

Protection Mainstreaming Guidance Note Cox's Bazar Protection Sector, November 2020

Protection mainstreaming, an imperative for all humanitarian actors engaged in the Joint Response Plan, ensures that a protection lens is incorporated into operations. It is a way of designing and implementing all programs so that protection risks and potential violations are taken into consideration. To mainstream protection, actors need to understand who is at risk, from what or whom, and why, and the consequences their actions or inaction may have on the threats people experience and their vulnerability and capacity vis-à-vis these threats. This includes knowing how and where to refer people in need of specialized support to prevent or recover from violence and exploitation, as well as understanding when, how, and to whom to refer specialized protection issues.

Mainstreaming protection ensures that the **protective impact of aid programming is maximized**. By incorporating protection principles into aid delivery, humanitarian actors in Cox's Bazar can ensure that their activities target the most vulnerable, enhance safety, dignity, and promote and protect the rights of refugees without contributing to or perpetuating discrimination, abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation.

When mainstreaming protection into the program cycle, the following **FOUR PRINCIPLES** must be considered in all humanitarian activities:

- 1. Prioritize Safety and Dignity, and Avoid Causing Harm:** Prevent and minimize as much as possible any unintended adverse effects of your intervention, which can increase people's vulnerability to both physical and psychosocial risks.
- 2. Meaningful Access:** Arrange for people's access to assistance and services in proportion to need and without barriers. Pay special attention to individuals and groups who may be particularly vulnerable or have difficulty accessing assistance and services, eg. persons with disability, elderly, children, etc.
- 3. Accountability:** Set-up appropriate mechanisms through which affected populations can measure the adequacy of interventions, and organizations can address concerns and complaints.
- 4. Participation and Empowerment:** Support the development of communities' and individual capacities and assist people to claim their rights, including – not exclusively – the rights to shelter, food, water and sanitation, health, and education.

To mainstream protection, additional **PROTECTION ELEMENTS** should be taken into consideration:

Protection integration involves incorporating protection objectives into the programming of other sector-specific responses (i.e. beyond the protection sector response) to achieve protection outcomes. Integrated protection programming requires all humanitarian actors to commit, wherever feasible and appropriate, to protection objectives in the design of their activities. It can therefore support the system-wide commitment to the centrality of protection because it relies on different actors (i.e. protection and non-protection) to work individually and together as part of a multisector humanitarian response.

Approach: Mainstreaming of protection principles of (1) safety and dignity, (2) access, (3) accountability and (4) participation and empowerment in all humanitarian sectors and at all stages of the program cycle. Protection can be mainstreamed by including the above elements in the general project management as central to delivering humanitarian aid **AND** through incorporating the above elements into project cycle management through protection mainstreaming indicators for each sector.

Applicability: All humanitarian actors share an ethical responsibility for mainstreaming protection across the Joint Response Plan, including general and sector staff, programming staff, advocacy staff, design, monitoring and evaluation staff, and their managers. Sector lead agencies and partners are responsible for ensuring that activities within their respective sectors are carried out with a “protection lens”, and in particular for ensuring that their activities integrate protection principles. Protection Sector in Cox’s Bazar can provide advice, guidance and training on protection mainstreaming. It is further to be noted that Mainstreaming Protection with Sectors and Working Groups does not require specific protection expertise. Here below are some recommendations set-forth for the different coordination forums and partners in the Cox’s Bazar context:

- **ISCG:** Ensure protection mainstreaming is central to the work of the ISCG and that a collective approach is taken from the Sectors to put protection mainstreaming into practice. Support and facilitate the integration of protection mainstreaming in joint assessments, joint analysis, planning and monitoring under the Humanitarian Programme Cycle. Support the mainstreaming of protection when engaging with donors for fund allocation process and with government authorities.
- **Protection Sector:** Conduct and compile comprehensive Protection Analysis that details the main protection threats, vulnerabilities and coping strategies of the refugee population to inform decision and programming. Provide the technical lead and support in ensuring protection mainstreaming is both regularly discussed in ISCG meetings and put into practice. Protection Mainstreaming Focal Points will continue to be active within other Sectors with close supervision from Protection Sector. Efforts will be scaled up to integrate protection principles into the delivery of assistance and services so that Sectors and service providers can ensure response activities target the most vulnerable, enhance safety, dignity, and promote and protect the rights of the beneficiaries in line with the “DO NO HARM” principle and without inadvertently contributing to, or perpetuating discrimination, abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation. Protection Sector aims to provide guidance, trainings, and technical advice on protection mainstreaming to Sector staff and Sectorial partners through Protection Mainstreaming Focal Points who will be guided by the PWG Task Team in actively supporting and engaging with existing Sectors.
- **All Sectors:** Mainstream protection in the sector strategy to address risks and support the mainstreaming of protection in sector-specific programming through advice, guidance and training. Make use of existing protection mainstreaming tools, guidance and resources, in particular utilizing the Sector specific Protection Mainstreaming Tip Sheets developed by Protection Sector: ensure that the tips are reflected in the project proposals during the PRT process, ensure that the tips are implemented and request partners to report regularly on implementation, challenges and best practices related to the tip sheets. Continue to work closely with Protection Mainstreaming Focal Points who are embedded within Sectors. Develop Protection Mainstreaming Action plan and devise measures to implement and monitor outcomes. Ensure the respect of protection principles during the implementation of COVID-19 preventive/responsive measures and in the emergency response (eg. cyclone response).
- **Sector Partners:** Mainstream protection into all stages of their programs, in relation to refugees, implementing partners and staff. Support peer agencies, local partners and community-based structures to mainstream protection in all stages of their programs.

Operational Organization within the 2021 Joint Response Plan to take into consideration in mainstreaming protection according to the Program Cycle through the following steps:

- 1. NEEDS ASSESSMENT & RISK ANALYSIS – Step 1:** Identifies threats, vulnerabilities and assesses the community’s capacities and mechanisms to cope with those protection risks. This forms the basis for identifying prevention and mitigation measures to ensure protection principles are mainstreamed in the intervention.
- 2. PROJECT DESIGN – Step 2:** Defines whether the project design (project proposal) is aligned with protection mainstreaming principles and if staff knowledge and understanding of protection mainstreaming is satisfactory. Those assessments may lead to readjustments of the proposed intervention.
- 3. IMPLEMENTATION – Step 3:** Outlines key prevention and mitigation measures identified in Step 1 and plans for the implementation of protection mainstreaming activities. It details the resources necessary, and helps the organization track the implementation and monitoring of mainstreaming activities.
- 4. MONITORING AND EVALUATION – Step 4:** Monitors and evaluates whether protection mainstreaming is taking place and what impact this has had on affected populations in terms of safety, dignity, meaningful access, accountability, participation and empowerment. As demonstrated in the above steps, the methodology proposed fits within the successive stages of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle. Each entity (ISCG, Sector, Working Groups, Service Providers) has specific roles and responsibilities in mainstreaming protection throughout the HPC.

CROSS-CUTTING REQUIREMENTS: Mainstreaming cross-cutting issues ensures that such considerations inform all aspects of humanitarian action and maximizes the quality and impact of the work that all humanitarian do. Some of these issues are: Age, Gender and Diversity, Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence, Housing, Land and Property, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, Disability, and addressing issues of Gender Diverse Population. Protection Mainstreaming comprises the four key principles of prioritizing safety and dignity and avoiding causing harm, ensuring meaningful access, accountability, and participation and empowerment. As such, the application of these principles allows for all the above-described issues to be reflected at all stages of the response. Protection should be mainstreamed as well while responding during the COVID-19 pandemic and when designing and implementing emergency plans in case of natural disasters. Particular attention should be dedicated to all mechanisms to protect refugees from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation by humanitarian workers.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING

- ✓ Technical support by the Protection Sector including Child Protection and Child Protection Sub-Sectors for all Sectors and Working Groups in Cox’s Bazar.
- ✓ Protection Mainstreaming Trainings for Sectors and Working Groups
- ✓ Sector Specific Tip Sheets with measure to establish Protection Mainstreaming Action Plan.
- ✓ Based on existing ToR, Protection Mainstreaming Focal Points (PM FP) will be assigned to each Sector along with one Back up.
- ✓ Two PM FPs will also be dedicated to the Protection Sector so as to build the capacity of Camp Level Protection Focal Points (PFPs), camp level Sector Focal Points, members of the Protection Emergency Response Unit (PERU) and Rapid Protection Assessment Teams (RPA).
- ✓ An annotated reference list of protection mainstreaming guidance, tools, and manuals.
- ✓ Protection Sector Information Management Products.

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