



Protection Cluster in Ethiopia



IDP settlement in the Afar Region, most of the families in this settlement have left their home because of lack of water as per the consequences of the Drought.

Protection Mainstreaming: WASH & Protection Clusters working together

Through a Mobile Data System utilized by the Protection Cluster Field Mission, conducted 18-22 April 2016, some of the important initial findings related to the WASH issues were reported. This feedback is useful to the WASH Cluster to continue its protection-focused work:

- Overall, women are enduring hardships to attend to the needs of their families during the drought.
- It was generally reported for delivery of humanitarian services that IDPs experienced discrimination with respect to host communities.
- 37% of the groups questioned said that the service quality is low and accessibility difficult for a variety of reasons. For example, in Megale, the women are saying that they have to walk an average of 6 hours/day to fetch water. Meanwhile the children are left alone;
- In addition, it was reported, during the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with the girls and women that some girls do not go to school because there are no separate latrines for boys and girls. Another compounding factor is the that families fear for their daughters walking long distances, exposing them to risks of violence;
- 50% responded that services, due to their design and distance are rarely accessible for persons with reduced mobility (e.g.: person with physical disabilities, the elderly, chronic illness).
- 64% of the FGDs indicated that WASH facilities are inadequate on non-existent at school
- The mission also observed skin diseases, mainly on children.

What is protection?

Protection is defined as “*all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies of law, namely human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law*”.

Key protection principles that must be incorporated into all programmes are:

Do no harm: • Avoid exposing people to further harm as a result of your actions, and ensure that: • The environment and way in which assistance is provided do not expose people to further hazards, violence or human rights abuses or violations; • Take all reasonable steps to ensure that the affected population is not subject to violent attack, or forced or induced into undertaking actions that may cause them harm or violate their rights; • Manage information in a sensitive manner so that the security of informants or others who may be identifiable is not jeopardized; • Assistance and protection measures do not undermine local capacities for self-protection. Support the efforts of the affected population and local communities to find security and restore dignity.

Non-discrimination: • Ensure equitable and impartial access to assistance, without discrimination on any grounds: • Ensure all parts of the affected population have access to humanitarian assistance; • Challenge any deliberate attempts to exclude parts of the affected population; • Provide support and assistance on the basis of need and guard against any form of direct or indirect discrimination.

Human rights-based approach: • Promote respect for human rights, and assist and support affected people to claim their rights and access remedies from relevant authorities; to obtain information on their entitlements and secure the documentation needed to demonstrate their entitlements; and to recover by providing psychosocial and community support; • Ensure consultation with the target population at all stages, and the participation of all in the design and targeting of interventions, in particular vulnerable and marginalized group.

The Right to Water and Sanitation

Everyone is entitled to water and sanitation that is sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable.

In 2010, the General Assembly and Human Rights Council recognized “the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights”. The right to water and sanitation is derived from existing human rights treaties and obligations and is implicit in the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and the right to life, and fundamental for ensuring human dignity. International humanitarian law also specifically protects access to safe drinking water and sanitation, including water infrastructure.

What is Protection Mainstreaming?

The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) defines protection mainstreaming as “*the process of incorporating protection principles and promoting meaningful access, safety, and dignity in humanitarian aid*”, with **Four Key Elements**:

- **Prioritize safety and dignity, and avoid causing harm:** Prevent and minimize as much as possible any unintended negative effects of your intervention which could increase people's vulnerability to both physical and psychosocial risks.
E.g. Consider that location, lighting and privacy can make women feel insecure and not utilize the service; create divide between groups.
- **Equity and meaningful access:** Take pro-active steps to ensure beneficiaries' meaningful access to impartial assistance and facilities - in proportion to need and without any barriers (i.e. discrimination). Pay special attention to individuals and groups who may be particularly vulnerable or have difficulty accessing assistance and facilities.
E.g. If sanitary facilities are placed where a person in a wheel chair cannot enter, in practice means that the service has not been provided.
- **Accountability to affected populations:** Set up appropriate mechanisms through which affected populations can receive the information they need to make informed decisions, provide feedback on the humanitarian interventions, share concerns and submit complaints. Accountability is articulated internally through the project's own mechanism, and independently through an independent feedback and complaints mechanism. The Communication with Communities (CwC) Working Group is dedicated to sharing lessons learned and coordinating activities implemented by HCT
E.g. In the geographic area you work, who are most in need? How do you priorities them and where do you start?
- **Participation and empowerment:** Support the development of self-protection capacities and assist people in claiming their rights, including - but not exclusively - the rights to shelter, food, water and sanitation, health, and education. Participation and empowerment are integrated throughout the toolkit while humanitarian actors in SS propose to assist people in claiming their rights by promoting both the duties and responsibilities of the authorities, recognized community leaders, and the beneficiaries towards the services provided.
E.g. When addressing WASH in a crowded IDPs area, how do you work with the community to address child protection concerns; gender based violence & exploitation; the specific needs of disabled people?