FRA, ARA, POR	2022

Framework for Strengthening the Institutional Capacity of National and Local Actors – GPC CP AoR	Framework	ENG	2022
Tip Sheet for Cluster Coordinators on How to Best Engage with Diaspora – GCP CP AoR and DEMAC	Tool	ENG	2022
Tip Sheet for Engaging Women-Led Organisations in Humanitarian Coordination Mechanisms – GPC, CARE, WASH, Nutrition, Education	Tool	ENG	2022
Tip Sheet for Integrating Localisation in the HNO and HRP – GPC	Tool	ENG, FRE	2022
Self-Assessment Tool on Principles of Partnership: Partnership Review	Tool	ENG	2022
Self-Assessment Tool on Principles of Partnership: Cluster Review	Tool	ENG	2022
Webinar: Translating IASC Guidance into Action: Participation, Representation and Leadership by Local and National Actors in Protection Coordination, Global Protection Forum 2021	Webinar	ENG	2021
GPC PowerPoint Presentation - Capacity-Building Workshop on Cluster Engagement for Local and National NGOs	Training Material	ENG	2022
GPC Training Handbook - Capacity-Building Workshop on Cluster Engagement for Local and National NGOs	Training Handbook	ENG	2022
Examples of How Localisation can be Integrated into Humanitarian Programme Cycle – GPC Image	Training Material	ENG	2022
PowerPoint Presentation - Localisation Orientation Module for Cluster Coordinators – GPC CP AoR	Training Material	ENG	2022
Facilitator's Guidance - Localisation Orientation Module for Cluster Coordinators – GPC CP AoR	Training Material	ENG	2022
Training Plan Template - Localisation Orientation Module for Cluster Coordinators – GPC CP AoR	Training Material	ENG	2022

12.2 Community-Based Protection

Community-based or community-led approaches to protection adopt a "people-centric" intent, which aims at helping people affected by crisis to better navigate the difficult circumstances they face (*Professional Standards for Protection Work, 2025).*

This section covers:

- Understanding the difference between community-based and community-led interventions.
- Remembering the first principles of inclusion of affected people in protection action.
- Considering social media and community-based protection.
- Amplifying communities, and do no harm.

This section references a number of key resource materials;

Key Resources

- ICRC – Professional Standards for Protection Work by Humanitarian and Human Rights Actors during Armed Conflict – Chapter 2 (2024)
- Oxfam – From Participation to Leadership: A resource pack on community-based protection (2021)
- UNHCR Protection Policy – Understanding Community Based Protection (2013)

Core Concepts

Communities and Humanitarian Action

Protection in humanitarian action is grounded in the aims of preventing or reducing harms to civilians and supporting the realization of their rights. This places a firm focus on the duties of parties to a conflict and the authorities, from local to national levels, to reduce harms and protect rights. Emphasis has also often been placed on the role of external protection actors to provide support and assistance to affected communities when duty bearers are failing to protect. However, the independent and unique capacities of communities themselves in contributing to their own protection has often been less understood. Over the past number of years however, this is starting to shift, and protection actors have been placing more importance on the participation and leadership of communities in protection work amidst spiralling protection needs across complex crisis situations.

In situations of violence, civilians and communities engage in self-protection actions to keep themselves, their families and their communities safer. This can involve engaging with armed actors, as both perpetrators of violence and potentially providers of protection, resulting in both positive and negative outcomes.

The humanitarian coordination system – and specifically, the Global Protection Cluster – offers an opportunity to support greater visibility of enhanced practice and deeper learning related to community-based/community-led protection programmes as enablers in community-led protection. The GPC is thus committed to expanding the traditionally top-down, state-centric mode of protection work, recognising and promoting how protection is an activity done by affected populations, not just for affected populations. There is also an opportunity for sharing emerging and good practices, learning, strengthening networks and providing a platform for strengthening synergies between protection and peace action.

The Professional Standards for Protection Work (2024) outlines four core ways in which protection actors must put affected people at the centre of their work.

1. Protection actors must base their work on engagement with people at risk and ensure they are meaningfully engaged throughout the design and implementation of any protection action.
2. Protection actors should learn from and build on the capacities of individuals and communities, to strengthen their resilience.
3. Protection actors should assist affected people in accessing information that can help them avoid or mitigate risk.
4. Protection actors working with affected people should inform them of their rights and of the obligations of duty bearers to respect them.

Understanding the Difference: Community Based & Community Led

A community-based/community-led approach recognises that affected communities are often the first responders in any crisis, and they are the experts in understanding of the risks, threats and capacities. It also recognises that community structures will pre-date humanitarian action and are likely to remain far beyond humanitarian interventions.

Community-based approaches are activities and programmes that include communities in all aspects of the programme cycle:

- Preparing and contributing to situation analyses.
- Setting priorities.
- Designing and implementing responses and interventions.
- Monitoring implementation and adjusting interventions as needed.
- Evaluating and reporting results.

These programmes go beyond being 'community informed' and they seek to combine communities' knowledge and capacities with the technical expertise of protection actors to guide prevention and response activities.

Community-led protection responses are those that are initiated by the community themselves, and they can occur with or without the support of external actors. Self-protection refers to what people (including households and communities) do to ensure their own protection from violence, coercion and deliberate deprivation

Whether community-based or community-led, both types of programming should be about supporting and empowering communities' self-protection capacities (Oxfam, 2021). Oxfam explain the ways in which individuals and communities seek to protection themselves:

- **Prevention strategies** entail deterring the (actual or potential) perpetrators of a threat, thus preventing it from occurring.
- **Avoidance strategies** are those that allow for individuals and communities not to be exposed to a threat. The threat itself still occurs, but it is avoided.
- **Mitigation strategies** entail reducing the severity of a threat, or the range of people who may be affected by it.
- **Cessation strategies** are those that bring an end to an ongoing threat.

Communities' self-protection strategies can be positive and negative, and it is the responsibility of actors engaging with communities to boost positive strategies and raise the impact of the harmful effects of negative coping strategies.

Box 1: Example of types of strategy in a scenario

The scenario below illustrates different examples of prevention, avoidance, mitigation and cessation strategies in response to the threat of extortion by soldiers at a checkpoint.

Scenario	Self-protection strategy	Type of strategy
A person wishes to go to the market. However, the fastest route is known to be targeted by soldiers extorting lone travellers along this route.	The person decides to travel in a large group, hoping that this will dissuade the soldiers.	Prevention
	The person decides to take an alternative route, even if not as fast, thus avoiding the risk of being victim of extortion.	Avoidance
	The person hides some of their money and mobile phone, but reserves some money to give to the soldiers, in the hope that they will be satisfied with the money and not demand more.	Mitigation
	The person mobilizes the community, and together they pressure the authorities to arrest the soldiers.	Cessation

Social Media and Community-Based Protection

Social media has an increasing importance in the ability of people affected by crisis to share and receive information. Social media can strengthen participation, engagement, transparency, outreach and advocacy in protection action, but it also has risks if used poorly by humanitarian actors or it is used to spread misinformation and disinformation.

When considering social media and community-based protection, there are two important components.

1. How it is used by **affected populations**: For everyday life; social capital; information and 'sense making' and for collection action and voice in a crisis.
2. How it is used by **humanitarian actors:** For public relation; situational awareness; community engagement and accountability and as a tool for programme intervention.

Any use of social media in protection action should consider the following: who has access to social media (and who does not) and how do people use social media. Protection actors should be mindful of digital divides and exclusion, and of course to ensure that social media and digital engagement is not used simply because it is easier for humanitarian actors (rather than more relevant to communities).

Read more

- UNHCR – Using Social Media in Community Based Protection (2021)
- Save the Children – Digital Safeguarding for Migrating and Displaced Children (2020)
- Humanitarian Policy Group – Social Media and Inclusion in Humanitarian Response (2022)

Role of the Protection Cluster

Amplifying Communities, without Harm

- While community members are often the first emergency respondents, they can face different pressures when other actors come to assist in the community. External actors can overstretch the same community by asking them to take on the burden of humanitarian processes and procedures, or that they are pushed aside by other actors who have more access to resources and decision makers. It's important that humanitarian actors get the balance right of supporting, amplifying and adding

technical expertise. For protection actors, this requires consideration when engaging protection volunteer networks and/or engaging in protection consultations in the community.

- Protection actors should identify and support communities' self-protection measures; they should not replace existing positive measures or introduce new measures that might weaken the community's own protection capacity. They should identify practices and coping mechanisms with harmful protection outcomes and work with the community to adapt or replace these or mitigate their effects. This is also important when considering assumptions of what cost and structures communities can sustain.
- Humanitarian actors must prioritize amplify the voices of affected people regarding protection risks at all levels. Efforts should be complementary to and coordinated with the objectives of affected people. Local actors will often have the context knowledge and local resources, but they may also face barriers to effectively influencing key duty bearers when the protection concerns to be raised are too sensitive. In such cases, international humanitarian and human rights actors should work in complementarity with local actors and reinforce them and be willing to advocate to duty bearers on behalf of affected people.
- It is not possible to work directly with every affected person, but it is important that international actors – including clusters – keep lines of engagement open to affected people. Clusters and their partners should be mindful that when working with a smaller group of people – such as protection focal points, protection monitors, or community leaders – they do not represent the whole community. Clusters need to be careful not to reinforce any negative structures for communities (e.g. leaders who do not have the trust of their communities, or who only represent one part of the community). Certain groups can be excluded from community structures.
- When engaging community-based organisations and partners, protection partners should not set communities up to fail. Including CBOs may require training and support to participate in agency and organisation led processes such as the humanitarian cluster system.
- Community engagement is a process not a project. While clusters might support quick impact community-based projects in a crisis, for example through a pooled fund allocation, the organisation delivering the project should have community trust and working with communities' self-protection strategies. Community work is a skill – and it requires expertise, training and resources.

Key Resources and Tools

Title	Type	Language	Year
UNHCR Protection Policy – Understanding Community Based Protection	Policy	ENG	2013
ICRC Professional Standards for Protection Work by Humanitarian and Human Rights Actors during Armed Conflict – Chapter 2	Standards	ENG, FRA, ESP, ARA, RUS	2024
Oxfam, From Participation to Leadership: A Resource Pack on Community-Based Protection	Resource Pack	ENG, FRA, ESP, ARA	2021
ICRC Community-Based Protection: A Guide for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	Resource Pack	ENG, FRA, ESP, ARA, RUS	2022
UNHCR Explaining Community-Based Protection	Video	ENG	2013

UNHCR: Community-Based Protection and MHPSS	Field Guide	ENG, RUS, UKR	2017
GPC, Protection Cluster DRC, Interaction – Policy Brief on Community-Based Protection in the DRC	Policy Brief	ENG, FRE	2024
GPC Protection Conversation Series – Proactive Protection	Webinar	ENG	2024
GPC Global Protection Forum, Community Led Advocacy – Self Protection and Accountability	Webinar	ENG	2024

12.3 Protection Case Management

This section includes

- An introduction to Protection Case Management (PCM) and its principles.
- The role of case management in addressing protection risks.
- The responsibilities of the Protection Cluster in facilitating and coordinating case management.
- Guidance on linking case management to protection analysis and individual protection assistance.

Introduction to Protection Case Management (PCM)

Protection Case Management is a form of specialised protection assistance based on social work principles and case management approaches to provide individualised support. Case management is a service that is provided to an individual with complex or multiple protection needs related to violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation.

A case worker provides one-on-one support to an individual. Some organisations refer to this individual as a service user, others refer to them as a client. The case worker collaborates closely with the service user/client to access, coordinate and advocate for the needed services.

In Protection Case Management, the people receiving the service are either at risk of or recovering from:

- **Violence:** The intentional use of physical force or power threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.
- **Coercion:** In short, forcing someone to do something against their will. Coercion in humanitarian situations can be understood as coercion-as-extortion, a demand coupled with a threat of harm or the infliction of harm, done to extract some kind of concession from the victim state. It is an act targeting the victim state's will or decision-making capacity.
- **Deliberate Deprivation:** Intentional action to prevent people from accessing resources, goods, or services they need and have the right to access.

Read more: GPC, NRC, IRC: Your Guide to Protection Case Management (2025)

Protection Case Management is a structured and sustained method for providing responsive and remedial support to a person at heightened risk. It is an empowering and collaborative process drawing on the strengths of the client, where the client is supported to connect to services needed. A client is supported by an assigned caseworker, who provides a safe environment for them and develops a relationship built on trust. The caseworker supports the client to assess their situation, and to recognise and strengthen the protective factors in their life. The caseworker informs the client of all the options available and assists them in identifying, and then reaching, personal goals by leveraging their strengths and working with service providers. The caseworker, supported by a supervisor, takes responsibility for linking the client to these services, advocating for actions needed, and following up those actions in a coordinated way.

Protection Case Management – Theory of Change Diagram:

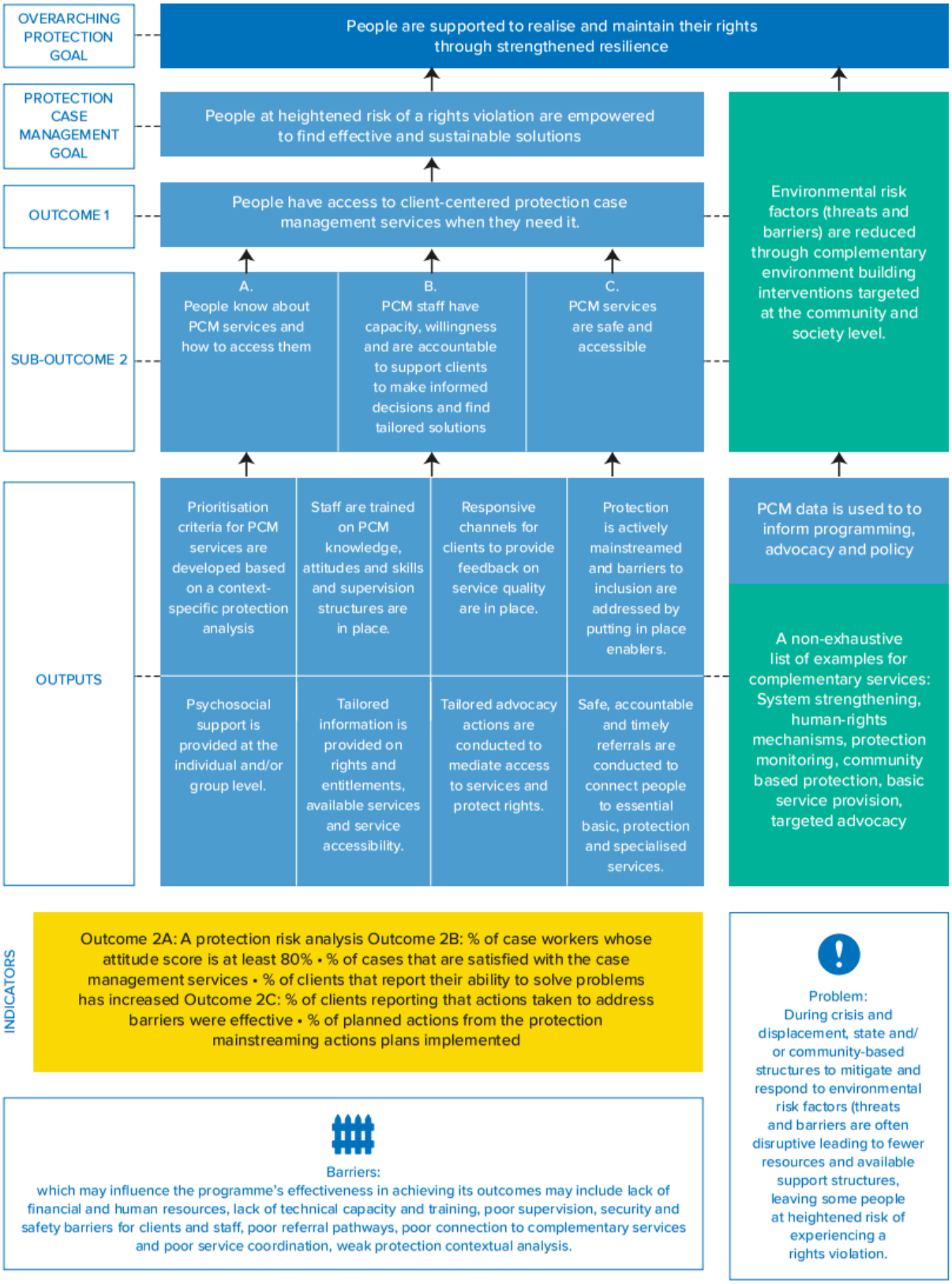


Figure: *https://globalprotectioncluster.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/guide_to_protection_cm.pdf* - Your Guide to Protection Case Management (page 12) – GPC

Who Implements Protection Case Management?

Organisations across the protection spectrum engage in case management programming, including child protection and GBV organisations. While case management is a cross-cutting intervention, not all protection partners are equipped to provide quality case management services.

Effective case management requires that organisations have suitable structures to safely deliver case management. They should have:

- An effective case worker system, with suitable internal supervision and support structures.
- The ability to provide MHPSS services to service users.
- Clear targeting and intake criteria for the safe identification of cases.
- The ability to manage referral pathways, and provide guidance for individuals that are not eligible for services.

Safe protection case management can only be provided by partners that have the required structure in place, and this needs careful planning and organisational stability. Case management services are only likely to be provided by established protection partners that have stability of funding and resources to allow continuity of care. It is not an intervention that can be mobilised in an ad hoc basis.

Protection Case Management in an Emergency

Protection case management in an emergency setting considers whether it is suitable, safe or feasible to align with national social work systems or local authorities to delivery direct case management or similar services.

Protection case management is a social work – aligned service, that draws from the experience of social work principles. Where possible, organisations should work closely with existing social work systems and other relevant authorities to deliver direct case management or any similar services. After a review of the strengths, challenges and gaps in the national system, the Protection Cluster and its partners may determine that it is appropriate to initiate humanitarian led case management programming.

This can be in cases where the national capacity has broken down or is struggling to adapt to a new context such as displacement, or where affected populations feel unable or unsafe to access national services.

Linking Case Management to Protection Analysis

A protection analysis is important to assess the need for protection case management in a humanitarian setting. It is important to identify when and where protection case management is required. Protection case management service providers should base their intake criteria following a protection risk analysis. This should be adapted to the local level, allowing partners to reflect on local risks. The protection risk analysis constitutes the foundation for the identification of the main protection risks (through an analysis of main threats, vulnerabilities, and capacities) faced by different gender, age and groups with different characteristics in a specific context.

This analysis will enable partners to understand their targeting and intake criteria. While many people can benefit from case management services, it is important that humanitarian protection case management prioritises cases based on severity of risk.

Role of the Protection Cluster

The Protection Cluster has a role in creating an enabling environment for effective and principled case management and supporting operational partners that provide these services.

- Ensure ongoing protection analysis that facilitates the identification of protection risks and threats. This regular analysis should also be facilitated by creating an open-discussion space between partners in cluster meetings. This analysis assists partners in their targeting and intake criteria.
- Support coordination across the protection spectrum. GBV and Child Protection have their own case management coordination processes in place. Where possible and/or where necessary, the protection cluster should work to ensure coherence across the spectrum and reduce any unnecessary duplication or burden on protection partners.
- Provide a platform for case management coordination, such as case management working group. Any working group should be chaired by an organisation that provides case management services. This working group is responsible for developing a locally relevant minimum standards of protection case management.
- Conduct periodical case management system reviews, that can assess national and local government capacities and map humanitarian response capacities. It is critical that humanitarian case management does not duplicate efforts in supporting the primary duty bearer.
- Where the cluster has included case management within the HNRP, the cluster should periodically check that any partner reporting against these indicators in the 4/5W have appropriate capacity to provide safe case management services.

Key Resources and Tools

Please see under Key Resources and Tools in next Section: Service Mapping and Referrals

We would like to acknowledge the assistance received from our colleagues at the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and thank them for their input in the preparation of this section on Case Management.

12.4 Service Mapping and Referrals

Supporting service mapping is one of the core deliverables of a Cluster, included under core function 1 (support service delivery). Appropriate service mapping is a corner stone of protection response.

This section covers:

- Overview information, links to global guidance and standards, and example of country-level tools.
- Guidance to enhance understanding of service mapping and referrals.
- Technical resources and practices for Protection partners to improve service coordination.
- Steps to develop context-specific platforms or technical guidance.

Service Mapping

Clusters should support service delivery by providing a platform that ensures service mapping and developing mechanisms to eliminate duplication. Protection Clusters are required to support information on service provision at a:

- **Response-wide/inter-cluster level** – linked to 4/5W.
- **Cluster level** – cluster specific service mapping to support partner coordination and appropriate referrals.
- **Site/location level** – detailed service mapping in specific response locations or for a specific programmatic need.

A strong service map underpins inter-agency referrals between protection actors, and from non-protection actors to protection actors. Quality service mapping is foundational to enabling safe and appropriate referral processes between service providers.

Service mapping should not be confused with the 4/5Ws.

Service Mapping vs. 5Ws	
Humanitarian 5Ws (*Who does What, Where, When and for Whom*)	A tool designed to support information management for effective coordinated humanitarian response. The tool helps in collecting data on the operational presence and results achieved (outputs) of Protection Partners and is linked to the strategic objectives of the Humanitarian Response Plan. The 5W is an activity-based tool and it is limited to humanitarian actors participating in the humanitarian response plan.
Service Mapping	A tool to map existing (and available) services for people at risk of violence and survivors of violence. It is used to document information on types of services that are available, to allow for safe and appropriate referral for immediate and long-term support.

Service mapping is broader than humanitarian 5Ws. It can be used to map services provided by protection and non-protection actors. It can include information on services provided by Government and non-humanitarian partners. Examples of services that can be included in a service map includes: protection partner services, specialised child protection and GBV services, health services, legal and administrative services, psychosocial support, education, cash for protection, material support providers, safe/emergency shelter, government services (social services).

Who Uses a Service Map?

- **Service providers.** At a minimum, service mapping information should be available to all protection service providers that participate in the development of the service mapping tool. It is not uncommon that other humanitarian sectors or OCHA will request access to protection service maps to support their partners to engage in quick referral to protection services. Other sectors may want to share information about their own services (e.g. health services) within the service map.
- **Service users**. Depending on the information management capacity of a response, service maps can be made available to internally displaced people, and other users of humanitarian services. This is not uncommon in refugee settings. If you intend for a service map to be available to service users, then it should be appropriately adapted.
- **Frontline workers.** Frontline workers can be sources of information on available services and can serve as entry points to connect people to the services and assistance they need. This is done either by putting them in direct contact with the necessary service provider or by informing them about how to seek the service themselves.

Role of the Protection Cluster in Service Mapping

At a basic level, service mapping facilitates inter-agency collaboration on service provision to at-risk (and affected) individuals and communities. The advantage of operating this system through the Protection Cluster:

- Avoids duplication of efforts of partners.
- Enables non-protection partners to more easily share information on services that are willing to receive referrals from protection actors.
- Facilitates collaboration between the Protection Cluster and Areas of Responsibilities.
- Identifies locations and services where there are gaps.

As service maps can also include services provided by non-protection actors (e.g. state authorities, services from other sectors), service maps can include information on opening hours, intake criteria and fees. These can be monitored to see if there are barriers in access to services. The Protection Cluster can engage in advocacy to remove or reduce such barriers.

The Protection Cluster can support service mapping by:

- Creating/circulating a minimum standards checklist for services.
- Ensuring that partners accurately and in a timely manner update information on available services.
- Hosting service mapping to allow partners to access information on available services.
- Raising awareness with non-protection actors on the existence of the service map.
- Conducting spot checks and monitoring visits to service locations.
- Advocating with relevant humanitarian partners/authorities on barriers to accessing services.
- Creating a working group on service mapping and referrals to ensure regular discussion on the relevance and need to operational partners, to support continuous buy in.

Key Considerations & Questions for Service Mapping

- Service mapping capacities are based on your IM and data hosting capacity – consider your resources and what is required to maintain this system over the longer term.
- A service map does not need to be high-tech to be useful.

- If national service mapping is not possible – or required – you can limit the service map to a more specific geographic area.
- Service mapping requires collaboration and cooperation from partners. You can survey partners on willingness to participate and what services they would like to see reflected in any mapping exercise (e.g. health services, legal services, mine action services).
- Know your user. Different users have different needs and accessibility issues, and it is important that you know at the start who your primary user is.
- Reflect on any sensitive services that partners may not want to be widely known (e.g. GBV or LGBTQI+ services) and how you will balance the risks of circulating information.
- Collaborate with whatever exists. The aim of service mapping is to reduce the burden on partners and avoid duplication of effort. Other actors may have existing service mapping (e.g. specialised AoR), and you can build on these efforts.
- A service map is supposed to be useful to its user.

Referrals

A **referral** is the process of directing a client to another service provider because they require help that is beyond the expertise or scope of work of the current service provider, or the service provider determines there is a better placed actor for the specific case.

A **self-referral** is the process of an individual making a request for assistance to the needed service provider themselves.

Role of the Protection Cluster in Referrals

The Protection Cluster is not directly involved in the management of individual or household referrals. The role of the cluster is to encourage partner organisations to use the individual referral management system which best allows them to:

- Record, monitor and follow up on referrals.
- Adhere to minimum standards, such as confidentiality and informed consent.
- Promote accountability to affected populations.

The Protection Cluster can support this through:

- Promoting the use of a uniform referral form and Standard Operating Procedures.
- Developing and regularly reviewing the Interagency minimum standards for referrals and promoting compliance to these standards.
- Generating trend analysis on referrals to promote accountability and provide information on service gaps.
- Training relevant partners (including non-cluster members) on the use of documentation, and minimum standards.
- Raising awareness of the protection referral processes with non-protection actors.

Key Considerations & Questions for Referrals

- Referrals happen between organisations and agencies, and not via the cluster.
- Protection actors are not gatekeepers – discuss with your partners how to balance data sharing processes with the need to ensure that the most relevant individuals have access to safe and secure services.

- It is common that non-protection actors will refer to protection actors – to the closest available protection service – and protection actors will have to manage the safe onwards referral to the best placed protection actor.
- The Protection Cluster may be required to engage with key actors (e.g. non-protection organisation or state social services) to facilitate referral processes.

Key Resources and Tools

Title	Type	Language	Year
Protection Case Management			
GPC, NRC, IRC Your Guide to Protection Case Management	Guidance	ENG	2025
Service Mapping			
IRC Service Mapping Handbook	Handbook	ENG	2024
IRC Establishing Guidelines and SOPs on Service Mapping	Guide	ENG	2024
GPC Service Mapping Template - Excel	Tool	ENG	2022
Referrals			
Yemen Protection Cluster Inter-Agency Referral Form	Referral Form	ENG	2017
Lebanon Inter-Agency Minimum Standard on Referrals	Referral Guidance	ENG	2022
Ukraine Protection Cluster Referral Minimum Standards	Referral Guidance	ENG	2020
IRC High Risk Escalation and Referral Pathway Template	Template	ENG	2024
IRC Referral Pathway Template	Template	ENG	2024

12.5 Legal Aid, Law and Policy

This section provides information on:

- The importance of legal aid in humanitarian contexts.
- Key definitions and approaches in legal aid programming.
- Law and policy advocacy.
- The role of the Protection Cluster in facilitating legal aid and law/policy advocacy.
- Resources and tools.

Introduction to Legal Aid in Humanitarian Contexts

The need for legal aid in all its forms in displacement and humanitarian contexts is quite wide. Legal aid and assistance interventions are crucial to support affected populations to access justice and protection, as well as humanitarian assistance and public services. The provision of legal aid is a corner stone of any humanitarian response, and links people to pathways for durable solutions.

Read more

- Conceptual Framework: Legal Aid in Humanitarian Settings, GPC Law and Policy Task Team, 2022
- Legal Aid in Humanitarian Settings. Analysis Guide, GPC Law and Policy Task Team, 2022
- African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), 2009

Displacement causes – and exacerbates – protection risks for those that are affected, and some people can experience considerable obstacles in accessing services and assistance and legal protection for their person and property. They might experience significant discrimination and denial of rights and legal protection. Certain groups of persons can face additional legal and other barriers and obstacles (such as social or cultural) when seeking legal assistance and legal protection.

Legal aid programming encompasses a range of services, depending on a person's needs and entitlements. Many individuals benefit from information on their rights and entitlements, and from information that guides them through the states' administrative systems (e.g. on how to replace legal documents or how to ensure the registration of their household for assistance). Most individuals though will require one-on-one counselling or more sustained and specialised support to assist them to navigate the administrative and justice systems.

Legal aid in humanitarian settings aims to increase the ability of crisis-affected populations (individuals and communities) and among them the most vulnerable/marginalized, to understand their rights and obligations, make informed decisions about their preferred solutions.

Humanitarian activities that are directed towards supporting individuals and communities (i.e. direct service provisions) are often complemented by actions and programmes that aim to build the capacity of duty bearers and relevant state and civil society institutions and to conduct advocacy alongside other civil society actors (e.g., Bar Association) to influence laws, policies and practices to provide more effective legal protection (i.e. interventions aimed at strengthening the enabling legal, policy and institutional environment).

Understanding Legal Terminology

Organisations and agencies that engage in legal aid programming in humanitarian settings have developed common terminology, such as the Conceptual Framework to coordinate their work and objectives.

Legal Terminology	
Access to Justice	Access to justice is defined as the ability of people to seek and obtain a remedy through justice systems. Justice systems can include statutory/official systems, as well as traditional, customary and religious. This remedy is in conformity with human rights standards. Everyone should, on an equal basis with others, enjoy the rights to equality before the law, to equal protection under the law, to a fair resolution of disputes, to meaningful participation and to be heard.
Legal Aid	Legal aid plays a crucial role in enabling people to navigate the justice system, to make informed decisions, as well as to obtain remedies. Legal aid makes a critical connection between populations and the justice systems. It is both a right and an essential precondition for the exercise and enjoyment of several other human rights. While there is no standard definition of legal aid, the GPC Law and Policy Task Team use the term legal aid to mean the specialised assistance provided to an individual, household, community or population group that lack the legal capacity/knowledge/awareness to identify, address and solve a justice problem and/or specialised assistance provided to those that face legislative, institutional, practical, legal, administrative or other type of obstacles in accessing justice. Appropriate and quality legal aid services enable individuals and communities to achieve rights-based solutions to legal or justice issues. *Direct Legal Aid service provision entails:* • Legal information • Legal advice, counselling, legal counselling • Legal assistance, legal representation at little or no cost to the person
Legal Information	Legal information is a distinct and specialised form of protection information awareness raising. It is important that cluster coordination teams understand the distinction. Displacement often contributes to lack of information on rights and services to which individuals/groups are entitled, legal documents they need to access services or obtain protection, what support is available when their rights are violated and how to seek that support. Displaced persons often feel a sense of fear or alienation regarding justice services; these feelings are often amplified by a lack of knowledge of what is available. The provision of legal information aims at making individuals and communities aware of their key legal issues. Legal information provision can support in identifying individuals in need of specialized legal aid services. Legal information materials are usually developed by lawyers and/or community paralegals to provide information to a pre-identified legal issue and to facilitate self-identification of legal issues and why it is important.

Who provides Legal Aid?

Organisations across the protection spectrum engage in legal aid programming, including child protection and GBV organisations, or those working on housing, land and property issues. Other sectors can have integrated legal aid, such as Shelter and Education. While legal aid is a cross-cutting intervention, not all protection partners are equipped to provide quality legal aid.

A legal aid provider is a legally trained professional (lawyer or paralegal or other suitably trained person) who provides legal aid services on a full-time or part-time basis. Legal aid providers are typically lawyers, but in many contexts, they are supported by community paralegals to increase proximity, enhancing access to justice.

Community paralegals are different from conventional paralegals. Their primary role is not to assist lawyers, but rather to work directly with the communities they serve. They are trained in basic law and in skills like mediation, education, and advocacy. See here for more information**.**

Legal aid service provider is the organization that provides legal aid services, or on behalf of which a legal aid provider works.

Legal aid actors include legal aid providers and legal aid service providers. They can be organised into two categories:

1) Those belonging to civil society (such as organizations providing legal aid in its different components), private sector (such as private lawyer's networks), international organizations (such as UN agencies, international NGO providing legal aid services), or Bar Association (often private but with a public role related to legal aid service provision).
2) Those belonging to the authorities (such as lawyers funded by the State to provide legal services) or justice actors.

The provision of effective humanitarian legal aid requires that organisations have suitable structures, funding and community access. To safely deliver case management they should have:

- ✓ Qualified legal and/or community paralegal staff.
- ✓ Clear targeting and intake criteria for the safe identification of cases.
- ✓ The ability to manage referral pathways and provide guidance for individuals that are not eligible for services.

Linking Protection Analysis and the Legal Aid Analysis Framework

A protection analysis is important to assess the main risks and threats in a humanitarian setting. There are several very useful tools that can be used and can be integrated alongside each other for a robust analysis of the legal environment and protection content.

The Legal Aid Analysis Framework (LAAF) is a practical matrix that can assist partners to develop a joint analysis of the legal aid landscape – including the legal environment, justice system, legal aid needs, existing capacities and responses in a country or territory affected by a crisis.

The Protection Analytical Framework (PAF) is a global analysis tool that assists in developing a country or location specific interagency understanding of who is most at risk, and what threats they face. This is important to service providers to assist them in identifying priority locations to respond and identifying priority needs within these locations.

The Rights and Analysis Platform is hosted by UNHCR. It is a digital Platform designed to provide information about laws and policies relating to the rights for refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced and stateless persons. RiMAP provides a structured methodology and an online Platform for collecting and analysing legal data and challenges around specific rights categories.

Civil Documentation and Humanitarian Access

Access to legal identity and civil documentation is one of the most basic human rights, as enshrined in different international legal instruments. It is identified as a core humanitarian protection need in many crises.

Displaced persons are frequently asked to produce identity documents to move freely, to access assistance, to obtain other documents or to register their children. Often, they cannot produce such documents because they lost them—or they never had them—and they end up in a vicious circle of being undocumented and lacking registration.

These barriers are not unique to displacement contexts, but the specific vulnerabilities of displaced persons make them even more consequential. There are, however, certain barriers specific to displacement contexts. For example, documents can often only be obtained in the place of origin and displaced persons cannot make the journey because of security concerns, lack of resources or fear of jeopardizing their legal stay in a host country. Also, the destruction of identity and civil registration offices and records because of conflict or disaster means that foundational documents are missing [see more at NRC Legal Identity].

Protection Clusters are active in analysing these issues and highlighting the protection impact of a lack/loss of civil documentation. Such as this report from Iraq.

Law and Policy on Internal Displacement

Interventions strengthening the enabling legal, policy and institutional environment can – and do – complement direct legal aid service provision. This is a complimentary area of work to legal aid and goes beyond traditional legal aid and access to justice. Protection Clusters and their members have an important role to play in advocating for and supporting States in the development and implementation of their laws and policies for protection outcomes. This is particularly relevant where states have laws and policies that negatively affect the protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs). For many States, the incorporation of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (or the domestication of the African Union Kampala Convention as relevant) into national legislation can facilitate the establishment of a protection legal environment for people affected by displacement.

It is important to remember that effective advocacy on law and policy change is directed towards appropriate State institutions and/or actors that support the capacity development of State institutions. Legal actors provide legal advice, guidance and support on emerging issues and policies that affect displaced persons. This can be achieved through advocacy, capacity building, assessment and analysis of legislation, case law analysis, and the collection of case studies.

The engagement of field Protection Clusters in the law-and-policy area should be based on a solid analysis of the legal and policy context, which should be an integral part of the protection context-based analysis informing the overall strategic planning.

Information and analysis can include – but is not limited to:

- ✓ Reports on issues relating to the rights of IDPs.
- ✓ Create/strengthen information networks of national partners to exchange information, analysis and lessons learned.
- ✓ Collect and share information on precedent-setting cases, new procedures, state programmes and their impact on IDPs.

Role of the Protection Cluster in Legal Aid and Law and Policy

The Protection Cluster has a role in creating an enabling environment for effective, coordinated and principled law, policy and legal aid interventions, and in supporting operational partners that provide these services.

Integrating Law and Policy Perspectives into Protection Analysis and Coordination

- Ensure a proper legal and legal aid analysis to understand the legal environment, justice system, legal aid needs, and existing capacities and responses in your context. This regular analysis should also be facilitated by creating an open-discussion space between partners in cluster meetings. This analysis assists partners in their targeting and intake criteria.
- Use Protection Analysis Updates and other Protection Cluster analysis products to share recommendations on critical law and policy reforms required to improve the protective legal environment for IDPs.
- Support coordination across the protection spectrum. GBV and child protection have legal programmes and advocacy initiatives in place (e.g. birth registration advocacy). Where possible and/or where necessary, the Protection Cluster should work to ensure coherence across the spectrum and increase collective efforts to advocate for strengthened legal protection.
- Provide a platform for organisations with legal aid programming to meet, share experiences and establish common tools, for example a Legal Task Force. This working group should be chaired by an appropriate organisation engaged in legal aid programming. It is responsible for developing a locally relevant minimum standards for legal aid and conducting shared Legal Aid analysis as relevant.

Dedicated Law and Policy Initiatives

- Promote human rights engagement with UN and regional human rights mechanisms – including the engagement of protection civil society organisations.
- Organise events with competent national and sub-national authorities, HCT and protection partners on relevant law and policy on internal displacement (e.g. Kampala Convention).
- Support online and in-person briefings to donors.
- Act as a bridge between communities and duty-bearers (e.g. organising visits for MPs or authorities to IDP communities, organise consultations with affected communities).

Key Resources and Tools

Title	Type	Language	Year
Guidance			
Legal Aid Analysis Framework	Framework	ENG, ESP, FRA	2023
Legal Aid in Humanitarian Settings – Conceptual Framework	Framework	ENG, ESP, FRA, ARA	2022 (ENG 2024)
Legal Aid Analysis Guide	Guidance	ENG, ESP, FRA, ARA	2022 ENG (2024)
Law and Policy			
African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention)	Legal Framework	ENG, FRA, ARA, POR	2009
GPC Training Package: Capacity Building on Law and Policymaking on Internal Displacement	Training	ENG, ESP, FRA, POR, ARA	2016

Strengthening Legal Aid and Access to Justice in Humanitarian Settings: A Compilation of Learning on relevant Strategies and Effective Practices	Lessons Learned	ENG	2024
Webinar on Legal Aid to Protect the Right to Legal Identity	Webinar	ENG	2023
LAAF: Análisis Regional de Necesidades de Ayuda Legal: Colombia, México, Perú, Venezuela, Guatemala y Honduras	Report	ESP	2024
Example Cluster Activities			
Northwest Syria – Legal Services Dashboard – GPC	Dashboard	ENG	2023
Northeast Syria – Rule of Law Analysis Presentation – GPC, IRC	Presentation	ENG	2023
Mozambique – Principled Return of IDPs – Position Paper, GPC	Advocacy	ENG	2021
Ukraine – Good Practices on IDP Legislative Advocacy	Advocacy	ENG	2021
Legal Aid in Ukraine (Legal Aid and Access to Justice in Crisis Settings)	Presentation	ENG	2023

Global Protection Cluster
Law and Policy
Task Team

We would like to acknowledge the assistance received from our colleagues in the Global Protection Cluster's Task Team on Law and Policy, and thank them for their input in the preparation of this section on Legal Aid, Law and Policy.

12.6 Cash and Protection

Cash assistance has a significant importance in humanitarian action and is a common response modality used in protection programming. The use of cash in protection programming is complimentary to other forms of cash assistance (such as multi-purpose cash) but has a targeted focus on achieving protection outcomes.

This section provides:

- Definition and role of C4P within protection programming.
- Responsibilities of Protection Cluster Coordination Teams.
- Guidance on coordination with Cash Working Groups and integration into broader humanitarian response plans.
- Key resources, tools, and examples for effective implementation.

Introduction to C4P

Cash for Protection (C4P) is defined as an intervention whereby Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) is used as a modality, within a protection programming, to contribute to address individual, or household-level protection needs, preventing, reducing occurrence or the severity of the impact of specific protection risks (see: Cash for Protection Definitions).

While in specialised/stand-alone protection programmes C4P have specific protection objectives, in integrated protection and CVA programming protection and CVA activities are combined to collectively contribute to reduce the exposure of the affected population to protection risks and harms and support the capacity of individuals and households to meet their essential needs without having to rely on negative coping strategies.

Difference between MPCA and C4P

Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) comprises transfers (either periodic or one-off) corresponding to the amount of money required to cover, fully or partially, a household's basic and/or recovery needs that can be monetized and purchased. Cash transfers are "multipurpose" if explicitly designed to address multiple needs, with the transfer value calculated accordingly.

While Cash for Protection (C4P) focuses specifically on using cash assistance to enhance protection for vulnerable populations. Therefore, the provision of cash for protection should never be intended to address exclusively socio-economic vulnerabilities, these will be addressed by MPCA.

The provision of cash for protection is driven by a causal link between a clearly identified protection concern and the analysis of how the cash assistance will be used as a modality to address protection risks by preventing, reducing, or mitigating the risks identified. In some circumstances, these could include addressing a variety of financial barriers, including basic needs. However, C4P and MPCA are not mutually exclusive and can be combined and used strategically to achieve protection outcomes in humanitarian contexts.

> **Read more:** For more detail, read this note be the GPC's Cash for Protection Team: Cash for Protection in Specialised/Standalone Protection Programming Note (2024)

The Importance of a Protection Risk Analysis

A protection risk analysis is the first step to determine which specific protection risks can be responded to using C4P in a specific context, identifying the groups who are most exposed to these risks, and how the CVA can contribute to protection outputs or outcomes.

The protection risk analysis constitutes the foundation for the identification of the main protection risks (through an analysis of main threats, vulnerabilities, and capacities) faced by different gender, age and groups with different characteristics in a specific context. Protection risk is defined as the actual or potential exposure of the affected population to violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation.

How to Decide when Cash Assistance is Appropriate

Protection partners need to decide if/when cash assistance is an appropriate programme methodology. The Cash for Protection in Specialised/Standalone Protection Programming Note (2024) advises that cash can be integrated into a broader protection response and it does not require a dedicated targeting strategy at a response level. The targeting of cash for protection is at an individual, HH or community level.

- The individual/HH/community protection analysis allows partners to decide whether cash for protection is a pertinent type of response.
- It is important to establish how the provision of cash will address the identified protection risks and contribute to a direct protection outcome.
- The selection of C4P recipients is made by protection actors and based on an individual protection assessment.
- This assessment should be based upon the do no harm principle and should consider if a potential cash intervention aligns with a “do no harm” perspective and does not put an individual at further risk.

Role of the Protection Cluster

The Protection Cluster has a very specific role in discussions on cash and protection programming. The cluster supports technical collaboration between cluster members, and at an inter-agency and inter cluster level.

Support to Protection Partner Programming

The following actions can improve the programme quality of cash interventions and protection programming.

- Provide updated protection risk analysis to support the definition of eligibility and priority criteria for Cash for Protection. This is based on context specific protection risk analysis for different population groups (age, gender, ability, etc.).
- Facilitate the development of technical guidance on the design and implementation of cash for protection programming.
- Ensure that partners set a transfer value, with an agreed ceiling of costs for cash for protection. This might require the cluster to consolidate information on the costs of specific services, to assist partners to set a transfer value.
- Disseminate tools and key technical resources and national/context specific guidance.
- Regularly update the protection service map.
- Support collection and sharing of best practices and lessons learnt to improve quality and evidence-based programming.

Coordinate with Other Sectors using Cash-Based Assistance

Where there is a Cash Working Group (CWG), this is an excellent platform to ensure coordination with other sectors such as education, health, food security and livelihoods etc.

- Facilitate collaboration and establishment of referral mechanisms between protection and CVA practitioners.
- Ensure identification of potential protection risks related to CVA and mitigation strategies.

- Support protection market assessments and advocate to include protection services in existing market assessments, through inclusion of key questions on cost of protection services, stakeholders involved in the services, and existing access restrictions; and/or to support dedicated protection services market assessment.
- Promote protection mainstreaming within CVA, through capacity building and provision of tools for program design, implementation and monitoring.

Promote Coherence

- Coordinate with protection AoRs on cash for protection to ensure coherence of action and approaches in using CVA for protection outcomes.
- Ensure CVA is considered as one modality within the protection sector, and it is included in HNRP/HRP and other humanitarian planning and in humanitarian funding requirements.
- Encourage the capacity building of local actors and collaboration with the government and authorities as relevant. This promotes understanding and acceptance of cash for protection intervention and the coordination with other existing social protection programmes.

Cash Coordination and Humanitarian Responses

The IASC approved Cash Coordination Module (2021) outlines the principle of cash coordination in humanitarian responses.

Cash coordination should be led by the inter-cluster coordination group/inter-sector working group with a dedicated cash coordination group conducting the day-to-day work. It has been agreed that:

- The inter-sector/inter-cluster coordination group is accountable for overall cash coordination, with day-to-day tasks delegated to a linked and formalized Cash Working Group which is accountable to the IS/ICCG. In settings with no IASC or refugee coordination structure in place, the RC/HC will be responsible for ensuring cash coordination arrangements are set up in alignment with the proposed model and with support from OCHA, DCO and RC office.
- The Cash Working Group should have strong links to the clusters and sectors, who should be represented in its membership and will continue to remain responsible for cash relating to their sectoral responses.
- The Cash Working Group should have clear lines of accountability with programmatic agencies – it should be clear what support and services it will provide and what engagement and information it will require from them

In 2024, the IASC updated the Guidance on Multipurpose Cas (MPC) Section and Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) Overview in Humanitarian Needs and Response Plans (HNRPs) to explain the presentation of cash programming in the HNRP.

Cash for Protection Task Force/Working Group

Where relevant, the Protection Cluster can establish a national/sub-national C4P Task Force/Working Group:

- **Leadership:** Protection Cluster in collaboration/co-coordination with the Cash Working Group (CWG) or other existing cash coordination mechanism. Include AoRs coordinators as relevant.
- **Members:** Protection Cluster/AoRs members and CVA actors, implementing or willing to set up CVA for protection interventions.

The main tasks of the C4P TF/WG include:

- Coordinate with appropriate CVA and protection national/sub-national coordination mechanisms.

- Map out CVA and protection assessments plans and activities to strengthen coordination and collaboration.
- Prompt collaboration of CVA and protection actors through the conception of response plans to design, implementation and monitoring.
- Provide technical guidance on the design and implementation of cash for protection programming, including through the dissemination of tools and key technical resources and national/context specific guidance.
- Offer a space for collaboration and discussion to address key CVA and protection challenges that emerge in the humanitarian response, ensuring sharing of best practices and lessons learnt.
- Adapt global guidance and tools to national/sub-national context.
- Identify and address capacity building needs.
- Develop information products/factsheets, regrouping key updates, data, coordination, resources and technical information updates from coordination forums.

Key Resources and Tools

Title	Type	Language	Year
Key Considerations on C4P in Specialised/Stand-alone Protection Programming – Note, GPC TTC4P	Guidance Document	ENG	2024
Cash for Protection Definitions: Working Document	Working Document	ENG	2022
How to Consider Protection Aspects when Designing an MEB	Guidance Note	ENG	2022
Cash and Voucher Assistance for Protection: Taking Stock of CVA to Achieve Protection Outcomes in Humanitarian Settings	Paper	ENG	2024
Examples of National Protection Cluster Guidance			
Syria: Guidance on Provision of Cash and In-kind Support for Protection	Example	ENG	2024
Yemen: Cash for Protection – Guidelines for Protection Partners	Example	ENG	2024
Ukraine: Recommendations on Cash for Protection for General Protection Actors – GPC, UNHCR	Example	ENG, UKR	2024
References & Further Reading			
GPC Task Team on Cash for Protection e-library	E-Library	ENG	-
CALP Network – Glossary of Terms	Glossary	ENG, DEU/GER, ARA, ESP, FRA, POR	

Global Protection Cluster
Task Team on Cash for Protection

We would like to acknowledge the assistance received from our colleagues in the Global Protection Cluster's Task Team on Cash for Protection, and thank them for their input in the preparation of this section on Cash for Protection.

12.7 Negotiations

This section covers:

- The principles and purpose of humanitarian negotiations.
- Humanitarian negotiations for protection outcomes.
- Roles and responsibilities of humanitarian actors in negotiations.
- The role of the Protection Cluster in supporting negotiations.
- Key resources for humanitarian negotiations.

Humanitarian Negotiations Overview

Humanitarian negotiations, as defined by the Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN) are "the interaction or engagement between humanitarian organisations and their counterparts" to:

- Establish and maintain the presence of humanitarian organisation.
- Advocate for humanitarian access to people and in need, and for people in need to access services and assistance.
- Advocate for the protection and dignity of people in armed conflict, and other situations of violence.
- Promote better respect for international law.

Humanitarian organizations negotiate with different counterparts, at multiple levels. Key counterparts may include government authorities, non-state armed groups, military and police forces, communities and community representatives (religious leaders, tribal leaders, etc.), donors, and other organizations.

Humanitarian negotiations are based on a long-term commitment to engagement, based on dialogue. They are focused on building relationships of trust, that enables two parties (or more) to reach agreement on specific humanitarian operations or actions. Humanitarian activities are carried out while adhering to the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

- **Humanity** – the belief that human suffering must be addressed wherever found.
- **Impartiality** – the belief that assistance must be provided based on need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases without distinction.
- **Neutrality** – the belief that organisations must refrain from taking sides in hostilities.
- **Independence** – the belief that assistance must be autonomous from political, economic, military, or other objectives.

Read more

- Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Groups, UN OCHA, IASC, 2006
- Professional Standards for Protection Work, International Committee for the Red Cross, 2024
- Field Manual on Frontline Humanitarian Negotiations, Centre for Competence in Humanitarian Negotiations

What are Humanitarian Negotiations for Protection?

Cluster coordinators will be familiar with forms of humanitarian negotiations that are often carried out by the Humanitarian Coordinator and Country Team, OCHA and other appropriate actors – to advocate for humanitarian access.

Negotiating access can be a significant task in humanitarian action, but negotiations can also take on a far wider array of aims, including for protection.

Humanitarian negotiations for protection are negotiations that are aimed at mitigating protection risks that civilians face in crisis and advancing protection outcomes. Examples of negotiations for specific protection issues, carried out by experienced negotiators, include but are not limited to:

- **Securing safe movement of populations**: Negotiating with parties to conflict, authorities or other armed groups to reduce/remove specific movement restrictions or adhere to a time-bound cessation of hostilities to facilitate the safe movement of populations.
- **Gaining authorisation to conduct protection programming**: There are specific forms of protection programming that may be considered sensitive or are prohibited by parties and authorities such as mine clearance, GBV programming or protection monitoring.
- **Negotiating protection for specific at-risk communities**: This could include negotiations for the release of children who have been recruited into armed groups or for survivors of gender-based violence to access needed medical and psycho-social support services.
- **Reducing risk to affected populations**: Negotiations recognise that there are sub-optimal scenarios that affect civilian populations (e.g. in case of sudden camp closures or forced depopulation/return). Negotiators may assess that it is possible to mitigate the effect of the circumstances through humanitarian intervention, even if it's not possible to remove the threat.

Humanitarian negotiations are an essential aspect of broader engagement and influencing as part of protection. Alongside negotiations, other forms of influencing may include protection advocacy and/or humanitarian diplomacy, which have some similar but also distinct approaches and tactics to negotiations.

Who Engages in Humanitarian Negotiations for Protection?

Depending on the Organisational Mandate:

All humanitarian organizations engage in some form of negotiation to ensure their presence and access, secure operational permissions, and address other practical requirements. However, not all organizations specialize in protection-related negotiations, which involve securing outcomes that directly safeguard the well-being of affected populations.

Depending on the operational context, each organization conducts a risk assessment based on national laws, policies, donor requirements, and its own risk tolerance. Some organizations may be unable or unwilling to engage with specific actors, such as armed groups or entities designated as terrorist organizations, while others may refrain from engaging with governments.

In your operational context, there are likely to be both international organizations with specialized expertise or mandate, and national organizations recognized by communities and humanitarian actors as credible negotiators on behalf of the wider community. For the Protection Cluster Coordinator, the presence of both international and national organizations with distinct strengths requires fostering collaboration, coherence, and adherence to humanitarian principles. The coordinator should map key actors, leverage their complementary roles, and support capacity building, especially for national organizations. Ensuring inclusive and coordinated negotiation efforts helps prevent fragmentation and conflicting approaches, while maintaining principled, effective engagement with interlocutors. Ultimately, the coordinator plays a critical role in aligning diverse efforts to uphold protection require for affected populations.

Within a Humanitarian Organization

Within a humanitarian organization, protection-related negotiations can involve a range of roles, depending on the context and the organization's structure. Negotiations often involve a team effort, with roles

overlapping depending on the context and the stakeholders involved. For example, field staff and program managers engage with local authorities and affected communities to ensure safe access and protection activities. Protection officers focus on specific protection issues, while country directors and heads of mission handle high-level negotiations with governments and armed actors. Security officers negotiate safe passage, and advocacy leads, or legal advisors influence policy and ensure compliance with humanitarian law. Cluster coordinators, such as those in the Protection Cluster, facilitate coordinated efforts across organizations to address collective protection concerns.

While all organisations participate in some form of negotiation with different interlocutors, to ensure safe presence and access, to secure needed permissions to operate etc., not all organisations are specialised in the act of protection negotiation. All organisations undertake a risk calculation on their presence linked to the national laws and policies, as well as their own risk appetite and donor requirements. Not all organisations can engage with armed groups, particularly listed terrorist organisations, and many organisations do not engage governments.

In your country of operation there is likely to be a combination of specialised international organisations and national organisations that have the recognised authority from communities and humanitarian actors, to negotiate on behalf the wider community.

Humanitarian negotiations require some form of trade-off to form an agreement between the humanitarian negotiator and the other parties to negotiation. Experienced negotiators understand that while there is a trade-off, this still must adhere to Humanitarian Principles and of Do No Harm and be guided by clear red lines. Negotiations must consider the wider impact or precedent established by any agreement.

Where do Negotiations Take Place?

There is no single level or location of humanitarian negotiation. Humanitarian negotiations can take place with different counterparts, at multiple levels. They can take place with armed groups, government and authorities at a national level, but they can also occur at a local level such as at specific checkpoints, or with specific administrative authorities or community leaders. At higher levels, this includes engaging with heads of state, ministers, army generals, or governors. At lower levels, it involves discussions with soldiers at checkpoints, leaders of local militias, town elders, religious leaders, heads of families, or even the affected people themselves. The counterparts in these negotiations are diverse and can include government authorities, non-state armed groups, military and police forces, communities, donors, and other organizations. Each level and counterpart require tailored approaches, including that of choosing the right negotiator to represent the organization.

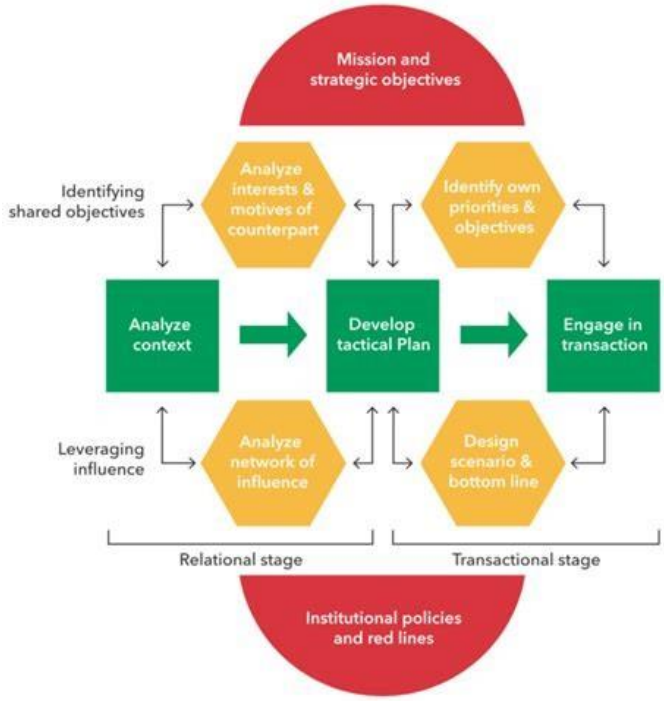
At the same time, humanitarian negotiations can also take place within the same organisation, within the humanitarian community, and with donors.

Understanding and fostering sources of legitimacy is crucial in humanitarian negotiations. Depending on the negotiation typology—political, professional, or technical—teams should be composed of members with relevant expertise, strong communication skills, and cultural sensitivity. Emphasizing the organization's mission, technical competence, and track record builds trust and credibility, enhancing negotiation outcomes.

Role of the Protection Cluster

Protection Clusters are not typically the lead in humanitarian negotiations, although there are some case-by-case examples where the Protection Cluster has been requested by other humanitarian actors to engage with government counterparts on behalf of the wider protection community.

The Protection Cluster has a role in creating an enabling environment for effective and principled humanitarian negotiations. This role is implemented across the Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation's framework, referred to as the *Naivasha Grid,* by many organisations engaged in humanitarian negotiations.



Ways the Cluster can Support Protection-Oriented Humanitarian Negotiations:

- Ensure ongoing protection analysis that facilitates the identification of protection risks and threats. This analysis is provided through products such as Protection Analysis Updates. This regular analysis should also be facilitated through creating an open-discussion space between partners in cluster meetings, and through the regular sharing of partner analysis with the inter-cluster and HCT.
- Ensure community participation in influencing the scope of humanitarian negotiations and ensuring that negotiations are in the best interests of the affected communities and individuals.
- Advocating with humanitarian actors and member states on the importance of specific issues and immediate risks, to ensure the consistent prioritisation of protection issues by humanitarian actors and supportive member states in their engagement with authorities.
- Highlight areas and locations where protection partners could benefit from the support of humanitarian negotiators in negotiation capacity-strengthening (e.g. where they are having issues in access or acceptance by authorities/armed groups for specific protection programmes).
- Inform do-no harm analysis and the development of red-lines in any humanitarian negotiations, or other engagement with authorities and armed groups, that ensure the centring of the affected population in any agreement.
- While the Protection Cluster can itself be a negotiation-focused forum, Protection Clusters can also actively engage other negotiation focused platforms such as the Humanitarian Access Working Group (e.g. to ensure that protection concerns are integrated in their access strategies), UN country team (e.g. to offer insights on protection risks and needs, influencing the overall humanitarian strategy and ensuring that protection is central to the response), or the Durable Solutions Working Group to

support coherence of protection analysis across platforms, to escalate relevant negotiation challenges and dilemmas.

- Support the capacity building of Protection Cluster partners, on how to advocate for and influence humanitarian negotiations.
- Contribute to knowledge and learning on the impact of protection based humanitarian advocacy.

Access That Protects

The *Access That Protects* agenda emerged from a growing recognition within the Global Protection Cluster that access negotiations and humanitarian response efforts too often overlook the specific risks and protection needs of affected populations. In 2022, the GPC launched a multi-country consultation process across nine protection clusters, involving local actors, communities, and humanitarian partners. This initiative aimed to better understand how access constraints impact protection outcomes, particularly for those most at risk—such as women, children, persons with disabilities, and minorities. Insights from this process revealed that while much attention was given to delivering material assistance, access to protection services—such as case management, legal aid, GBV response, and child protection—was routinely deprioritized or obstructed. These findings shaped the *Access That Protects* agenda, which calls for protection-led access strategies, stronger leadership and accountability from HCT, and the systematic integration of protection into access negotiations and analysis. This shift is not only about reaching people, but ensuring that the way humanitarian actors access and operate protects rights, dignity, and safety.

Read more: Access That Protects: An Agenda for Change – in English, French, Arabic, and Spanish.

Resources: https://globalprotectioncluster.org/themes/access_that_protects

Key Resources and Tools

Title	Type	Language	Year
Access Negotiations with Armed Groups for Protection, Global Protection Forum	Webinar	ENG	2022
Community Engagement with Armed Actors: Strengthening Protection, Prevention and Response, Global Protection Forum	Webinar	ENG	2022
Interactive Simulation on Access Negotiations for Protection, Global Protection Forum	Simulation Exercise	ENG	2022
CCHN Negotiating with Beneficiaries and Communities	Guidance	ENG	2021
CCHN Frontline Negotiations Resources	Range of Resources	Multiple	--
CCHN Negotiating for Protection Outcomes: Insights from the CCHN's Research and the Community of Practice's Experience	Briefing Note	ENG	2024
Access that Protects – Agenda for Change 2022	Report	ENG, FRA, ESP, ARA	2022

We would like to acknowledge the assistance received from our colleagues at the Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN), and thank them for their input in the preparation of this section on Humanitarian Negotiations.

12.8 Anti-Trafficking

Trafficking in persons (also called human trafficking) is a crime, a grave violation of human rights and in many cases, a form of gender-based violence. Crisis contexts can exacerbate pre-existing trafficking trends and give rise to new ones.

This section covers:

- What is Human Trafficking.
- Legal framework and protection monitoring mechanisms for Victims of Trafficking.
- Analysing Trafficking.
- Protection Clusters and Anti-Trafficking Efforts

In crisis contexts, traffickers capitalize on the widespread human, material, social and economic distress caused by the emergency. A number of factors make people more vulnerable to trafficking, including the hampered ability of families and communities to provide for their basic needs; limited options to seek domestic or international protection safely and regularly; negative coping mechanisms adopted by those affected by the crisis; erosion of the rule of law; and the breakdown of social safety nets and other social protection systems.

Overview of Human Trafficking

Trafficking in Persons (TIP) is a serious crime, a grave violation of human rights and in many cases, a form of GBV.

The *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children* (commonly referred to as the Trafficking in Persons Protocol or the Palermo Protocol) provides the international legal definition of trafficking in persons:

> “The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs.” (Article 3, paragraph (a))

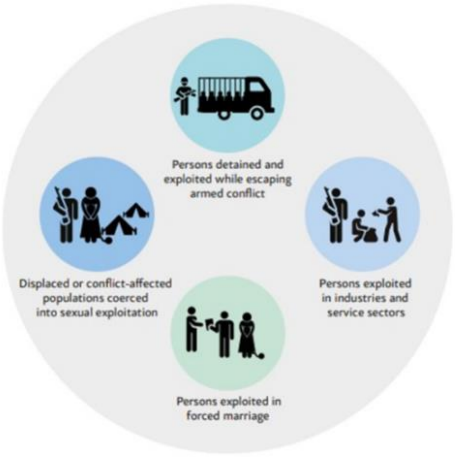
Based on this definition, the crime of trafficking in persons has three elements:

1. **The Act (what is done):** Recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons.
2. **The Means (how it is done):** Threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, or giving payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim.
3. **The Purpose (why it is done):** For the purpose of exploitation, at a minimum and not as an exhaustive list – exploiting the prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices or the removal of organs.

Some forms of trafficking are a direct result of crises, for example people may be trafficked for use as combatants to finance armed conflict, to provide exploitative sexual services, for forced labour, for forced marriage and, in some cases, to reinforce the enslavement of ethnic minorities. In other instances, trafficking may be indirectly related to the crisis, such as displaced populations being targeted or intercepted while fleeing the crisis or trafficked at their destination for domestic servitude, forced labour or sexual exploitation.

Some cases of trafficking are a direct result of crises for example:

Other cases of trafficking are indirectly related to a crisis for example:



Who Can Be Trafficked?

There are many misunderstandings and stereotypes of trafficking and who is trafficked[1].

- **A border crossing is not required**: Trafficking does not require a person to be moved across an international border. In fact, trafficking does not require any movement. A trafficked person can be held and exploited within their own community.
- **Anyone can be trafficked:** There is no single profile of a trafficked person. Trafficked persons can be young or old people, men, women, or girls or boys. They can be educated, illiterate, healthy or ill, and have varied degrees of physical and cognitive ability. Trafficking is, however, a gendered phenomenon – women and girls are disproportionally targeted for sexual exploitation and men and boys for forced recruitment into armed groups and forces.
- **Traffickers have many profiles:** There is no single profile of a trafficker. Traffickers can be men or women, young, old or even minors; members of organized criminal groups, armed groups, personnel of international or nongovernmental organizations, governmental personnel, total strangers or friends or relatives of the trafficked person.
- **No limit to exploitative purposes:** Trafficking can be for a range of exploitative purposes, including for sexual exploitation, forced labour or other purposes not explicitly mentioned in the Trafficking in Persons Protocol, such as exploitation for forced marriage, or the commission of criminal activities. Act, means and purpose is needed.
- **Not all exploited people are trafficked**: Persons who are exploited still suffer violations but are only considered trafficked persons if the acts and means have been used to exploit them (or only acts, in the case of children). A person can consent to exploitative circumstances and still be a trafficked person. The use of "means" (for example, threat or use of force, coercion, etc.) to obtain a person's consent makes that consent irrelevant; in cases where the trafficked person is a child, consent is always irrelevant. A smuggled person can become a trafficked person Smuggled persons are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking.
- **When and where does trafficking occur**: Trafficking in persons may occur at any stage of displacement, in any location. IDPs' vulnerability to trafficking will depend on the local context and the stage of displacement (such as early onset or protracted displacement).

[1] The below has been adapted from UNODC, Countering Trafficking in Persons in Conflict Situations, 2018

Legal Framework and Protection Monitoring Mechanisms for Victims of Trafficking

The legal framework surrounding the protection of victims of trafficking (VoTs) is shaped by both international and national laws, as well as robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms. These frameworks aim to offer protection, support, and avenues for justice for trafficking survivors, but challenges in consistency and accessibility remain.

At the international level, the **UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons**, adopted in 2000, stands as a pivotal tool for combating trafficking. Also known as the Palermo Protocol, this legally binding document complements the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. It outlines the obligations of state parties to criminalize trafficking, protect and assist victims, and enhance international cooperation. The Protocol sets forth comprehensive guidelines for the prevention of trafficking, protection of victims, and prosecution of traffickers. Importantly, it underscores the need for states to ensure that victims are afforded protections and assistance, including access to justice and redress. Countries that are parties to the Protocol are obligated to implement national laws in line with these standards. In terms of access to justice, Article 6 requires that States parties provide victims with information and an opportunity for their views and concerns to be presented and considered at criminal proceedings against offenders. It also obliges States parties to provide victims with information on relevant court and administrative proceedings and with counselling and information about their legal rights in a language they can understand5. Those commitments were most recently reiterated by Member States in the *2021 Political Declaration on the Implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons*6.

National laws complement international frameworks by criminalizing trafficking within a country's legal system. Many countries have developed or amended domestic laws to align with the Palermo Protocol. These laws generally focus on the criminalization of trafficking, the punishment of traffickers, and the provision of legal recourse for victims. However, while the existence of such laws is critical, challenges arise in the implementation and enforcement of these protections. Law enforcement agencies, for instance, may lack the capacity to properly investigate and prosecute trafficking cases, and judicial systems may be ill-equipped to handle the complex nature of trafficking crimes.

UN Security Council mechanisms such as the *Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM)7* and *MARA (Monitoring, Analysis, and Reporting Arrangements)* are cornerstone initiatives aimed at strengthening accountability and responses to trafficking, particularly in conflict settings where children and women are disproportionately affected.

- The **MRM** was developed under the *UN Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005)*, which mandates the monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children in armed conflict, including forced recruitment, sexual violence, and abduction. This mechanism gathers data from various sources, including UN bodies, humanitarian organizations, and governments, to assess the scope and impact of these risks during conflict.
- Similarly, the **MARA** is a mechanism established by the UN Security Council to systematically document and respond to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). It was introduced under *UN Security Council Resolution 1960 (2010)* and is primarily used to collect, verify, and analyse information on sexual violence in conflict settings.

Analysing Trafficking

Before undertaking any anti-trafficking action, the context must be analysed. Similar to approaches in GBV, humanitarian actors can assume that trafficking is occurring and threatening affected populations and that it is a valid concern regardless of the presence or absence of documented 'evidence'. Protection actors do not require verified prevalence or incidence rates of trafficking before setting up minimal structures that could

assist victims and prevent new cases. There are opportunities to obtain insight on human trafficking through routine information management activities and to apply different angles of analysis to existing data.

For more purposeful scrutiny, protection actors can arrange methods for seeking population-based data at later stages. Prior to this and in the immediate to medium-term stages of an emergency, it will be important to understand general contextual issues and trends of trafficking; information about exploitation that may have been present in the community before displacement, potential service entry points and the demographics of the displaced population that could indicate various types of vulnerability.

A context analysis should aim to understand:

1. The pre-crisis trafficking background and scale.
2. Reports, even if anecdotal, about trafficking currently taking place.
3. Vulnerabilities to trafficking.
4. The legal framework (international, regional and domestic).
5. The institutional context and capacity.

TOOLS: Protection Clusters can use the Context Analysis Checklist & Notetaking Tool to analyse trafficking in their context.

Protection Clusters and Anti-trafficking Efforts

- There is no standard practice for coordinating anti-trafficking interventions; they could be coordinated during Protection Cluster meetings, or through the establishment of an anti-trafficking working group reporting to the Protection Cluster coordinator. When the identified trends and cases of trafficking in persons are disproportionately affecting women and/or children – therefore requiring stronger responses by GBV and/or child protection actors – coordination might take place under the relevant areas of responsibility. Regardless of the forum in which coordination takes place, the response needs to be closely coordinated with GBV and child protection to ensure that victims of trafficking are referred to relevant response services (case management and specialized response services) and included in referral pathways and standard operating procedures.
- The dynamics of trafficking in persons and protection from trafficking should be an integral part of the protection analysis and recommended actions. In practical terms, this approach means the Protection Cluster needs to promote, develop, implement and monitor field-level protection strategies that include anti-trafficking. Doing so requires an understanding of trafficking and commitment to advocacy, so that the subject appears in all Protection Cluster meetings during inter-cluster coordination meetings and is brought to the attention of the HCT when relevant. It also means including trafficking considerations in protection monitoring and reporting, addressing trafficking in routine trainings and sensitizations of front-line staff and community mobilizers and inclusion in context descriptions and needs analysis for multisectoral materials such as the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO).
- Protection actors (including community mechanisms, civil society organizations and national NGOs to international organizations) play a pivotal role in identifying and supporting victims of trafficking and where possible in facilitating access to justice for victims of trafficking. These organizations serve as critical intermediaries between victims and justice systems, advocating for the rights of victims and providing vital support services. National NGOs often have a deep understanding of the local context and can offer practical assistance, such as guiding victims through the legal process, providing shelter and social services, and helping victims rebuild their lives. Many of these organizations also work to strengthen the capacity of national authorities and judicial systems by offering training on trafficking,

victim identification, and legal rights. Their grassroots connections make them an invaluable resource in ensuring that victims of trafficking can access justice in both formal and informal systems, particularly when other actors may be absent or ineffective.

- Specialized humanitarian support services are often the first entry points for victims of trafficking seeking assistance and legal remedies. This first interaction, where a person reaches out to address an immediate need such as shelter, cash assistance or protection from violence, is a gateway to supporting individuals addressing their legal status.
- The establishment of victim-centred support services that offer legal assistance, psychological support, and safe housing is essential. These services must be designed to protect the privacy and security of the victims while guiding them through the legal processes in a way that is sensitive to their trauma. These services should also be culturally and linguistically appropriate to address the diverse backgrounds of victims of trafficking. Promising practices are observed where protection partners are adopting survivor-centric approaches with One-Stop Centers that provide medical, psychosocial, and legal aid under one roof.
- Legal aid programs and advocacy also play a significant role, as many victims may not be aware of their rights or may be unable to navigate complex legal systems on their own. Humanitarian organizations can partner with local authorities and international bodies to ensure that victims are provided with necessary legal representation and access to courts. Field experience shows that survivors who feel safe and supported are far more likely to engage with the justice process.

Addressing Obstacles to Engaging in Anti-Trafficking Efforts

While there are many positive examples of cluster and protection partners engagement in anti-trafficking efforts, it is noted that these efforts can be ad hoc and require the willingness. There are a few barriers to effective engagement in anti-trafficking efforts.

- **Reluctance to engage with outsiders:** In many cases, people that are trafficked are being trafficked through conflict areas, and there can be a perception by some community-based actors that people who are trafficked are outsiders, or that there are risks from local authorities/gangs that are trafficking these individuals. A fear of the traffickers, and a distrust of people being trafficked, was a given reason why smaller partners might not want to engage. Protection clusters can work to counter this negative perception and identify partners willing to engage and accept referrals of victims of trafficking.
- **Data gaps:** There can be a perception among protection actors that collecting data from individuals without offering corresponding services may be irresponsible. It is important that clusters work to ensure that data collection and service provision are not self-reinforcing, and identify a range of actors that can provide expert analysis and information.
- **Understanding the difference between scale and severity:** Humanitarian action can be driven towards the most significant needs by scale - working on protection issues experienced by the largest number of people. The GPC seeks to ensure that trafficking remains a priority through the clear identification of the risk of trafficking. Yet, in many cases, there is a risk that something experienced by a smaller number of people – even if the risk to the individual is much higher – can often be overlooked.

Key Resources and Tools

Title	Type	Language	Year
Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime	IHRL	ENG	2000

GPC, Protection Risk: Trafficking in Persons, Forced Labour or Slavery-Like Practices	Note	ENG	2022
GPC Video: What is Human Trafficking?	Video	ENG	2022
GPC, An Introductory Guide to Anti-Trafficking Action in Internal Displacement Contexts	Guide	ENG, FRA, ESP, ARA	2020
GPC, Anti-Trafficking in Humanitarian Responses	Report	ENG	2018
Anti-Trafficking in Humanitarian Settings: Gaps and priorities for a more systematic response – Justice and Care	Report	ENG	2024
Digital Technology and Anti-Trafficking Action in Crises: A Practice View on Opportunities and Challenges, Global Protection Forum	Webinar	ENG	2021
Statement on the Occasion of the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons – GPC	Statement	ENG, FRA, ESP	2023

12.9 Mobile and Rapid Protection Responses

Contexts change rapidly in crisis, forcing communities to adopt new strategies and operational actors to develop new and efficient ways to access communities. Protection partners may opt to adopt mobile approaches to protection response, and Protection Clusters can provide a platform to support and promote these endeavours, when appropriate.

This section covers:

- Explanation of different modalities of mobile response.
- Discussion on what type of assistance is provided in mobile responses.
- Who to prioritise with a mobile response and the principles of a mobile response.

Understanding the Use of Mobile Response Strategies

Mobile responses are designed to be flexible and efficient response modalities to reach people in need. Mobile responses can compliment static responses where they are functional, and they can be used to fill gaps where static responses do not exist or have been significantly disrupted. While there are many forms of mobile responses, they are commonly used:

- In an **emergency**, when mobile teams can deploy immediately after displacement, or an incident occurs – before a static service can be set up.
- To reach communities in **hard-to-reach areas**, who may not otherwise receive the specialised services that they need, particularly where a static response is not possible due to security and access, or the locations remoteness.
- When **needs are high** and there is a capacity gap, mobile services allow specialists to cover a broader area and allow more people to access these specialist services.
- For **people on the move,** mobile services are well adapted to responding in transit points, humanitarian service points, and collective centres that are established for people moving away from violence and other forms of insecurity. Mobile teams can also assist people who are nomadic or have other seasonal movement patterns.

Mobile responses can also have a preventative component, by engaging communities early and promoting good practices by authorities and duty bearers. Protection actors use analysis and community engagement and monitoring processes to map potential high-risk areas/communities and other hotspots.

People on the Move

Crises are often followed by significant visible movement of populations, moving towards safety and assistance. This displacement is often the trigger for humanitarian action. People on the move during conflict and after disasters face extraordinary risks to their lives, safety, dignity, human rights and well-being. In some locations, people are trying to transit using hard-to-reach areas and nonofficial routes to avoid detection, and this can increase the risks they face including the risk of trafficking.

Other communities have their mobility patterns disrupted, such as pastoralists and nomads during conflict, violence, climatic shocks, or restricted due to epidemics or other factors. Blocked migration corridors exacerbate competition over resources, and can alter access to markets, grazing and water points for livestock or agricultural zones. Seasonal workers can also be heavily affected by these dynamics.

Protection actors should be sensitive to 'invisible' movement dynamics – particularly for marginalised and at-risk groups.

Rapid Response Mechanisms

Rapid Response Mechanisms are a form of mobile response. They are a common coordination instrument in humanitarian operations, designed to be quick and flexible in a crisis. For an RRM to be operational, donors enter a contractual arrangement with a partner – or multiple partners – to create a network of humanitarian organisations that can respond quickly in a crisis. They are provided the resources to ensure they have sufficient personnel, logistical capacity and other resources needed to respond to small scale emergencies as soon as possible after they occur. These RRM approaches can look different country to country, but they are all built on having a clear risk analysis, and robust early warning systems and agreed triggers and scenarios between operational actors.

Overall, RRM are designed to improve the coordination of approaches in the assessment, response and monitoring phase of an emergency intervention.

The Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) has three inter-linked pillars:

1. Maintain and strengthen the humanitarian alert system
2. Provide first line response
3. Coordinate and advocate for responses that are not in place

It can vary from place to place whether protection is included as part of an RRM mechanism. In some cases, the donor supports the full integration of protection teams in the mobile response. This allows protection actors to be present alongside other sectors during rapid assessments and service delivery, enabling immediate identification and response to protection risks, as well as timely referrals. In other contexts, the Protection Cluster and partners must advocate more strongly to have protection included and/or strongly linked to a protection response. For example, RRM teams can be trained to identify protection concerns and make referrals to specialized services, or protection actors can follow up rapidly after an RRM assessment to ensure a protection response.

Protection and Mobile Response Strategies

The type of services provided by mobile actors can vary from a basic protection intervention to providing highly specialised services. In the case of more basic services, the objective of a mobile response is to contribute to the safety, dignity and protection of vulnerable people by providing essential assistance and protection services. This can include:

- Identify ‘hotspot’ locations and communities where there is potential conflict and high levels of protection issues/incidents.
- Provide information and counselling/legal assistance and address disinformation. This is commonly in the form of ‘help and protection desks.’
- Carry out initial identification processes, mapping protection needs, and identifying people at specific risk.
- Provide assistance to at risk individuals.
- Provide referrals to lifesaving services, including protection services.
- Provide services such as psychosocial support and restoring family links (RFL).
- Support preventive evacuation for high-risk locations.
- Conduct any necessary capacity building and training of other humanitarian actors and local authorities present on protection procedures.
- Promote humanitarian diplomacy for the most at-risk people through information collection and analysis.

Protection Mobile Responses as Enablers of Other Humanitarian Action

Protection mobile teams ensure that the immediate needs and protection standards are met at service points for people who have been displaced – including transit sites, reception centres, humanitarian hubs, collective centres etc. Protection mobile teams enable the efforts of other humanitarian actors that provide emergency assistance such as health, WASH, shelter, who also find their own responses overwhelmed at this time. Protection actors facilitate safe and equitable distributions and assistance.

Mobile Protection Responses and Specialised Services

Mobile services can be an efficient means to bring specialised resources to large numbers of people. This is commonly seen in health responses, where there may not be the need for a permanent static service or if there is a lower number of qualified people with the specialised skill. Mobile missions can also be an effective way to bring government services to people.

Example – Good Practice

In Iraq, protection partners organised joint mobile missions with the relevant Government bodies – Ministry of Interior and local Civil Affairs Directorates – to people. Protection partners provided counselling and information to communities in advance and supported them to prepare their administrative documents, so they were ready to submit these to the mobile government missions when they arrived. This was an effective strategy by legal protection actors to overcome some of the barriers and challenges faced by affected individuals to access civil documentation, where they were unable to return to their area of origin to submit paperwork. **Read more here.**

Mobile Responses: Who to Prioritise?

It can be difficult to determine who to prioritise in mobile responses, particularly when needs are very high. Here are some elements to consider:

- **Frontline communities and high-risk areas**: Special attention should be given to communities near frontline areas or those experiencing increased exposure to hostilities, for example, due to shifts in the conflict zones. This includes a focus on children, individuals with limited mobility, and those with heightened vulnerabilities.
- **Communities who face risks in accessing static services**: Communities can live close to static services but face undue risks in accessing them, due to factors such as the presence of checkpoints or discrimination against specific communities. For these communities, it can be safer to bring assistance to them than expect them to come to access static services.
- **Internally displaced people on the move**: Mobile teams should prioritize at risk people among internally displaced people, including those in transit centres and collective sites.

Linking Mobile Responses to Static Responses

Mobile responses are an efficient tool to bring protection programming to people at risk and in need. They aim to respond quickly to the most acute needs and potentially shorten the time gap for people needing assistance, while operational actors explore the need for potential static responses or larger scale operational action.

Mobile responses can be precursors to the establishment of more static services, but this is not always the case. It is not always possible for mobile services to link to static responses, as they may not exist or may have been disrupted due to the context. Sometimes, due to either needs or resource constraints, operational

actors may provide time-bound mobile services or continue mobile services. In this case, it is particularly important to ensure linkages to local and government services.

To every extent possible, any incoming mobile response should engage with any existing partners on the ground or engage with partners who were previously working in this area, to facilitate community acceptance and ensure responses are appropriate to community needs.

The Importance of Information and Referrals

Information and referrals are an important component of protection action. While this can sound very basic, this is a critical step in assisting people reach their own protection outcomes. People on the move may not have adequate information to improve their safety and where to go to seek assistance. Mobile responses provide critical information through trusted channels and preferred languages. Mobile teams can conduct outreach activities to raise awareness about services and ensure access to existing or mobile services.

In some cases, facilitating a referral may go beyond providing information to a person about a service. Protection actors use the referral network to connect individuals directly to services and monitor whether they have been able to receive these services. In some cases, a protection actor may be required to take additional steps to ensure a person can physically access the necessary services. This can range from providing transportation or covering transportation costs or negotiating with authorities/armed groups to allow safe movement to services and assistance.

Principles of Mobile Protection Responses

While it can be more operationally challenging to provide mobile response, it is important that they are still governed by the same operational principles as any other protection response.

- Respect for individuals, their choices, and identities.
- Non-discrimination and inclusivity, ensuring services are available to everyone without excluding any group.
- Accessibility, offering services at convenient times and locations that takes all reasonable efforts to mitigate risks.
- Coordination and collaboration with other sectors and services for comprehensive support, including local authorities where appropriate.
- Community participation and engagement.
- Accountability through monitoring, evaluation, and evidence-based practices.
- Advocating for more assistance where needed.

Role of the Protection Cluster

Mobile responses require a high degree of coordination and interagency cooperation, to ensure that they are the most effective use of collective resources and appropriate to the needs of the community.

In addition to the specific role of the cluster in providing protection analysis and information, the Protection Cluster can:

- Through protection monitoring, community engagement, and analysis of evolving risks, the Protection Cluster can detect emerging threats or sudden deterioration in the protection environment. It issues alerts that can trigger inter-agency or sectoral rapid response mechanisms.
- Provide a common platform for partners engaging in mobile protection response to coordinate their operational presence. The Protection Cluster should also participate in other forums that discuss rapid

and mobile responses (e.g. RRM, Access Working Group or any other mechanism), to link protection action to other interagency efforts.

- Promote the integration of protection action into other mobile efforts (including RRM). This approach needs to strike the balance between protection mainstreaming efforts of the involved agencies and organisations to support safe and inclusive programming, to the integration of specialised protection actors as part of joint teams and efforts.
- Ensure up to date referral mechanisms to enable a quick and safe onward referral process for people with specific needs.
- Mobile missions or RRM can often be preceded by other forms of interagency missions such as an Interagency Rapid Needs Assessment. The Protection Cluster should provide up to date and easy to use protection risk analysis tools that can be used as part of this exercise. Where possible, the Protection Cluster should deploy staff to participate and/or nominate an appropriate partner to participate.
- Advocate for the inclusion of existing partnerships and capacity on the ground. Mobile and rapid responses should work hand in hand with existing protection capacity.
- Support continuous reflection between protection partners on the most efficient use of resources and the needs of the affected communities, to make sure that the main operational modalities are fit for purpose.

Key Resources and Tools

Title	Type	Language	Year
South Sudan Mobile Protection Task Force TOR, Concept Note	*Upon Request*	ENG	2024
Niger Rapid Protection Response Coordination Protocol (Matrix Excel, and Communication Protocol for Rapid Interventions)	*Upon Request*	FRA	2023
Iraq Protection Analysis Report, Right to Identity and Civil Documentation	Report	ENG	2021
Rapid Protection Assessment and Monitoring - Observation Method Tool	*Upon Request*	ENG, FRA	2022
Ethiopia Protection Risk Assessment Tool	Tool	ENG	2025
Northeast Nigeria Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM)	Package	ENG	-
Mali Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) – Example of Protection Questions	*Upon Request*	FRA	2020
Mali Rapid Protection Assessment and Rapid Response Capacities	Dashboard	FRA	2020
Mali Rapid Protection Response Methodology and Minimum Protection Package	*Upon Request*	FRA	2020
Mali Rapid Protection Assessment Tools – KII, FGD, Observation Tools	*Upon Request*	FRA	2020
DRC Minimum Protection Package and Activity Costs	*Upon Request*	FRA	2023
Sudan Protection Cluster Emergency Minimum Activity Package	*Upon Request*	ENG	2025

Protection Field Coordination Toolkit – Overview of Chapters

Visit the main toolkit landing page or navigate directly to the chapters below to access more resources and information on the Protection Cluster's role in the following areas:

Protection Field Coordination Toolkit – Overview of Chapters		
Chapter 1: Humanitarian Coordination Overview	• Coordination models for internal displacement, refugee response and mixed situations • Cluster Activation Criteria and Processes	
Chapter 2: Humanitarian Programme Cycle	• Elements / Principles of the HPC and the Role of the Cluster • Flash Appeals and Pooled Funds • Integration cross-cutting issues and the Centrality of Protection into the HPC	
Chapter 3: Internal Displacement	• Internal displacement and the needs of IDPs. • Legal frameworks and displacement	
Chapter 4: Protection in Armed Conflict	• International Law/Principles • Humanitarian protection and Protection of Civilians (PoC). • Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination	
Chapter 5: Centrality of Protection	• The Protection Cluster's responsibilities in CoP • The difference between mainstreaming, integration and the centrality of protection. • IASC processes and HCT benchmarks	
Chapter 6: Climate, Disaster, and Sudden Onset Emergencies	• Terminology and definitions in climate and disasters. • Responding to sudden onset emergencies • Actions that can be taken after a sudden onset shock (day 1-5) • Climate and disaster preparedness and response.	
Chapter 7: Durable Solutions	• Global frameworks guiding Durable Solutions • Supporting durable solutions at strategic and operational levels. • The GPC Durable Solutions Guidance for Protection Clusters	
Chapter 8: Cluster Transition, Deactivation and Reform	• Criteria for cluster deactivation and transition • Transition processes • Humanitarian reform initiatives • Area-based coordination	
Chapter 9: Advocacy and Communication	• Developing advocacy strategies and action plans • Preparing briefings to ICCG/HCT and engaging donors • Leveraging human rights mechanisms • Communication products and media engagement	
Chapter 10: Data Responsibility and Safe Information Management	• Principles of data safeguarding, management and sharing • Data responsibility in humanitarian action • Safe and effective data handling	
Chapter 11: Cross-Cutting Issues	• Age, Gender, Diversity and Disability Inclusion • MHPSS	• AAP • PSEA • Protection Mainstreaming
Chapter 12: Understanding Protection Programmatic Approaches and Interventions	• Locally Led Responses • Community Based Protection • Case Management • Service Mapping and Referrals • Legal Aid, Law and Policy	• Cash and Protection • Humanitarian Negotiations • Anti-Trafficking • Mobile and Rapid Protection Responses