UNHCR
The UN
Refugee Agency

Division of International Protection
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
92, Rue de Montbrilliant, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland
Email: HQTS00@unhcr.org
Website: www.unhcr.org

Protection Policy Paper

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION

Division of International Protection

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

The following people and organizations were extremely helpful in providing information during the preparation of this policy paper:

African Refugee Women's Association, Lilia Aporo, ASAIBA, Association of Refugees with Disabilities, Francesca Bonelli, Kate Bourne, Eirin Broholm, Dale Buscher, Mark Canavera, Sergio Castelbianco, Jackson Chekweko, Andres Celis, COCOMACIA, Community Interpreters Association, Chris Dolan, Emma Fanning, Greg Garras, Diane Goodman, Kristin Riis Halvorsen, Rachel Hastie, Stella Kabaganda, Joanina Karugaba, Esther Kiragu, Stefanie Krause, Andrea Lari, Lou Lasap, Jessica Lenz, Sarah Lilley, Saskia Lookhart, Jane Lowicki-Zucca, Jenny McAvoy, Cesar Mesa, Roberto Mignone, Terry Morel, Juliette Murekeyisoni, Andrea Naletto, Devota Nuwe, Opcion Legal, Leloba Pahl, Peer Counselors Association, Rachael Riley, Claudia Rincon, Lucy Shillingi, Amanda Solano, Dr. Kevin Tsatsiyo, Andrea Vasquez, Dagmar Vorechovska, Gloria Mahlof Weiss, Mike Wessells, Women's Refugee Commission, Victims of Torture and Sexual Violence, Josep Zapater.

Special thanks to the following people for their contributions to the design of this document: Aftyn Behn, Amisha Budhdeo, Shirley Camia, Anja Dietrich, Joanina Karugaba, Léa Piccot, Nick Sore.

Cover photo : © UNHCR/Harandane Dicko
Malian refugees in Abala refugee camp, Niger, participate in a community led effort to raise awareness of gender issues and successful management of household conflicts.

Any part of this document may be reproduced, translated into other languages or adapted to meet local needs without prior permission of UNHCR, provided that all parts are distributed free of charge and UNHCR is acknowledged.

©2013, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Division of International Protection
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
92, Rue de Montbrilliant, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland
Email: HQTS00@unhcr.org,
Website: www.unhcr.org

Protection Policy Paper

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION

About this paper

For over a decade, UNHCR has used community-based approaches to strengthen protection. Though the term 'community-based protection' (CBP) is not widely-used, for humanitarian organisations the concepts and approaches are familiar. Drawing on documents, interviews with practitioners and field visits, this document sets out key lessons that have emerged in recent years during the delivery of CBP. It aims to help UNHCR staff and partners at all levels to integrate community-based approaches to protection in their humanitarian work.

Syrian, Iraqi and Jordanian participants of the Global Refugee Youth Consultations, national consultation in Amman, Jordan in 2015.

© UNHCR/Nick Sore

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 5

Key Lesson 1 9
COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION IS A PROCESS, NOT A PROJECT

Key Lesson 2 14
SELECT COMMUNITY COUNTERPARTS WITH CARE

Key Lesson 3 18
COMMUNITIES ARE WELL PLACED TO IDENTIFY THEIR PROTECTION CHALLENGES BUT EXTERNAL PARTNERS ALSO HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE

Key Lesson 4 20
EFFECTIVE PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS REQUIRE ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS

Key Lesson 5 23
COMMUNITIES ALREADY EMPLOY PROTECTION MEASURES

Key Lesson 6 25
COMMUNITY WORK REQUIRES EXPERTISE AND TRAINING

Key Lesson 7 28
SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION IS ESSENTIAL

Key Lesson 8 30
FOCUS ON PROTECTION

Key Lesson 9 33
PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY FROM THE START

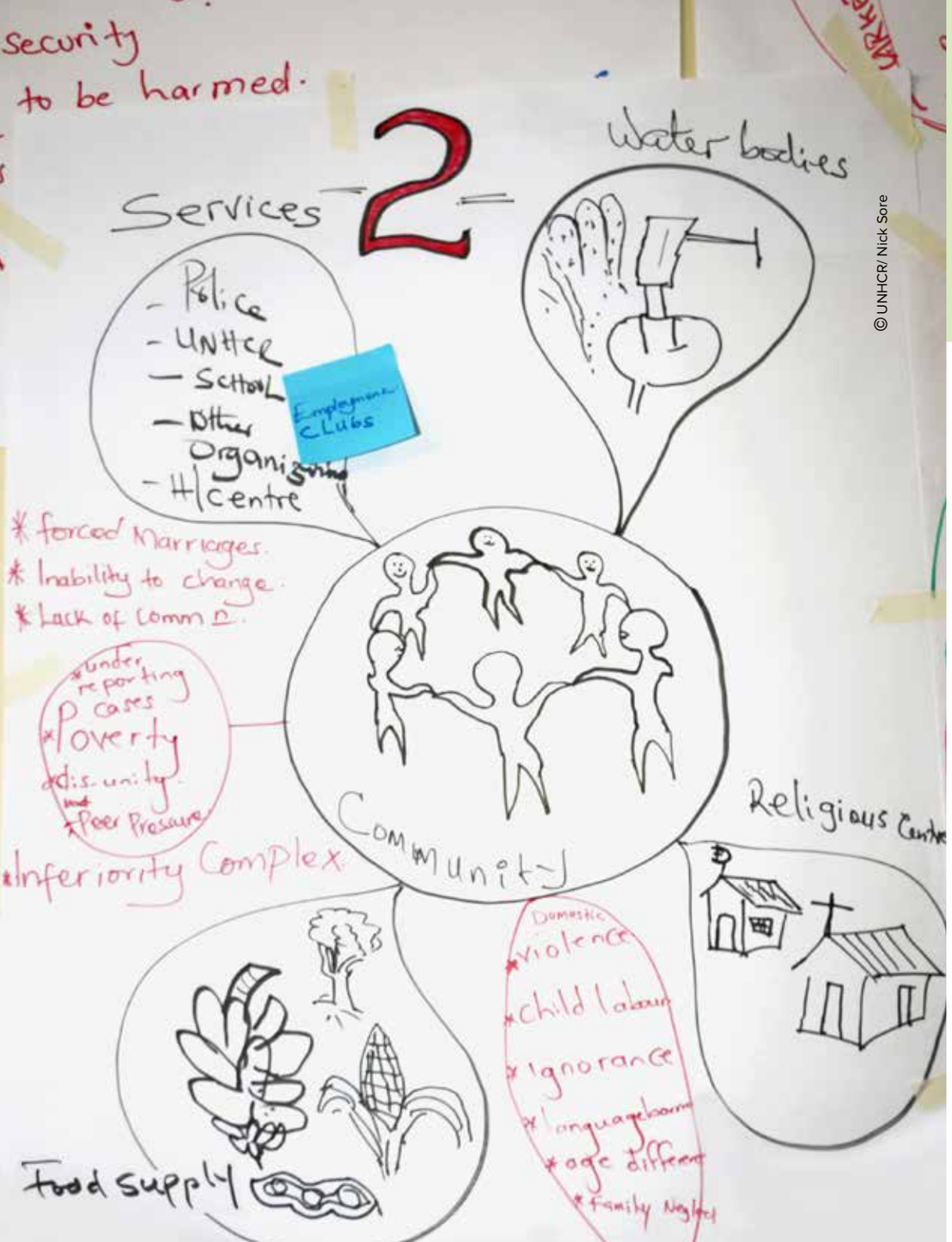
Key Lesson 10 37
SUPPORT AND WORK WITH EXISTING COMMUNITY AND NATIONAL STRUCTURES

Key Lesson 11 40
DEVELOP AN ADVOCACY STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

Key Lesson 12 43
GIVE ATTENTION TO EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Conclusion 47

Bibliography 48



© UNHCR/ Nick Sore

At the Global Refugee Youth Consultations, national consultation in Kampala, Uganda in 2015, participants from the DRC, South Sudan, Somalia and Uganda worked together to identify components of their communities, and some of the challenges that youth face within them.

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION

I - INTRODUCTION

Over time, UNHCR has strengthened the rights-based foundations of its work. UNHCR considers that its mandate is to work with refugees, stateless and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to ensure they can fulfil their rights (rather than to assist "beneficiaries"). These rights include the right of every person to participate in deciding and shaping their lives. Reflecting its mandate, UNHCR has therefore adopted a community-based approach to working with all the people it serves, based on consultation and participation, irrespective of sex, age, ethnicity and other attributes.

Through the systematic application of an age, gender and diversity (AGD) approach, UNHCR seeks to ensure that all persons of concern enjoy their rights on an equal footing and are able to participate fully in the decisions that affect their lives. The AGD policy is inseparable from UNHCR's overall commitment to a rights-based approach.[1]

Beyond the rights-based logic of CBP, it is recognised that external inputs alone cannot achieve sustained improvements in the lives of persons of concern. Long term improvement can only be achieved in close partnership with the communities and individuals that UNHCR serves, and depends essentially on engaging their own talents and capacity for self-reliance.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH?

In both relief and development work, the term 'community-based approach' implies that communities engage meaningfully and substantially in all aspects of programmes that affect them, strengthening the community's leading role as a driving force for change. Too often, staff members consult communities or their representatives about concerns they have, but then develop and implement projects without further involvement by the concerned community. While this is clearly better than no consultation at all, it is not a community-based approach. To be truly community-based, programmes must involve affected groups in a community at every stage: in assessment, diagnosis, prioritization,

[1] For a full discussion, see Section 2 of UNHCR, *A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations*, 2008

design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.[2] The approach emphasizes the community's self-determination and capacity, but does not remove the need for formal protection mechanisms or imply that communities are expected to be completely self-sufficient. Communities may still need technical and material support for a long period. Nor is the approach a low-cost alternative, although outcomes are likely to be more sustainable in the long run because strong communities require less external intervention and support. A community-based approach also means that forms of protection which focus on finding solutions can be undertaken from a much earlier stage.

WHAT IS PROTECTION?

Agencies may define the content of 'protection' in different ways. However, there is a core common area: all agencies agree that persons of concern must be protected from persistent internal or external violence or threats of violence, and their effects, and from coercion and systematic deprivation of basic rights. For UNHCR, 'protection' covers all activities that aim to achieve full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of human rights, refugee, statelessness and international humanitarian law. It requires the creation of an environment that is conducive to preventing or alleviating the immediate effects of a specific pattern of abuse, and restoring human dignity through reparation, restitution and rehabilitation.

Protection may be required in several humanitarian contexts. It affects refugees and IDPs, and is relevant throughout all phases of conflict as well as during natural disasters, whether these are emergencies or protracted. Protection responses may also be required for stateless persons, including both those in a migratory context and for those who have never left their own country. Human beings naturally form communities, and this remains true when they are uprooted, living in camps or settlements, living on the margins of society, or, increasingly, living in host communities. With some important exceptions, a community-based approach to protection is appropriate in most situations, and can generate more effective protection and sustainable solutions.

[2] For more information, see Section 3 of UNHCR, *A Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations*, 2008.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION?

The International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent has described the protection required by people in humanitarian situations in terms of a "protection egg". The egg has three levels, which require three levels of action.[3]

First, it is necessary to provide services that are urgently needed to prevent threats and abuses and address immediate effects. Second, agencies need to implement programmes that enable people to improve their situation and restore their dignity. At the third level, action is required to change underlying circumstances that obstruct the ability of people to realize and enjoy their human rights. Each of these three levels of intervention will be strengthened if communities are actively involved in identifying and designing responses to the threats they face. Development and humanitarian programmes have increasingly emphasized community participation. However, humanitarian professionals are still learning how and when to use the approach. CBP puts the capacities, agency, rights and dignity of persons of concern at the centre of programming. It generates more effective and sustainable protection outcomes by identifying protection gaps through consultation and strengthening local resources and capacity.

At the most basic level, it is essential to understand communities in order to avoid harm and ensure that programmes do not inadvertently leave people and communities worse off. Engaging communities in their own protection also prepares them for return and other durable solutions.

While 'protection mainstreaming' analysis identifies risks and makes sure that programmes supplying water, sanitation, livelihoods and other services do not create protection risks as a side effect, community-based protection uses a community-based approach to programming specifically to address protection issues that a community faces. Moreover, it is essential that this protection mainstreaming analysis is implemented with an AGD perspective, in order to ensure gender equality and the inclusion of women, men, girls and boys of all ages and diverse backgrounds. Working from an AGD perspective also implies including, on an equal basis, all persons of concern with specific needs (for example, LGBTI[4] persons and older persons, persons with disabilities, persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities, and indigenous peoples).

The link between communities and protection is mutually reinforcing. Working through community mechanisms enhances protection, and enhanced protection strengthens communities.

[3] International Committee of the Red Cross, *Professional Standards for Protection Work*, 2013.
[4] Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex.

II - KEY LESSONS OF COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION

Many lessons may clearly be drawn from the excellent work of UNHCR, its partners, and other organizations that apply CBP. The points highlighted here are applicable in many contexts.[5]

Participants of the Global Refugee Youth Consultations, national consultation in Kampala, Uganda 2015. On the final day of the Consultation, youth receive certificates of participation from representatives of the national partner, COBURWAS, UNHCR Uganda and the Women's Refugee Commission.

[5] For additional information on how international assistance is viewed by those on the 'receiving end', see CDA, *Collaborative Learning Projects: The Listening Project*.

> *Staff need to really spend time in communities, not just be a cloud of dust from a white car.*
> *UNHCR staff member*

KEY LESSON 1 •

COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION IS A PROCESS, NOT A PROJECT

Perhaps the most important thing to remember, and ensure that partners and allies understand, is that the adoption of a rights-based approach through community engagement is neither a short-term commitment nor a phase in programme implementation. It is a methodology for sustained protection work that puts the community at the centre.[6]

Too often, community engagement is fulfilled by brief meetings with community groups that generate lists of needs and complaints, whereas it needs to be a jointly developed programme of action that enhances protection. A community-based approach includes meaningful community engagement with each of the following familiar programme elements:

- An initial, and then regular, analysis of the current situation.
- Agree on priorities.
- Design and implementation of responses or interventions.
- Monitoring of implementation and adjustment of interventions as needed.
- Evaluation and reporting of results.

Experienced protection officers estimate that the process of getting to know a community, and developing a plan for its protection, may require six months to a year of continual learning and engagement. The time spent on developing trust, understanding and capacity should not be considered separate from the "real work" of implementation.
It is the foundation for a community-based approach, and can itself improve protection as the community comes together and people gain awareness of their rights, develop responses, and learn where and how to seek assistance.

[6] For a good guide to processes, see ActionAid, *Safety with Dignity: A Field Manual for Integrating Community Based Protection across Humanitarian Programs*, 2010.

> *You can't build trust in a community if you only go in to get information without returning to provide feedback and information.*
> *UNHCR staff member*

Sustained engagement with a community may involve several people and agencies, so must be coordinated closely. NGOs may be the primary programme implementers and point of contact, but UNHCR staff members must ensure they are present frequently enough to build their own relationships with the community, monitor implementation, and understand the evolving context.

KEEP IN MIND

- You may avoid some initial missteps if you acquire an understanding of a community's composition, history and context before your first contact or visit.
- Engagement may be a slow process, requiring patience and respect for the community's own pace of change. Where communities are under threat or already disrupted, building relationships may take even longer.
- Trust will be enhanced if the same staff members are regularly involved and what they say to the community is consistent.
- Repeated training and practice sessions will be needed to enable communities to participate effectively in all aspects of a programme. Members of the community will differ in their visibility, capacity and power. Skilful outreach and facilitation will be required to ensure that all relevant points of view are heard.
- Dialogue and consensus-building skills will be needed to move community meetings from 'wish lists' to a shared analysis. This should consider: protection challenges and their underlying causes; desired outcomes and priorities for action; and responses implemented by the community.[7]
- UNHCR and partners should be transparent about the limits of their capacity (notably with regard to budget limitations, legal restrictions, and mandates).
- To sustain trust and rapport, it is vital to ensure that UNHCR and partners follow up all the commitments they make.
- UNHCR and partners may need to provide coaching, to help their staff adjust to forms of decision-making that are shared with refugees and IDPs.
- Community consultations may fail if they are abridged because staff of UNHCR or its partners are pressed for time or fail to allocate the time needed.

[7] For more information, refer to section 3.1.4, on Participatory assessment, expectations, time and resources, of the UNHCR, *Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations,* 2008.

- Donors need to understand the nature of a community-based approach to protection, and must also give it time to work.
- Organizing, analysing and planning can be empowering and healing for refugees and IDPs, as they begin to regain a sense of control over their own lives.
- A systemic approach to protection is essential, both to achieving sustainability and mobilizing communities to be the drivers of change.

Colombia

UNHCR has a well-established CBP programme in Colombia, with ten field offices, built up under three successive Representatives.

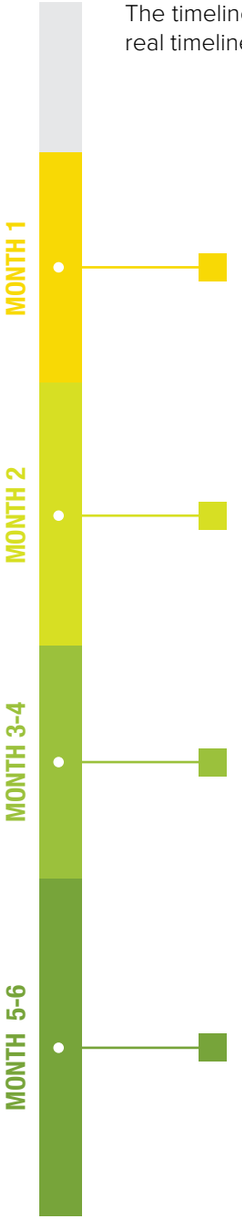
Work with an indigenous community began in Quibdó when a community organization asked UNHCR to help the community remain on its territory. Initially, UNHCR made periodic visits. Its basic message was: "We don't provide the stomach; we provide the mind. If the mind is full, it can figure out how to fill the stomach."

After about a year, the community organization presented UNHCR with a handwritten plan. UNHCR staff helped the community understand its rights and authority under Colombia's constitution. This enabled the community to meet with a broader group of communities to discuss protection strategies and other governance issues. The communities agreed to build three shelters at spots on their territory that were close to population centres with telecommunications and other sources of potential assistance. At the request of the communities, UNHCR provided modest material assistance to help them erect these structures, ran participatory assessments every six months, and gave training - including on gender and sexual and gender based violence - that helped to empower women in the communities.

UNHCR has stood alongside the indigenous community, and advocated on its behalf, when it called on the State to protect and fulfil human rights. UNHCR and the community have now worked together for seven years, and have developed a high degree of trust. In a district that sees frequent mass displacements, the community is undivided and remains on its traditional lands.

SAMPLE TIMELINE FOR INITIAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The timeline below is illustrative. Many local factors will influence a real timeline.

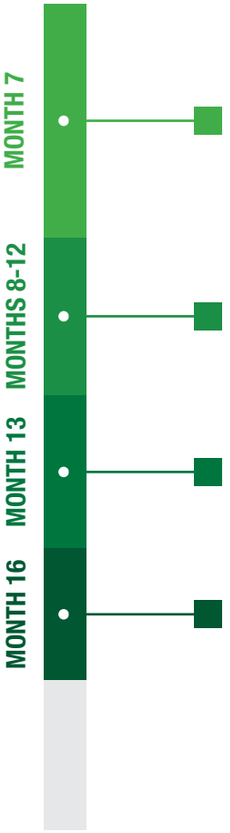


Month 1 Learn as much as possible about the community before visiting. Learn its history; consider community structures and organizations; identify formal and informal leaders; study how decisions are made; list other agencies working in the area and in the community. Identify national institutions or programmes that can help to address community needs and concerns.

Month 2 Make an initial visit. Meet the community's leaders; validate or correct your research findings; explain how UNHCR works and the CBP approach; clarify what kinds of assistance UNHCR can and cannot provide. Ask whether the community is interested in working with UNHCR and its partners. If it is, explain participatory assessment in detail and what preparations the community needs to make. Agree a time for a participatory assessment (PA).

Month 3-4 Spend as much time as possible in the community. Continue to seek out leaders or representatives of various community populations. Using the AGD process, ensure that groups selected for the PA are representative and diverse, and include the most vulnerable populations. Conduct the PA. Summarize its findings in a report the community will find accessible.

Month 5-6 Work with leaders to schedule a feedback and planning meeting. Ensure all groups are notified and able to attend. Present the PA findings and explain which issues fall within UNHCR's mandate. Together with the community, use PA results to identify protection threats. Be sure to probe for underlying issues and causes (see Key Lesson 2). Work with the community to set priorities, based on the community's own assessments and UNHCR's ability to deliver. Agree on a process for selecting community representatives to develop and monitor an action plan, and mechanism(s) for informing the larger community going forward.



Month 7 Select representatives. Schedule a meeting and work with representatives to develop the action plan. Agree with them who will be responsible for material contributions and implementation; desired outcomes and how progress towards them will be measured; and how community representatives will communicate information on the action plan to the wider community.

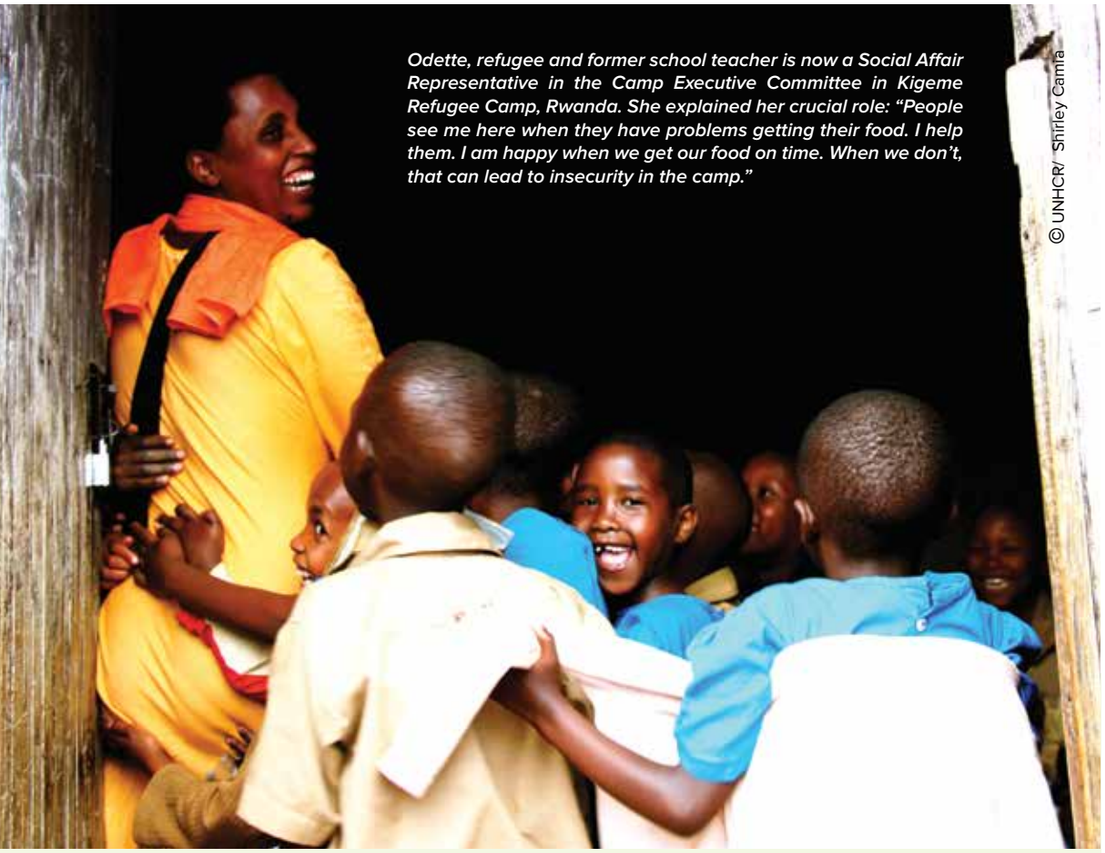
Month 8-12 Start implementing the action plan. Maintain regular contact with community representatives and periodic contact with wider community. Monitor implementation and track the agreed indicators.

Month 13 Convene a meeting with the community to evaluate progress to date and decide next steps. Present achievements against objectives; discuss challenges; adjust implementation as needed.

Month 16 Adjust the membership of the representatives group as needed; develop plans for Year 2 and conduct a Participatory Assessment using an AGD approach.

KEY LESSON 2 •

SELECT COMMUNITY COUNTERPARTS WITH CARE



Odette, refugee and former school teacher is now a Social Affair Representative in the Camp Executive Committee in Kigeme Refugee Camp, Rwanda. She explained her crucial role: "People see me here when they have problems getting their food. I help them. I am happy when we get our food on time. When we don't, that can lead to insecurity in the camp."

© UNHCR/ Shirley Camia

> *It is very important to talk to the right people. During community activities you can only speak with some people, you need to be attentive. You need to know the opinion leaders, cultural leaders, influential figures, and the dynamics of the community. It is important to be inside – to have local staff who have been there a long time, who are talking with people, and have a good sense of how to operate.*
> *UNHCR staff member*

It is not possible to work directly with every person in a community. Though it is important to keep the entire community informed by means of open meetings or other channels, for practical reasons it will be necessary to work with a small group of people who represent the community's views and make decisions on its behalf. The selection of community representatives is therefore critical. It is important to understand a community's dynamics before deciding how selection will occur, since a poorly designed process may increase inequality or insecurity. The views of marginalized groups need to be represented, alongside recognised leaders. AGD analysis[8] and regular interaction with the community can help to identify potential representatives of these groups.

KEEP IN MIND

- Those who put themselves forward as 'community leaders', may not have the backing or the trust of their community. Sound selection depends on having a good understanding of the community, and the various groups that compose it, and asking members of those groups who they consider to be their leaders.[9]
- Good coordination will ensure that agencies work coherently with community leaders and do not promote rivalries that create instability or problems of security.
- Even when representatives have been selected carefully, it is risky to rely completely on them. Their motivations, or the needs of the community, may change. Maintain contact with the wider community to ensure that all relevant points of view continue to be represented effectively.
- Do not rely exclusively on community leaders to select participants for trainings and other projects, because they may not take account of the interests of all groups in the society.
- People naturally form groups when they are displaced, but these may be discriminatory: before supporting new groups, assess them carefully.
- Community members may need training to enable them to participate on an equal basis with agency or government counterparts. Populations that have frequently been excluded from such processes, and therefore lack experience, are particularly likely to need training. Don't set them up to fail.

[8] Please refer to "Age, gender and diversity analysis", section 2.3.3 of the UNHCR, *Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations*, 2008; and to the UNHCR *Need to Know Guidance* Series (see bibliography).
[9] Please refer to sections 3.2.1, "Community mapping of management structures", and 3.2.2, "Community-based representation", of the UNHCR, *Community-based Approach in UNHCR Operations*, 2008.

- Adolescents are frequently omitted from both child and adult programmes, although they are exposed to a range of serious protection threats. Different approaches may be needed to ensure that they are represented.

- The needs of women and girls tend to be neglected and are a priority for UNHCR and many agencies. However, focusing on them and excluding other groups can create tensions and lead agencies to overlook other important protection threats. In communities marked by gender inequality, take care to build broad support for programmes that empower women.

- Get to know the community well. This will enable you to identify community groups and associations that are trusted and should be involved in arrangements for community representation or programme implementation.

- Establish clear terms of reference for community representatives and committees and for external partners, including UNHCR itself.

- Payment of community representatives in effect endorses their performance. This needs to be undertaken with caution, for example, if these community representatives are not highly regarded in their community, such endorsement can undermine the credibility of community consultations.

> *Everyone wanted to work with the women. Men got angry and became a protection threat.*
> *UNHCR staff member*

Nepal

Many community-based programmes find that it is difficult to involve persons with disabilities (PwD) in a meaningful way.

About 10 per cent of the people in Nepal's refugee camps have been identified as having a disability (close to global estimates). Many have hearing or speech impairments. As elsewhere, people with disabilities, especially women and girls, are at particular risk of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV), but victims of SGBV in Nepal's camps were frequently unprotected because they could not communicate with the authorities or service providers. Many other needs were unmet for the same reason. Few officials or PwDs had learned sign language.

With its partners, UNHCR developed an alternative communications toolkit using images, and taught people how to use it. Over time, in consultation with persons with disabilities, UNHCR trained a pool of teachers and interpreters in sign language, and taught basic sign language to service providers and family members. In parallel, UNHCR ensured that persons with disabilities were represented in the community structures of the camp.

Chad

In one of Chad's refugee camps, one group of refugees, the blacksmiths, were considered by the other refugees to be from a lower class. They were excluded from all decision-making processes and were not even allowed to participate in gatherings organized by the community leaders.

Humanitarian workers helped the blacksmiths to organize themselves and resume work. They quickly became one of the first groups to be productive and generate income. Visitors to the camp were encouraged to meet them and, because the community leaders accompanied the visitors, they began to discover the value of the group's work. Community leaders then encouraged the blacksmiths to come to community meetings, which gradually led to their direct participation in camp-leadership discussions.

KEY LESSON 3 •

COMMUNITIES ARE WELL PLACED TO IDENTIFY THEIR PROTECTION CHALLENGES BUT EXTERNAL PARTNERS ALSO HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE

© UNHCR/ R. Arnold

UNHCR Consultations with stateless children and youth in Malaysia.

> *We were surprised to find in UNHCR an ally for the community's objectives. Previously we had not trusted outsiders. But now we have an important foundation to be able to trust in a crisis situation.*
> *Indigenous community leader*

Humanitarian professionals work first to guarantee the physical safety of people, then to meet their basic needs sustainably (food and shelter), and finally to create an environment in which the full range of human rights is protected. However, a refugee, stateless or IDP community may rank the urgency of protection issues differently, and in fact members of the community may not be fully aware of the legal status underlying their predicament, as is often the case with stateless persons. They may give an equal or higher priority to cultural or spiritual concerns relative to personal safety or material needs. In addition, the community may not even recognize some threats that external professionals consider to be urgent, such as sexual and gender based violence. Groups within a community (men and women, children and adults) may also prioritize protection challenges differently.

To create a successful protection environment, all perceived threats should be considered. As discussed above, it is also vital to give less visible, less powerful and marginalized community members opportunities to participate, because they may have specific needs and concerns. Where an agency differs from the community in its perception of threats, the community's priorities may need to be tackled first in order to alleviate anxiety, build trust and show results in areas that matter to them. An exception should be made, nevertheless, when there is a threat of imminent physical harm or other acute protection challenge. This must be given priority, and the community must be persuaded to accept that. Where a community proposes action that violates international human rights standards, the community should be encouraged to take a different approach. Displaced communities can frequently be open to new ways of handling issues that agencies sometimes incorrectly assume are cultural or social norms. Overall, priorities that the community identifies need to be balanced against organizational capacity and the judgment of protection professionals.

KEEP IN MIND

- Skilled facilitation, usually over several sessions, can enable communities to understand, identify and prioritize protection concerns more accurately. Do not expect to generate a well-reasoned list of priority actions in a single meeting. Plan to work with communities over time to identify problems that are immediately apparent and also problems that are unrecognized, below the surface, or are experienced only by subgroups. Take time to analyse the underlying or shared causes of these problems.

- Communities may need introductory training. Training in gender equality may help them to recognize gender-related threats. Training in protection may help them distinguish economic issues from issues of safety and security.

- A rights-based approach may not align with the community's own perception of threat. If this occurs, do not abandon the commitment to rights but work with the community, while linking the threats they identify to violations of rights. Understanding of a rights-based approach can form over time.

- Even when a community recognizes threats that are sensitive (such as SGBV), it may not be willing to address them at once. Resistance may be even stronger if men or boys are victims of SGBV. The commitment to rights is an obligation; implementing it is a matter of judgement. Not dealing with sensitive issues is a decision and sends the message that some rights are less important and can be ignored if they generate discomfort.

KEY LESSON 4 •

EFFECTIVE PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS REQUIRE ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS

Participating youth from the South Sudanese, Somali, Ugandan and DRC communities are considering youth issues in their communities and reporting findings to the wider group at the Global Refugee Youth Consultations, national consultation in Kampala, Uganda in 2015.

© UNHCR/ Nick Sore

> *A community-based approach provides a better analysis of the problem so that state and international response is based on the real needs and perspectives and interests of the people.*
> *UNHCR staff member*

One of the most important benefits of allocating time to understand the community and develop its capacity is that you are more likely to identify correctly both its protection problems and solutions with them.

The Participatory Assessment[10] process is likely to reveal many perceived threats as well as other issues of concern to the community. Further analysis will be needed to decide which are the most pressing, whether there are shared underlying causes, the degree to which issues fall within UNHCR's mandate, and what interventions are feasible. In addition, threats (including serious ones) that early consultations with the community did not identify may need to be introduced in a sensitive manner.

Sound decisions on what action is appropriate in a given community require a good understanding of the culture and structures of the society in question. UNHCR and partner staff will bring knowledge and ideas about what has worked (and not worked) elsewhere, but collaboration with the community is needed to decide on an approach that fits the particular context.

Because situations may change rapidly, assessment should be dynamic and subject to regular re-evaluation, even when threats have been diagnosed carefully and accurately. A minor risk may become a threat, a serious risk may recede, and entirely new dangers may emerge. The need to adapt to changing circumstances also means that programmes and budgets must allow for changes of course.

KEEP IN MIND

- Do not over-emphasise vulnerable categories. If you do, you may overlook other acute needs or less visible groups (e.g., male victims of sexual violence).
- Many protection problems, such as family violence or ethnic discrimination, may have existed before displacement. If such issues are treated as consequences of displacement, your analysis and understanding of cause will be distorted.
- Even the most successful models from other contexts are unlikely to produce similar results if they are simply copied. Use community engagement methods to analyse the local situation and adapt models to fit the context.
- Much intra-community violence may in fact target women or children. In many cases, nevertheless, the most effective strategy may be to address abuse and violence broadly. Singling out women and children can put them at greater risk or alienate them from the community.

[10] UNHCR, *The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations, 2006.*

Gabon

In Gabon, as a result of participatory assessments, a 'comité de quartier' was established to address protection needs identified by the community. The committee was formed to help improve relationship between refugees and host communities, including local authorities, and to reduce harassment by law enforcement agents. The committee also facilitated better access for refugees to socio-economic infrastructures and livelihood opportunities.

Participatory assessments led refugees to become actively involved in programme design, implementation and monitoring, and strengthened the identification of vulnerable groups. Refugees' involvement improved the targeting of assistance, especially to young mothers, and reduced the rate of forced prostitution among women and girls.

Colombia

An indigenous community in Colombia in the midst of a complex conflict situation identified forced recruitment of adolescents as one of two primary protection threats. Through an AGD process, young people said that the absence of organized activities for them was a major risk factor for recruitment. They asked for initial support to create a film club and took full responsibility for operating it.

In addition to keeping them busy, the film club gave young adults the opportunity to develop skills and self-confidence, which increased their ability to resist recruitment. In a different context, the formation of a film club might be just a youth development activity. In this case, it directly addressed a threat which the community had prioritized.

This example partially draws on an external evaluation by Ursula Mendoza and Virginia Thomas: see, UNHCR, AGDM Evaluation: A Participatory Evaluation of AGDM results in Four Colombian Communities.

KEY LESSON 5 •

COMMUNITIES ALREADY EMPLOY PROTECTION MEASURES

© UNHCR/ R. Arnold

Artee, a stateless girl from Thailand, is one of the leaders of the student volunteer project to help underprivileged people in the community. At this Mother's Day celebration at school, she organized the distribution of shoes donated by a local TV station to poor students. As she explained: "I don't have money so I help with the passion of my heart (...). I also help people with disabilities, and counsel students with drug addiction problems to come back to school".

Every community that faces threats engages in forms of individual or collective self-protection. These may be complex, for example involving negotiations with armed groups, or simple and pragmatic, such as going out only in groups. Strategies may or may not be effective, but it is important to identify and understand them. If external agencies introduce new protection measures without considering existing ones, the community may lose its own capacity to protect itself and may be worse off when external inputs are reduced. It will be useful to understand the security strategies that communities used

before they were displaced, as well as those they develop to deal with threats associated with dislocation. In particular, communities that were recently dislocated may be able to employ or revitalize these strategies usefully in their new setting. An effort should also be made to identify and make use of any unused capacity to cope with protection threats.

Some coping strategies are harmful. Reducing movement to avoid conflict or protect members of the household may reduce income or food production. Sex may be exchanged for food or other necessities. As comprehensive protection approaches are developed with the community, it will be important to replace harmful community protection measures or mitigate their effects.[11]

KEEP IN MIND

- Women may be more resilient than men during displacement. Men may experience a profound loss of identity when they lose their work or standing in the community, and their responses to this experience can create protection threats for women and children.

- Host communities and officials should be reminded regularly that refugee and IDP communities are willing and able to help protect their members. When they do so, it can reduce resentment and the perception by persons of concern that they are dependant and lack resources of their own.

- Refugees and displaced persons frequently establish community-based groups or committees, from a desire to talk to like-minded people or to address shared problems. These groups often act to strengthen protection responses and advocacy. They may facilitate the creation of national networks linking groups of people with similar interests.

Yemen. Improving community-based child care

When UNHCR met with a women's association in an urban refugee community in Yemen, it learned that women were tying their children to the bed to try to keep them "safe" while they were out at work.
Recognizing that this well-intentioned solution was dangerous, UNHCR worked with a community-based partner organization to establish a kindergarten where women could leave their children safely. Since the women were working, they could pay a small fee for this service.
UNHCR supported the project for three months, after which the women's association took over management of the kindergarten from the partner organization. Demand for child care services increased, and other groups of women subsequently established home-based day care services. In this way, they resolved the child care problem and generated some income.

[11] For a detailed discussion of how to identify community strategies, see ActionAid, *Safety with Dignity*, Step 2, 2010

KEY LESSON 6 •

COMMUNITY WORK REQUIRES EXPERTISE AND TRAINING

© UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

IDP women in Mingkaman Camp, South Sudan meet to discuss a sexual and gender-based violence. This is an opportunity to raise awareness and educate the community on topics that are taboo in the local culture.

> *Staff need skills to interact with different cultures and environments. We need to find a new way to transmit values – it can't be done in a training. It's like driving. Theoretical knowledge is not enough - we need to be with them as they work.*
> *UNHCR supervisor*

Community-based approaches require a range of skills from staff in UNHCR and implementing partners. Staff need to have expertise in protection, and be able to work sensitively with people who may be quite different from themselves. Newly arrived young staff may have enthusiasm, energy and fresh ideas, but lack experience of work with refugees or communities. Staff who have always lived in urban areas may have preconceptions about rural people. Any ingrained negative values, such as devaluing the opinions of women, need to be examined and countered. Supervisors may be very experienced but eager to delegate fieldwork to junior staff who are not yet ready to work on their own; they need to ensure that staff are adequately prepared for community-based work.

All staff who work directly with communities will need strong facilitation and consensus-building skills. Training programmes provide a foundation but cannot take the place of close mentoring by people with experience of facilitating dialogue and reaching agreements with a community. Staff will also need strong analytical abilities to diagnose protection threats and underlying issues, advocacy skills, and a capacity to understand and work in diverse cultures and societies. They need to be willing to travel and live in rough environments.

Perhaps most important, staff at all levels must be truly respectful in their attitudes to communities with which they aspire to work in partnership. The leadership of the UNHCR representative can be important in this respect. By visiting camps and participating in community forums and AGD processes, she or he communicates both to her or his staff and to the community that community engagement is a priority for UNHCR. Staff members signal how much they value the communities in which they work by the quality of the relationships they build and the frequency and seriousness of their visits.

UNHCR's implementing partners are often the faces that a community sees most often. As implementers of UNHCR projects, they need to demonstrate the same skills and attitudes as UNHCR staff, and should be selected carefully. UNHCR may need to provide training to ensure that its partners understand and uphold UNHCR's values with respect to gender equality, democratic participation, and other human rights. Regular monitoring will be required to ensure that partners retain their attitudes and skills over time as their staff change or rotate.

Finally, both female and male staff in an office need to have the skill set to work effectively with communities. Decisions on whether a male or female staff member should take the lead in interacting with a given group can have a profound positive or negative impact on the quality of the relationship that is established. Such decisions need to be taken with care based on an analysis of context and cultural norms.

KEEP IN MIND

- New and inexperienced staff will need comprehensive training, which should cover at least some of the following topics:
    - The Age, Gender Equality and Diversity Policy.
    - Use of UNHCR tools.
    - The rights-based approach.
    - Strategic thinking.
    - UNHCR's Code of Conduct.
    - Gender issues.
    - Facilitation and consensus building.
    - Advocacy.
    - Rights and responsibilities of persons of concern.

- Even experienced staff may need training or materials in specific areas, as community work proceeds.[12] Topics might include:
    - Working with People with Disabilities.
    - Addressing sexual and gender based violence (against males and females).
    - The meaningful participation of children.
    - Reintegration of demobilized child soldiers and others who have been forcibly recruited.
    - Working with indigenous communities.
    - Working with LGBTI groups.

- Both staff and partners will benefit from a supervisory structure that encourages them to consult on challenges, problem solving, and seek help when they are in danger of burnout.

- Many protection staff members have a strong legal background. This is important for some aspects of their work but it will be necessary to foster the facilitative and consultative skills they need to undertake community work.

- Staff need to understand that their role is to support and catalyse action by the community, rather than implement themselves.

[12] Some of these topics are covered in UNHCR's *Need to Know Guidance* Series. See also, UNHCR, *Listen and Learn: Participatory Assessment with Children and Adolescents*, 2012.

KEY LESSON 7 •

SUPPORTIVE SUPERVISION IS ESSENTIAL

This soccer team is part of a youth empowerment program in Lebanon. Three times a week this team, comprised of both Syrian and Lebanese players, gets together to practice and play games. The team has gained support and fans from both Syria and Lebanon.

One of the most critical elements for successful CBP in a UNHCR office is continuing commitment and support from supervisors. A Representative committed to a community-based approach will request and allocate funds, commit sufficient staff time to work with the community, and provide coaching and supervision. Supportive field office heads will advocate for increased resources for CBP, promote staff engagement with the community, and make themselves available to regularly participate in and monitor community interactions. Protection Officers will value the contributions of staff working closely with communities and collaborate to develop a shared approach to protection.

Where supervisors are not convinced of the value or efficacy of CBP, it will be extremely difficult to initiate and sustain.

KEEP IN MIND

- Supervisors who lack extensive direct experience of a community-based approach may need to be sensitized to its importance. They should ensure that experienced staff are on hand to mentor junior staff on their community work.
- All the materials in an office that pertain to CBP should be grouped and easily accessible to all staff.
- The departure of a supportive supervisor is a vulnerable moment for CBP programmes. A new supervisor who is less committed or committed to different priorities can quickly undo months of painstaking work to build trust and relationships with the community.

KEY LESSON 8 •

FOCUS ON PROTECTION

St. John Nursery and Primary School is a community-run school in Uganda that was created in 2014 by a refugee, who used his own funds to buy text books, chairs and construction materials. He is now searching for ways to expand the school, buy more text books and hire experienced teachers to help teach the over 500 children attending the school.

© UNHCR/Cosmos/Frederic Noy

Refugee, stateless and IDP communities have many needs. Those the community identifies as the most urgent may not actually be protection issues. It is the job of protection staff to work with the community to build understanding of UNHCR's mandate and make clear what constitutes a protection threat, then determine which community needs relate directly to protection. Every effort should be made to put communities in contact with other agencies that can assist them to address non-protection needs.

It is not always easy to draw the line between protection and non-protection issues. Ultimately, many forms of response, including development activities, enhance protection. Also, a given intervention may promote protection in one context but not in another. Because progress on protection can be slow and difficult to achieve, it is also tempting to drift towards activities that are not strictly protective. Given the very limited resources available for protection, UNHCR staff need to make sure that their efforts focus on activities that directly address protection threats.

KEEP IN MIND

- Experienced supervisors play an important role in assisting staff to determine which community concerns and interventions truly advance protection.
- Supervisors and country offices should take care that they do not unintentionally divert staff efforts from difficult protection challenges by demanding quick results.
- Do not confuse 'protection-sensitive programming' with protection. For example, ensuring that WASH programmes drill boreholes in safe locations is not protection, but protection-sensitive programming.
- Do not confuse mechanisms with protection. Talking with women, or disaggregating data by sex, does not in itself protect women against threats. Setting up a protection committee does not itself improve community security.

> *If field staff can look through an AGD protection lens as they go about their daily work, they will identify a lot of the protection issues.*
> *UNHCR staff member*

> *In a situation of extreme conflict we got a report that 80% of casualties were civilians. But people wanted to focus on the contents of the food ration in camps. Ridiculous. It is so hard to make progress on protection that people tend to tinker around on minor issues where they can demonstrate results.*
> *NGO staff*

- Donors may need to be reminded that community-based protection work may not fit neatly into a one- or two-year project framework.

- Communities may require training and multiple sessions to understand what a protection risk is and whether a particular programme or proposal for action falls within UNHCR's mandate.

Is a CBP approach appropriate to all contexts?

Opinions vary on whether CBP can be recommended everywhere, whether it is not feasible in some cases, or whether some aspects of the approach are always relevant. Clearly, it should be used with great caution in the following circumstances:

- *Where militarization puts communities at risk.*
- *Where authority is not established, the state is scarcely present, or power and control shift frequently as a result of changes in the military balance.*
- *Where government authorities are responsible for protection abuses or violations.*
- *Where it is too dangerous for staff or partners to enter, and even conducting a participatory assessment would put communities at risk.*
- *Where a community is a cult or a sect.*

In volatile environments, where protection cannot be discussed, it may still be possible to implement certain types of programmes, such as WASH or education. Community involvement in such programmes can enable agencies to obtain a sound understanding of protection threats.

Though it is difficult to get to know a new community deeply during the acute phase of an emergency, agencies can often establish relationships with community leaders and community structures and cooperate with them.[13]

[13] See the *UNHCR Emergency Handbook* section on community-based protection: https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/50479/community-based-protection#2,1451479434072

KEY LESSON 9 •

PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY FROM THE START

Computer classes at a community centre inside the Za'atari refugee camp jointly run by UNHCR and its NGO partner International Relief and Development (IRD).

© UNHCR/ Christopher Herwig

Many responses to protection threats are urgent and short term. When working with communities to develop longer-term mechanisms or responses that are triggered as threats arise, however, or to address more sustained protection challenges, sustainability must be considered from the earliest stages of conceptualization and design.

Regardless of how a protection programme originated, a strong sense of community ownership will improve its sustainability and effectiveness. These effects will be enhanced

if the activity responds to community priorities, respects cultural sensitivities, and follows other good programming principles. Great care should be taken when funds are disbursed early in a project. Distributing a lot of money early on can distort community involvement, create conditions favourable to extortion, and further marginalize the powerless.

Sensitive judgment is required to balance the need to provide assistance for long enough to make initiatives sustainable against the need to devolve primary responsibility as soon as possible to the community and relevant national and local institutions. That calculation will be influenced by the character and condition of the community, as well as the type of project. At all stages, be prepared to provide advice when initiatives hit problems or a third party can provide useful support (see Key Lesson 11). Knowing when to intervene, and when to leave community members alone to sort things out for themselves, is also a matter of judgement.

Donors have an important role to play in ensuring the sustainability of community-based programmes. First, they need to understand the protracted nature of community-based work. Initiatives may take a year to prepare and several to implement. Community-based protection projects should not receive short term grants. These can easily do harm, if they cause grantees to circumvent established patterns of community decision-making in the interest of rapid start-up, for example, or to select less meaningful outcomes because these can be achieved quickly. Both responses destroy trust and result in programmes that are less effective and less sustainable. Protection staff at all levels can help donors to appreciate the strengths and requirements of the CBP approach.

KEEP IN MIND

- Agencies may feel that protection can be secured by establishing new parallel services rather than working through existing institutions. However, these may disappear when the agencies leave. A more sound approach is to convince state and local authorities to meet their obligations by providing the services that are needed, even if this work is initially time-consuming.

- Refugee and IDP communities understandably focus on the temporary nature of their situation, but the reality is that for many people their status will continue for many years. They may need help to think through the merits of investing in sustainable, longer-term responses. This is also the case for stateless communities, the majority of whom are in protracted situations which require long term commitment and action by state authorities to resolve. Protection interventions for stateless persons need to be designed with the aim of addressing immediate risks but also with a view to solutions, i.e. acquisition of nationality.

- Particular caution must be used when providing funds, especially at the early stages of a new project that is just gaining community support, before strong community ownership is established. A large or even a modest infusion of funds can encourage more powerful members of the community to co-opt the initiative, create conditions for corruption and extortion, and lead to divisive accusations of corruption and abuse. It may also create an expectation that all initiatives will be externally funded, discouraging the community from undertaking projects at its own initiative, without funding. Nothing destroys a nascent, successful small-scale initiative faster than ill-conceived financial 'scaling up' by well-meaning agencies or donors.

- It is important to clarify early on what is expected from community members in terms of contributions and volunteering. The option of paying community members to work on projects should be weighed very carefully. Though work should be valued and compensated in principle, as soon as cash payments become the norm it becomes extremely difficult to persuade community members to work without them. Differences in payments across locations or agencies will also create resentment and inequality. When the project ends, finally, unless national authorities have agreed to supply the payments themselves, the work will just stop.

- Even if an external party can perform a task more quickly and efficiently, it is important to allow the community to work in its own way, at its own pace, and so build experience and ownership.

- When projects are more technical or specialized, the selection of an appropriate implementing partner or technical adviser is likely to be a key decision.

- Self-reliance is not the same as self-sufficiency; 'sustainable' does not mean that outside assistance is not needed. Communities of concern are likely to need some level of help for a prolonged period.

Financial interventions, if poorly planned, can distort well-intentioned responses under certain circumstances

When the 2004 tsunami struck one community in north eastern Sri Lanka, people helped one another from being swept away without considering whether the person at risk was Tamil, Muslim or Sinhalese. People at community level had always turned to others in the community for support, and helpers continued to play this expected role after the tsunami hit. Within a few weeks, however, international NGOs entered the area with large sums of money, hired most of the community helpers, and paid people for their work. This had the effect of dismantling community support structures and monetized helping behaviour. Within six weeks of the tsunami, most people had stopped helping each other spontaneously and expected to be paid for doing tasks that previously they would have done without charge. Local people referred to the destruction of their helping system as the 'Golden Tsunami.'

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, where rape is widely used as a weapon of war, NGOs with good intentions gave small sums of money to assist women who reported having been raped. Soon, some women would not report a rape unless they were paid.

KEY LESSON 10 •

SUPPORT AND WORK WITH EXISTING COMMUNITY AND NATIONAL STRUCTURES

© UNHCR/Babar Baloch

A ten kilometre race in Sri Lanka, organised jointly by IDPs, host community, local authorities, NGOs and UN partners to mark World Refugee Day.

When preparing to work in a community, one of the early tasks is to map services or initiatives for refugees, stateless persons and IDPs that are provided already by the community, government, external agencies, or the host community. When identifying priorities with the community, it is similarly important to consider how these can be integrated with, and help to strengthen, existing services. It is almost always better to work through existing institutions and programmes rather than establish new or parallel ones. Doing so can facilitate community ownership and enhance sustainability, and reduce duplication of effort. Perhaps surprisingly, it may not shorten the time needed to make

an intervention operational, because it may take time to create trust and the conditions necessary for effective and sustained cooperation between the institutions involved. It may also be necessary to overcome bureaucratic and other institutional barriers.

The state or community provides services in some urban contexts. In most instances, however, UNCHR's populations of concern are deliberately or unintentionally excluded from accessing them. UNHCR and its partners are sometimes able to capacitate or otherwise support such services and in return make them available to refugees, stateless persons and IDPs.

Where essential services are not provided, UNHCR may need to support their creation. In such case, it may be advisable to ensure that the state or community bodies responsible will ensure that poor and marginalized members of the host community also have access to the services in question. It is important to avoid unequal treatment on principle as well as on practical grounds because discrimination is likely to generate hostility in the community and threats to security.

Essential needs must be met, but their provision should not relieve national authorities or international actors of their responsibility to protect. Long-term systemic change may be required at national level to guarantee stateless persons, IDPs and refugees their rights, including the right to access essential services. To achieve this objective, communities, and UNHCR and its allies, should expect to have to lobby relevant government institutions over a long period.

KEEP IN MIND

- Integration with existing local institutional structures is usually a sounder and more sustainable course of action, even if the start-up phase is prolonged.

- Ensure that communities of concern to UNHCR and host communities are granted access to essential services on equal terms. Unequal treatment should be avoided on principle and because it can foster resentment, especially when the host community is itself poor.

- Local and state officials and institutions may need training, for example: to understand the rights of refugees; to make clear the relevance of human rights to the provision of essential services; to increase knowledge of adequate legislation and good administrative practises to ensure rights of stateless persons; to make clear their institutions' responsibilities; or to increase awareness of SGBV.

Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, most refugees live in three metropolitan areas. Though they share the language and culture of the host community and face less acute threats than refugees in other contexts, they nevertheless suffer considerable discrimination.

Amigos y Amigas d'Oro was formed during a participatory assessment, after a group of older refugees said they needed a place where they could share experiences, obtain advice and information, and relax. To start with, it was separate from Costa Rican institutions, but in 2010 it joined a national network of seniors' associations.

After initial hesitation, Amigos y Amigas is now well accepted by the network. The relationship has created new social relationships, enabled Costa Ricans to become familiar with refugees, and informed the network's national advocacy on behalf of elderly refugees.

KEY LESSON 11 •

DEVELOP AN ADVOCACY STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE CHANGE

Participants of the Global Refugee Youth Consultations, national consultation in Amman, Jordan 2015. Participants are deep in discussion identifying some of the priorities for youth in their communities.

© UNHCR/Nick Sore

Securing long-term improvements in the lives of persons of concern requires systemic change, allowing them to fully realize their rights while they are displaced and influencing the durable solutions they are offered. When communities start to engage effectively in their own protection, it is possible to work towards systemic change and meet immediate needs. Doing so requires a well-conceived advocacy plan, developed by community members, their official and unofficial leaders, and external agencies. Staff working on CBP are likely to focus their efforts on community efforts to influence the policies of local authorities, but complementary advocacy activities may be coordinated at national level.

UNHCR can assist communities with their advocacy in various ways. It can help communities understand their rights, as human beings and as refugees or IDPs. It can provide information about relevant laws, regulations, institutions and policies. It can assist communities to prepare a plan, and also advocate with them or on their behalf.

UNHCR has a crucial 'accompanying' role. Its presence can help to ensure that refugee, stateless and IDP communities are taken seriously and are given the opportunity to present their views to relevant local, national and regional institutions. In addition, it has standing to raise issues before national and international institutions to which communities may not have access.

Bangladesh

The Urdu-speaking community of Bangladesh, also known as the "Biharis," is a linguistic minority that was stateless because it was excluded from the body of citizens upon the creation of the independent State of Bangladesh in 1971. Eventually, the younger generation of Urdu-speakers began to integrate into Bangladeshi society by learning to speak Bangla and investing scarce resources to pursue private education. They formed several community-based NGOs and began to lobby national and international actors and, crucially, to present cases to the courts to confirm their right to Bangladeshi citizenship. UNHCR served an important liaison role between national campaigners, the international community, and the Bangladeshi Government. UNHCR supported the community by conducting a survey to establish the magnitude of the population and published a legal analysis which served to publicize the initial court victories achieved by the community. Eventually, in 2008, a landmark ruling by the Bangladeshi High Court concluded the entire population were citizens and ordered that they be issued with identity documents. This happened within a six month period and the Urdu-speakers were issued with nationality identification cards and able to vote for the first time.

KEEP IN MIND

- "Advocacy" refers to the community's capacity to bring its day-to-day concerns to relevant policy makers, who are in a position to effect change.
- A detailed analysis of power relations in the community and the wider environment is necessary, both to build an effective advocacy plan and ensure that it does not increase the risks that different community members face.

- Communities may need a third party to act as a bridge to bring them and decision makers together and to accompany them. This need may persist long after the initial link is made.

- State and local institutions may need guidance, about their responsibilities to refugee, stateless and IDP communities, and about relevant laws and regulations, including the relevance of human rights to refugees, stateless persons and IDPs and to the delivery of services, etc. Officials may also need sensitive coaching on how to interact with communities whose experience is very different from their own.

- Advocacy is stronger if it is evidence-based and presented by those who have personal exposure to the issues raised. Refugees, stateless persons and IDPs may need training and coaching to help them prepare and present their case. At the same time, they are likely to be the most effective and persuasive advocates of their cause.

Preparing for advocacy

Indigenous communities need to be able to advocate effectively on their own behalf. To do so, however, they may need training and advice to help them prepare their argument and ensure they are able to participate on an equal basis.

An indigenous community wanted to protect itself from displacement, but was threatened by the prolonged presence of competing armed factions. Elders identified two important protection threats: the forced recruitment of young adults and weaknesses in the training of younger leaders.

In response, a community organization started "The Territory We Will Inherit", a training programme that educated young people about their rights and showed them how to interact with state institutions when they wanted to claim services or assistance to which they were entitled under the law. Beforehand, however, the participants needed to develop an understanding of the Western concept of "youth" because their own culture had no equivalent, since status was determined by factors other than age, such as whether a person was married or had children.

KEY LESSON 12 •

GIVE ATTENTION TO EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Meeting in the courtyard of a reconstructed townhouse in Kilis, Turkey, which serves as a women's community centre. This is the only known Syrian-run women's community centre in southeast Turkey.

> *If you really want to work with communities in a meaningful way, [you] can't have the endpoint set before the project begins, but donors almost invariably insist on endpoints being identified before they grant the funds.*
> *Protection expert*

Staff of UNHCR and partner organisations who work with communities should be accountable first and foremost to the communities themselves. They should also be accountable to the institutions that support the work they do. Too frequently, however, indicators and outcomes are not defined carefully at the start and budgets set inadequate sums aside for evaluation. As a result, the evidence base for community approaches is poor. Though a number of important reviews exist, agencies have tended to document CBP for their own internal learning and much of our experience of CBP has never been documented or evaluated. The dearth of evidence means that the effectiveness of community approaches is open to doubt. The absence of shared documentation hampers learning across the field and reduces donor interest and understanding.

Some believe that protection cannot be reliably measured. A problem here is that programme and planning deadlines are often too short. Managers select "quick win" indicators and outcomes that can be achieved in the time set, rather than measure impacts that enhance protection in a sustainable manner over the long term. If the timeline is realistic, a well-designed community-based approach will identify specific protection threats and find responses to them. Changes in these factors can in fact be measured.

KEEP IN MIND

- Making oneself accountable to the community for results affirms the importance of the partnership and demonstrates confidence as well as respect for the community.
- Improvements in protection can be measured and documented; but short-term results-based management may not provide appropriate tools.
- Sound measurement of progress depends on clearly analysing challenges and outcomes at the start of a programme and in close consultation with the community.
- Donors may need to be briefed and educated about CBP and persuaded to lengthen their timeframes.

Consult with the community before declaring "success"

For refugee, stateless and IDP programmes, the achievement of durable solutions is a key measure of success. In the following case, community engagement was decisive in revealing that a number of durable solutions, that would have been reported as successful, did not meet the preferences of the people involved.

An international authority and a host government were evaluating options for a large group of refugees. Without community consultation, preparations were made to relocate them to a neighbouring island. An international NGO surveyed the refugees on their options and preferences. It found that most wanted to return home, while a minority wanted to remain in their current host community. None wished to live on another island. When the survey findings were presented, the host government and international authority dropped the relocation plan, and worked with the community to allow local integration and facilitated return.

The key point to note is that this relocation would have proceeded if the community had not been consulted, and would have been considered successful. Only consultation with the community revealed the outcome was undesired, causing the authorities to find alternative arrangements.

Jacqueline is a Women's Representative in the Camp Executive Committee in Gihembe Refugee Camp, in Rwanda. She also contributes to the camp nutrition centre. "I feel proud here because nutrition has a lot of importance in our lives, especially for children and for mothers. When I meet people who are not aware of the Nutrition Centre, I tell them about this place and the services it provides."

III CONCLUSION

In development and humanitarian work, including protection, practitioners have found that community-based approaches create conditions for positive change that can be sustained to a greater extent after donors and external agencies depart. Grounded in the actual and potential capacity of all communities, community-based protection assists refugees, stateless and the internally displaced persons to ensure their security, secure their rights, and take or recover control over their lives.

To find more material on community-based protection, including UNHCR's *Community-Based Protection in Action* series of thematic briefs, go to our community of practice at : http://www.unhcrexchange.org/communities/9159

IV BIBLIOGRAPHY

UN High Commissioner for Refugees,
Community of Practices on Community-based Protection, (2015).
http://www.unhcrexchange.org/communities/9159

UN High Commissioner for Refugees,
Community-based protection in Action, Series of thematic briefs, (2016)
http://www.unhcrexchange.org/topics/15192

UN High Commissioner for Refugees,
A Community-based approach in UNHCR Operations (2008).
http://www.unhcr.org/47ed0e212.html

UN High Commissioner for Refugees,
Age, Gender and Diversity Policy (2011).
http://www.refworld.org/docid/4def34f6887.html

UN High Commissioner for Refugees,
Listen and Learn: Participatory Assessment with Children and Adolescents (2012).
http://www.refworld.org/docid/4fffe4af2.html

UN High Commissioner for Refugees,
The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations (2006).
http://www.unhcr.org/450e963f2.html.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees,
Statelessness: An Analytical Framework for Prevention, Reduction and Protection (2008).
http://www.refworld.org/docid/49a28afb2.html

ActionAid,
Safety with Dignity: a field manual for integrating community-based protection across humanitarian programs (2010).
http://www.actionaid.org/publications/safety-dignity-field-based-manual-integrating-community-based-protection-across-humanit

CDA,
Collaborative Learning Projects: The Listening Project (2013).
http://www.cdacollaborative.org/programs/listening-program/

International Committee of the Red Cross,
Professional Standards for Protection Work, (2009).
http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/icrc_002_0999.pdf.

Mendoza, U & Thomas, V (external evaluators),
UNHCR's AGDM Evaluation: A Participatory Evaluation of AGDM results in Four Colombian Communities (2009).
http://www.international.gc.ca/department-ministere/evaluation/2013/dev-ccpe-eppc13.aspx?lang=eng

Slaymaker, T & Christiansen K.,
Community-based approaches and service delivery: Issues and options in difficult environments and partnerships.
Overseas Development Institute (2005).
http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/2936-community-based-approaches-service-delivery-difficult-environments-partnerships.

UNHCR'S NEED TO KNOW GUIDANCE SERIES:

UN High Commissioner for Refugees,
Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement (2011).
http://www.refworld.org/docid/4e6072b22.html

UN High Commissioner for Refugees,
Working with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Intersex Persons in Forced Displacement (2011).
http://www.refworld.org/docid/4e6073972.html

UN High Commissioner for Refugees,
Working with National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities and Indigenous Peoples in Forced Displacement (2011).
http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?docid=4ee72a2a2

UN High Commissioner for Refugees,
Working with Men and Boy Survivors of Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Forced Displacement, (2012).
http://www.refworld.org/docid/5006aa262.html

UN High Commissioner for Refugees,
Working with Older Persons in Forced Displacement, (2013).
http://www.refworld.org/docid/4ee72aaf2.html