



Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week

Event Hosted by the GPC Advocacy Task Team and GPC Human Rights Engagement Task Team

Collaborative Advocacy by Humanitarian and Human Rights Actors: How to better manage the tensions between Advocacy and Operational Access?

17th May 2022 - 14.00 to 15.30 CET

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Background

The event is an opportunity to reflect on lessons learned in relation to collaborative advocacy by humanitarian and human rights actors. In 2021, the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) of ODI undertook research in this regard in collaboration with the Global Protection Cluster's Human Rights Engagement Task Team, publishing the report entitled '[Opportunities and challenges: Collaborative advocacy by humanitarian and human rights actors](#)', which included key findings as well as recommendations for further collaborative advocacy and action.

Many stakeholders interviewed for this research highlighted that advocacy by humanitarians has become a 'race to the bottom' in recent years, with even private diplomacy increasingly compromised or deprioritised for the sake of securing and maintaining operational access. This dilemma has been prevalent for decades, but has become more so in conflicts in Myanmar, Ethiopia and Syria in the last decade.

The ongoing independent review of the IASC Centrality of Protection policy has identified a leadership gap as one of the foremost issues of concern, with senior leadership tending to prioritise maintaining presence and access, often at the expense of engaging in dialogue and advocacy around more sensitive protection challenges.

In today's most complex emergencies, there are major and very real tensions to be resolved between securing and maintaining operational access and different forms of advocacy. But there is also positive practice to demonstrate that collaboration between international humanitarian and human rights actors can help humanitarians better manage these tensions.

The event will use the research and its recommendations as the foundation for a 'deeper dive' discussion with leading practitioners working across humanitarian and human rights sectors, with a focus on how to manage the risks inherent in undertaking advocacy as operational actors and, therefore, the imperative for collaboration with human rights partners to reduce the dilemma.

The GPC Human Rights Engagement and Advocacy Task Teams will take stock of achievements, explore gaps and follow-up on recommendations. A panel of leading practitioners will share reflections and examples to help unpack the real and perceived challenges between advocacy/human rights approaches and access/delivery of services, what factors are hindering greater advocacy and access outcomes, and how these tensions can be addressed.

Objectives

The event will be moderated by the Global Protection Cluster and will be guided by the following questions:

1. To what extent have we collectively advanced on the real or perceived trade-offs between access and advocacy?
2. What current examples are there of positive practice to showcase how such tensions have been/can be managed through a more collaborative relationship with human rights actors? What can we learn from them?
3. What challenges/barriers remain to using both advocacy and access to secure better protection outcomes for affected people?
4. What opportunities are there to reinforce the concept that advocacy and access are both integral to humanitarian action and better managing the tensions between these two activities in policy and practice?

Agenda

- **Opening remarks**, William S. Chemaly, Global Protection Cluster Coordinator
- **Summary of Policy Brief on Collaborative Advocacy by Humanitarian and Human Rights Actors**, Vicki Metcalfe-Hough, Research Lead with the Humanitarian Protection Group at ODI
- **Panel discussion with 2-3 protection partners**
- **Questions & Answers**
- **Closing remarks and specific joint actions that can be pursued throughout 2022**, GPC Advocacy Task Team Co-Leads

