



Global Protection Cluster



The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) is a network to coordinate humanitarian organizations working on protection for diverse populations affected by conflict and disaster. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the lead agency in the Protection Cluster.

GENDER EQUALITY IN PROTECTION

The GPC, together with the Inter Agency Standing Committee and designated focal point agencies, address issues in protection-related areas including child protection, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), land, housing and property, mine action, and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. The Global Protection Cluster supports protection-related interventions and coordinates thematic policies, guidance, and tools.²²

Gender equality considerations in protection interventions help us to analyse, prioritize and respond effectively to prevent and alleviate human suffering for all segments of the population. Understanding how diverse people of all genders, ages, and abilities experience conflict and disaster is central to this. Pre-existing inequalities are often exacerbated during a crisis or emergency. Collecting information on the actual experiences of specific populations' exposure to risks including violence, abuse, coercion, and deprivation helps to inform response and makes a case where violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law are suspected.

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PROTECTION SECTOR

- Talk to diverse women and girls. Finding adaptations to existing services can make big improvements in women's and girls' participation. For example, in Liberia a safe space for girls to study was put in place to help girls avoid demands for sex in exchange for grades;
- Gender equitable solutions need to be practical and safe. Analyse context and gender-specific issues of safety and security, for example facilitating security escorts or forming groups of women to collect firewood, or to use the latrines at night etc.;
- Locations of integrated services can be brought closer to affected women and girls to reduce deterrents or stigma associated with their use. For example, a multi-agency compound in Jordan made it less obvious which services women and girls are accessing;
- Engagement of men and boys is crucial, as they may also be survivors themselves, and can assist in the prevention of SGBV. For example, former perpetrators can present themselves as role models for change to demonstrate to communities that cycles of abuse can and need to be broken; and
- Protection must be recognized as a core part of any response and as a cross-cutting issue to be mainstreamed across all sectors from water, sanitation and health, to education and shelter.
- Where families and communities have been successful in protecting their children from recruitment by armed groups, sexual exploitation and abuse, appreciative inquiry resulted in learning how their own protection initiatives have worked in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Cross-community learning was supported when appropriate;

RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

- Because the GPC strategic framework says, "Protection is integral across all sectors in humanitarian response", we must ensure gender and protection specialists are involved in all levels and stages of program design and implementation;
- Factors that affect protection are dynamic and context specific: context analyses need to be comprehensive and updated frequently in order to address protection needs. Ensure that protection analysis includes an understanding of risks faced by the LGBTQIA2S+ community;
- Different understandings of protection exist; some have a paternalistic approach that negate diverse local perspectives, priorities and capacities. It is important to support gender, age, and disability-inclusive, community-led definition and implementation processes;
- Prevention and response initiatives for SGBV should include gender, age, and ability of diverse community members and local actors in mapping hazards and services for referral pathways; and
- Gender responsive programming must recognize intersecting identity markers relevant to the context (age, ethnicity, religion etc.) as these can be important determinants of a gendered experience of conflict or disaster. For example, youth have vastly different experiences than elders and should be involved in defining adapted programming and services.

22. <http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/tools-and-guidance/essential-protection-guidance-and-tools/>