

Providing capacity to do protection: ProCap

Reviews of humanitarian response have highlighted protection capacity as a major gap. A particular challenge has been rapid deployment of experienced protection staff to support the UN protection response for IDPs and other vulnerable groups in emergencies and complex crises.

To fill this gap and support the goals of the Global Protection Cluster¹, an inter-agency Protection Capacity (ProCap) project has been developed to respond to gaps and needs in protection response in three priority areas:

- providing surge protection capacity through the deployment of senior protection experts on short-term missions to support and strengthen the UN protection response
- increasing the size and diversity of protection profiles in NGO standby rosters
- building protection knowledge and skills among protection officers in standby rosters through inter-agency training workshops, practitioner exchange and dissemination of protection tools.

A small core team of Senior Protection Officers (SPOs) – known as ProCap Tier I – are ready to provide additional emergency capacity through permanent rotation to the field on short-term deployments of up to six months with UNHCR, UNICEF, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) or the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Their role is to strengthen the strategic and operational response of the UN Country Team and/or the Protection Cluster lead agency through the development of protection policies, mechanisms and strategies, advocacy and building in-country protection capacities (national as well as international).

In 2006, nine ProCap SPOs have undertaken 12 assignments in seven countries: DRC, Georgia, Lebanon, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. Their contributions have included:

establishing field offices enabling a protection presence closer to communities at risk; supporting the formation and functioning of inter-agency protection networks; developing common tools and systems for protection monitoring and reporting; identifying protection gaps and trends; ensuring the integration of protection issues, including child rights and sexual violence, into humanitarian needs assessments and early recovery programming; monitoring returns; supporting the development of national policies and legislation to protect the rights of IDPs; promoting application of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement; designing advocacy strategies; and enhancing, including through training, the capacity of civil society, authorities and UN and international staff on protection issues and strategies for response.

In addition, ProCap Tier II is partnering with existing standby emergency rosters maintained by various NGOs – the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Save the Children Norway and Sweden, Austcare and RedR Australia – and is committed to increasing the protection capacity within their extensive rosters and working with them to facilitate the mapping and strategic deployment of this capacity. ProCap-trained personnel have been seconded, inter alia, to UN agencies in Lebanon, Liberia, Nepal, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Timor Leste.

ProCap seeks not only to develop but also to diversify protection capacity, in particular by broadening geographic representation and linguistic skills among the pool of protection experts on standby. ProCap is committed to expanding its partnerships. Discussions are underway with a number of southern-based organisations and networks with interest and capability to contribute to bolstering standby protection capacity worldwide.

ProCap also promotes the building of protection knowledge and skills

through a variety of mechanisms. These include an inter-agency protection training package, developed together with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue², designed to equip practitioners to undertake context-specific protection analysis, establish priorities, design and plan inter-agency responses, and conduct protection advocacy. The training package has already been provided to some 57 practitioners on existing standby emergency rosters. With a view to scaling-up, a training-of-trainers initiative is planned for early 2007.

A dedicated website, ProCap-Online³, is being finalised to facilitate mapping of protection capacity, timely matching of protection expertise with specific needs and support secondment of standby protection personnel to protection-mandated UN agencies. The site will provide an interactive forum for ProCap deployees to share and discuss protection challenges and strategies, contributing to the exchange and development of effective protection practices. For the broader humanitarian community, ProCap-Online will serve as an open-access resource of protection tools and reference material to support protection training, policy and practice.

ProCap is managed by an inter-agency Steering Committee comprising OHCHR, UNHCR, UNICEF, OCHA and an NGO representative. The ProCap Support Unit is hosted by OCHA's Internal Displacement Division, while NRC administers the Senior Protection Officers on behalf of ProCap. The project is funded through the generous support of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the UK and the US.

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1. UNHCR chairs the Protection cluster for conflict-generated IDPs. www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/cluster/protection/default.asp?bodyID=29&publish=0

2. www.hdcentre.org

3. <http://ocha.unog.ch/ProCapOnline>

Interested in joining the ProCap team?

ProCap welcomes applications for the core team of Senior Protection Officers, comprised of experts with

10-15 years of protection-related field experience and proven protection expertise, to serve on permanent (12 months minimum) rotation to the field. For more information, see www.nrc.no

Rosters of mid-level Protection Standby Experts (3-7 years experience) for short-term (3-6 months) deployment are maintained by NGO partners. For more information, see: <http://ocha.unog.ch/ProCapOnline/index.aspx?module=viewpage&pageid=becomingA>