UNHCR
**The UN
Refugee Agency**

A Community-based Approach

in UNHCR Operations

Note

This manual is the product of collaborative efforts, resulting from consultations and contributions from UNHCR staff and partners. UNHCR would like to thank all those who contributed to the development of this manual.

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Crowded conditions at a spontaneous camp site.
Don Bosco College, Dili, June 12, 2006.
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Introduction and overview

This section explains the background to the manual and outlines its aims, the intended audience and the manual's structure.

1.1 Background

In recent years, UNHCR has gradually shifted its focus from individual assistance in the area of community services to building on the knowledge, skills and capacities of people of concern[1] and their communities. This approach, as outlined in UNHCR's Community Development Policy of 2001,[2] is based on the understanding that by placing people of concern at the centre of operational decision-making, and building protection strategies in partnership with them, they will be better protected, their capacities to identify, develop and sustain solutions will be strengthened, and the resources available will be used more effectively. In a rights- and community-based approach, people of concern not only have the right to participate in making decisions that affect their lives, but they also have a right to information and transparency from UNHCR and partner staff.

The Agenda for Protection, Goal 3, Objective 4 states that refugee communities should be empowered to meet their own protection needs and calls upon:

"States, UNHCR and other partners to put in place or mobilize community-based systems and networks, including in particular for the protection of women and children, at the outset of the emergency phase through to the attainment of durable situations." UNHCR, 2003

This shift in emphasis requires that UNHCR and partner staff regard people of concern not as dependent beneficiaries who are to be "saved and assisted," but rather as equal partners who have an active role in protecting themselves and organizing for their own basic needs, even in emergencies. A 2002 evaluation of the community-services function in UNHCR highlighted many of the institutional impediments to effective community work and the need for an attitudinal change within the Organization.[3] The evaluation recommended revising community-services guidelines and manuals to reflect this changed perspective on people of concern and emphasize the critical relationship between community services and UNHCR's protection mandate, and to clarify terminology.

This manual was developed as a follow-up to the recommendations of the 2002 evaluation and to support the implementation of UNHCR's policy on community development, the Agenda for Protection, and the Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Strategy.[4] It should be used in tandem with UNHCR's "Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations," which is an important element of the community-based approach.

1.2 The aim of this manual

This manual is intended to support staff in implementing a community-based approach in UNHCR operations to ensure that people of concern are placed at the centre of all decisions affecting their lives.

The manual aims to:

- build a common understanding among UNHCR and partner staff of the community-based approach, its role in protection, its relationship to a rights-based approach, and the underlying principles of participation, inclusiveness and equality;

- improve staff capacity to develop a community-outreach strategy to mobilize and support community structures that represent women, girls, boys and men of all ages and backgrounds, and build community-based protection responses and sustainable solutions;

- provide practical guidance on how to implement a community-based approach so that all persons of concern can participate in developing common goals and action plans for protection, including assistance and solutions, and on how to jointly monitor and evaluate and establish confidential individual case-management systems for those at heightened risk; and

- encourage the strengthening of multifunctional teams in operations and highlight the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to implement the community-based approach.

There is no single blueprint for a community-based approach, since each situation of displacement is unique. UNHCR and partners will always need to conduct an in-depth analysis of each situation, with all community members participating, in order to agree on the best strategies.

1.3 Audience

This manual was developed for all UNHCR staff. A community-based approach requires the understanding, cooperation and coordination of staff at all levels, including senior management, programme, protection, community services, field, logistics, technical services and public information staff. The manual should be read and applied by everyone at policy, operational, advocacy and monitoring levels. It should be read in conjunction with other manuals that provide additional guidance for particular circumstances, such as UNHCR's *Handbook for Repatriation and Reintegration Activities* (May 2004). Partner staff might also find the manual useful in their work with UNHCR and affected communities, and as a complement to their own guidelines and tools.

1.4 Structure

The remainder of the manual is organized as follows:

Section 2: Context, concepts and guiding principles

This section describes the context in which we work, defines a community-based approach and explains its relevance to UNHCR operations, and highlights the underlying principles that should guide our interventions.

Section 3: Implementing a community-based approach

This section gives an overview of the different stages of the community-based approach, beginning with situation analysis, including stakeholder analysis and participatory assessment, and planning. It then explains the different aspects of community mobilization and empowerment, from mapping leadership and management structures to community-based protection, action planning, monitoring and evaluation. It also highlights the need to identify individuals at heightened risk and establish individual case management systems building on the work with the community. Practical "how-to" tips are also provided.

Section 4: Knowledge, skills, attitudes and multifunctional teams

This section outlines the most important knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by humanitarian staff and the way in which a multifunctional team, which combines different professional skills and functions, can strengthen the implementation of the community-based approach. It also provides practical guidance on how a team can first establish contact with a community.

Section 5: Considerations for specific contexts

This section offers guidance on applying a community-based approach in different contexts.

Examples and case studies are provided throughout the manual to illustrate points, warn of difficulties that can arise, and provide ideas and suggestions of good practice. The systematic development and use of a community-based approach is an ongoing learning process, and new examples will arise. These will be documented and incorporated in revised versions of this manual.

CD-ROM

The manual contains a CD-ROM with the following annexes to provide readers with easily accessible policy documents and tools.

Annex 1: Policy Documents

The annex contains key policy documents that are relevant to UNHCR's work in implementing a community-based approach, including its policy on "Reinforcing a Community-development Approach."

Annex 2: Toolkit

This annex contains a number of practical tools that can be used when working with the communities or by the communities themselves.

Annex 3: The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations

This tool is provided as participatory assessment is an essential part of a community-based approach.

Annex 4: The Heightened Risk Identification Tool (draft version)

A tool under development by UNHCR and partners to assist field staff in identifying who is most at risk in the community.

Annex 5: Reference materials and websites

A list of reference materials and some relevant websites is provided for further guidance.

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The context, concepts and guiding principles

This section outlines the context in which we work, defines a community-based approach, explains its relevance to UNHCR operations and highlights the underlying principles that should guide our interventions.

2.1 The context

UNHCR is mandated to provide international protection to persons of concern. Protection, which includes physical security and the restoration of human dignity, involves supporting communities to rebuild their social structures, realize their rights, and find durable solutions. Protection encompasses all activities aimed at ensuring that women, girls, boys and men of all ages and backgrounds have equal access to and can enjoy their rights in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies of law, including international refugee law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law.[5]

Forced displacement affects women, girls, boys and men in both similar and different ways. The immediate trauma and disruption can lead to a sense of confusion, insecurity and isolation, usually in a strange and sometimes hostile environment, that can be exacerbated when individuals have been subjected to or witnessed violent incidents. Social, economic and cultural changes that result from violent displacement, combined with sepa-

ration or loss of family members, community ties, personal belongings and material resources might contribute to or create protection risks and severe emotional stress. The protection risks and levels of distress will vary, depending on a wide range of factors, including the age, sex and background of the affected persons. For example, women and girls are traditionally less likely than men and boys to be able to exercise their fundamental rights and have access to food, health care, shelter, documentation and material resources. Often, they do not participate in decision-making processes. In addition, women and girls, including women with disabilities and older women, are more likely than boys and men to be subject to sexual and gender-based violence. Groups or persons with specific needs, such as unaccompanied and separated children and persons with mental disabilities might be marginalized and easily exploited, particularly in the emergency phase.

Yet people have remarkable coping capacities, even under extreme circumstances. In a relatively short period, community structures reappear or new ones are formed as people begin to rebuild their lives and provide for and protect their families and dependents. It is important to identify and understand these capacities and coping mechanisms when applying a community-based approach. It is also important to be aware of the broader political context, to recognize and understand changes in roles and power relations between women and men, young and old, and majority and minority groups, and to work with leaders and all members of the community to ensure respect for rights and equality. This will help ensure that our interventions do not undermine community structures which can provide protection and support. At the same time, new community dynamics will provide opportunities for strengthening representative and fair structures. In working closely with the community, we become better informed about the protection risks faced by different groups, depending on their age, gender and background (diversity).[6] Collaboration with government, national and international non-governmental partners is also essential when using a rights and community-based approach to provide protection and assist persons of concern in claiming their rights.

Ten changes to look out for during displacement

✓ Changes in family structure: With loss of or separation from family members, older persons might assume responsibility for their grandchildren in "grandparent-headed households"; adolescents might become sole carers of younger siblings; women or men might become single heads-of-families.

✓ Changes in access to services: In urban settings, refugees and internally displaced persons can find themselves without a "community" or support network and face isolation, discrimination, and language barriers; stateless persons might be unable to access documentation or education; returnees might have lost property and access to health care or education.

✓ Changes in status of older persons: Older persons might be marginalized if their traditional sources of power, such as community respect, control over land and property, or a leadership role in resolving disputes, are undermined.

✓ Changes in support systems: Frail older persons, persons with disabilities and unaccompanied and separated children who have lost traditional support from family and neighbours might be left out of food distribution and other essential services.

✓ Changes in risk of abuse: Persons with disabilities can be at higher risk of sexual abuse if they have lost family support. Unaccompanied and separated children might be subject to abuse and exploitation and/or military recruitment.

✓ Changes in the role of women: Women who have lost male relatives may be unable to move freely and access humanitarian workers and assistance.

✓ Changes in the role of men: Men who traditionally derived their status from providing for their families might experience low self-esteem and loss of control.

✓ Changes in social roles: Individuals can lose or gain power, become marginalized, or become isolated, and thus be subject to different protection risks.

✓ Changes in participation: By only focusing on those who can speak our language, we might undermine traditional leadership roles and inadvertently exclude those who do not find it easy to communicate with us.

✓ Changes in leadership: New leaders might be created based on control over resources or arms, information, or political affiliation. This can have a negative impact on the community.

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2.2 What is a community-based approach?

2.2.1 Community

"Community" can be described as a group of people that recognizes itself or is recognized by outsiders as sharing common cultural, religious or other social features, backgrounds and interests, and that forms a collective identity with shared goals. However, what is externally perceived as a community might in fact be an entity with many sub-groups or communities. It might be divided into clans or castes or by social class, language or religion. A community might be inclusive and protective of its members; but it might also be socially controlling, making it difficult for sub-groups, particularly minorities and marginalized groups, to express their opinions and claim their rights.

Refugees and displaced persons living in temporary "communities" often have different nationalities, religions, languages, ethnicity, and backgrounds, and do not perceive themselves as belonging to any community. Whether they live in camps, in transit and reception centres, or in urban dwellings, lack of economic options, restrictions on freedom of movement and/or imposed decisions on accommodation often dictate who their next-door neighbours will be. In some urban situations, internally displaced persons might prefer to keep their identities hidden, thus making it difficult to contact members of informal groups and mobilize people around common problems. In other instances, displaced persons living in urban areas might have assimilated well into existing sub-groups and may not need support. Working with displaced persons requires learning about members of the host community, who are also stakeholders, and addressing their concerns whenever feasible.

2.2.2 A community-based approach

A community-based approach is a way of working in partnership with persons of concern during all stages of UNHCR's programme cycle. It recognizes the resilience,[7] capacities, skills and resources of persons of concern, builds on these to deliver protection and solutions, and supports the community's own goals. The approach is not limited to a particular function or sector of work; it should guide all UNHCR staff and partners in

their work with persons of concern. It demands that we understand and consider the political context, the receiving population, gender roles, community dynamics, and protection risks, concerns and priorities. It also requires that we recognize our role as facilitators, our limitations in capacity and resources, the temporary nature of our presence, and the long-term impact of our interventions.

A community-based approach can help communities work to prevent social problems and to deal directly with those that do arise, instead of having external actors step in and assume these responsibilities. It supports persons of concern in re-establishing familiar cultural patterns and support structures. Indeed, the goals of the community-based approach are to reinforce the dignity and self-esteem of people of concern and to empower all the actors[8] to work together to support the different members of the community in exercising and enjoying their human rights.

An Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) working-group paper, *Community-based Protection in Somalia*,[9] highlights some of the difficulties in adopting a community-based approach. Ideally, the community freely defines its priorities. But our responsibility to respect individual human rights and the goals of our agencies might not coincide with community practices or priorities. UNHCR and partner staff must therefore work with the community to find ways to respond to the priorities of the community and uphold our mandate to protect all of its members and respect individuals' rights. In our daily work, this can mean introducing new practices, such as vaccinating children, educating girls, creating mechanisms for the fair distribution of food and assistance items, encouraging women to participate in decision-making processes, and preventing sexual and gender-based violence. We must be open and transparent about our goals, obligations and responsibilities, listen carefully to community members, and build mutual understanding. As UNHCR's mandate is to ensure the protection of *all* members of the community, these considerations are paramount, and the guiding principles outlined below should be the foundation of all of our work.

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2.3 Guiding principles

2.3.1 A rights-based approach[10]

A rights-based approach is a *conceptual framework*[11] that integrates the norms, standards and principles of the international human rights system into the policies, programmes and processes of development and humanitarian actors. It therefore focuses on both procedures and outcomes.

> *One of the most important roles of ... organization [s] is to support rights-holders to claim their rights. This requires major shifts in the way many agencies are working. Rather than delivering services and doing advocacy work on behalf of poor and disadvantaged people, a rights-based approach requires organizations to support people to demand what they are entitled to. ... A rights-based approach demands that agencies work together to support broad processes of change in society. Supporting participatory processes that bring together government and civil society is one of the most effective ways to change relationships between rights-holders and duty-bearers.*
>
> *Joachim Theis, "Challenges for a Rights-based Approach," in Children's Rights Information Newsletter, No. 18, March 2005, p. 28.*

A rights-based approach is founded on the principles of *participation* and *empowering individuals and communities* to promote change and enable them to exercise their rights and comply with their duties. It identifies rights-holders (women, girls, boys and men of concern) and duty-bearers (principally the State and its agents), and seeks to strengthen the capacities of rights-holders to make their claims and of duty-bearers to satisfy those claims. This requires an attitudinal shift in how we work with and for persons of concern: They are no longer viewed as beneficiaries of aid, but as rights-holders with legal entitlements.

Needs-based Approach[12]	Rights-based Approach
Deserving	Claim and entitlement
No one has definite obligations	Clear obligations
Receiving – beneficiaries	Active participation - partners
Some are left out	Equal rights for all
Charitable and voluntary	Mandatory, legal obligation and accountability
Addresses symptoms	Addresses causes

Thus, a community-based approach is integral to a rights-based approach as they are founded on common principles and goals.[13] The dual approach requires that our policies, programmes and activities be based on international legal standards, and that members and leaders of the community consider their roles as both rights-holders and duty-bearers. It is important to analyze, with all actors, the obstacles to exercising these responsibilities and ways to overcome them. For example, States have a duty to provide education for children, while parents have a responsibility to encourage their children to attend school, providing that they have access to schools and the means to support their attendance. In 2007, UNHCR's Executive Committee affirmed that a rights-based approach was fundamental to child protection.[14] A rights-based approach also requires that national legislation affecting displaced persons be reviewed. If necessary, UNHCR and partners may have to advocate for change so that such legislation conforms to human rights instruments.

2.3.2 Meaningful participation

"Participation" refers to the full and equal involvement of all members of the community in decision-making processes and activities that affect their lives, in both public and private spheres. The level of participation will depend upon how rewarding people find the experience and whether they gain something from the process. Participation also requires that instead of "informing and deciding for people," we listen to them. Our role is to facilitate discussions and analysis with persons of concern so that they can identify their own priorities and preferred outcomes.[15]

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Participation:

- is a right, and essential for informed decision-making;

- promotes protection and reduces feelings of powerlessness;

- enables UNHCR to draw on the insights, knowledge, capacities, skills and resources of persons of concern;

- empowers women, men, girls and boys of different backgrounds to rebuild self-esteem and self-confidence; and

- helps people of concern cope with the trauma of forced displacement.

> ### *Overcoming exclusion in Chad*
> *In Chad, one group of refugees, the blacksmiths, were considered by the other refugees to be from a lower class. They were excluded from decision-making processes and were not even allowed to participate in gatherings organized by the community leaders. Humanitarian workers helped the blacksmiths 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 as 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.*

Without broad participation, only a few will decide for all, and those few might control information and resources. This can lead to abuse of power, including among refugees. Meaningful participation by all will often require special efforts to ensure that those traditionally marginalized, such as women, children,[16] older persons, persons with disabilities and minority groups, are given support and specific opportunities to contribute. It might also be necessary to work with traditional leaders to encourage their active support. This is essential for avoiding token participation and failure, which reinforces marginalization and discrimination. In some settings, particularly in IDP contexts, some persons of concern might be unable or unwilling to freely express themselves in the presence of authorities.

A number of international legal standards emphasize the importance of the right to participate, particularly for women and children.[17] This right is closely linked to the right to information: People must have opportunities to ask questions about their rights and, if necessary, to challenge the content and help determine what and how information is disseminated.

Sonke Gender Justice, a South African NGO, has worked to empower persons with HIV/AIDS by teaching them about the consequences of the disease and about which medication is appropriate for each person. The objective is to ensure that people can exercise their right to adequate medical care. As a result, affected individuals felt empowered to ask for the correct medication, and doctors became more accountable for their services.

Participation is sometimes regarded narrowly as a method of improving project performance, rather than a way of fostering critical consciousness as the basis for active citizenship.[18] Through effective participation, the community can support its own self-initiated activities to meet its preferred goals.[19] In addition, active participation by women, girls, boys and men of all ages and diverse backgrounds is essential for effective protection planning. For further guidance on how to undertake participatory assessments, refer to *The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations* (UNHCR, 2006) and Section 3.1.4 below.

2.3.3 Age, gender and diversity analysis

An integral part of a rights- and community-based approach is analyzing the different realities people face because of their **age**, their **gender**, and their **diversity**, which relates to ethnicity, religion, disability, and sexual orientation, among other factors. Too often, a failure to consider the particular circumstances of each group has led to actions that have unintentionally resulted in further exclusion and discrimination. UNHCR thus adopts a two-pronged approach to promoting gender equality and rights for all: age, gender and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM), and targeted action. This means that age, gender and diversity issues are analyzed and incorporated into all areas of our work; and when the analysis indicates

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that inequalities exist, targeted actions are implemented to empower those who are being discriminated against to exercise their rights.

2.3.4 Empowerment

Power can be defined as the capacity to make informed choices and have the freedom to take action. Empowerment is not something that is "done" to people; it is the process by which individuals in the community analyze their situation, enhance their knowledge and resources, strengthen their capacity to claim their rights, and take action to achieve their goals.[20] At the same time, their capacities and skills are recognized by others. Empowerment requires change at the individual and structural levels.

In all societies, there are some people who are more powerful than others because of age, gender roles, ethnicity, political affiliation, economic situation, or other reasons. During displacement, power relations shift. Sometimes those who had previously been excluded suddenly have an opportunity to be involved in decision-making processes. These various changes must be analyzed and understood.

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Power relations between men and women are often based on gender roles, some of which might limit individuals' capacities to enjoy their rights. For example, some men are taught that, to behave "as a man," one has to be authoritarian and even use violence as a means of control. This can be a restrictive and negative experience, particularly if the men feel that they have to suppress their emotions, use force to command respect, and maintain a distant relationship with their children. Exploring the origins of that image of masculinity can provide an opportunity for discussing gender roles and power relations.[21] These same dynamics may well influence how traditional leaders interact in the community, the expectations and frustrations of youth, and how traditional justice systems rule on such matters as domestic violence, divorce and women's behaviour. Women will help sustain such systems if they believe that this is what "makes a man." Therefore, any changes in gender roles will require that women and men discuss how they would like to relate to each other and how this can benefit the family and the community.

Another important power relationship is that between humanitarian actors, including government partners, and the community members who rely on them to ensure appropriate use of resources. We are responsible for creating a climate of trust through our behaviour and our attitudes. UNHCR's Code of Conduct provides clear guidance in this respect, and Section 4 contains some guidance on the knowledge, skills and attitudes that should be encouraged to facilitate partnership.

Community empowerment can also result in the empowerment of humanitarian workers. Instead of working in an atmosphere of seeming mutual dependence, with the sometimes overwhelming feeling of impotence in the face of enormous challenges,[22] humanitarian workers can be more realistic about their limited roles. Recognizing the capacities of members of the community will foster a more constructive relationship, based on mutual respect, with persons of concern. In turn, UNHCR staff and partners will become more effective in delivering protection and supporting solutions.

2.3.5 Ownership, solutions and sustainability

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Ownership is achieved when persons of concern assume full responsibility for the continuation of the work and manage the activities and services that they consider priorities. It is the natural outcome of a process that has respected the principles of meaningful participation and empowerment. Support and assistance from external actors might still be required, however, because of an absence of resources or opportunities.

Older persons take action

In Costa Rica, the "Amigos de Oro" (the golden friends) group was created to provide an inclusive and friendly forum for older refugees to share their feelings, ideas and experiences regarding their displacement in December 2005. This group has now grown to include more than 35 older refugees. The group, which meets once a month, has identified a worrying lack of social-support networks and other obstacles to achieving self-sufficiency. Although many older refugees are willing to work, employment opportunities are scarce. Older refugees noted their marginalization and emphasized the need to raise awareness about their situation.

The "Amigos de Oro" group is acquiring legal status as an autonomous group so that it is better placed to lobby for support and participate with other organizations. The group plans to create micro-enterprises with a pay-back function so that the association will be self-supporting. The income will then be deposited into a "common fund" to support members who might have urgent needs, including medicines. The micro-enterprises will include handicrafts, sewing and dress-making, and a basic computer-skills course. Activities to support the group's integration into their host society include an event to introduce "Amigos de Oro" to local associations for older persons in Costa Rica.

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Sustainability is the possibility of maintaining the achievements of any support provided to the community to ensure effective protection and solutions. The work will only be sustainable if all partners systematically apply the principles of the community-based approach in the emergency phase and throughout the operation. UNHCR plays a key role in ensuring a consistent approach on which to build sustainability. If, for example, one partner applies a community-based approach in the health sector, but the partner responsible for camp management does not follow the same principles, there will soon be conflicting messages to the community and competition between the agencies. Likewise, if the health authorities are not engaged from the beginning in ensuring a link to the national health system, solutions will be difficult to sustain. In an urban setting, if one agency sets up a centre that provides assistance and cash grants while another fosters the mobilization of the community, it is likely that people will only

visit the agency that provides quick results, and, in the longer term, the capacity of people to protect themselves will not have been strengthened.

Sustainability is about community development: building on the capacities and skills of community members to manage representative and fair structures that can respond to both immediate and long-term protection risks and needs, and to develop solutions while upholding individual rights. Maximum ownership and sustainability are achieved when interventions are responses to community-driven demands.

The support of governments, local authorities and the host community is essential when carrying out an analysis and devising solutions with the displaced community. Their roles, concerns and views should not be overlooked, regardless of any preconceptions regarding the position they will adopt. UNHCR and partners, including other UN agencies, can help bring together local authorities, government partners and the receiving population to overcome differences in attitudes and support the displaced.

2.3.6 Transparency and accountability

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Transparency refers to "the provision of accessible and timely information to stakeholders and the opening up of organizational procedures, structures and processes to their assessment."[23] It requires informing people of concern and duty-bearers about UNHCR's protection mandate, policies and capacities and being open about what the organization is able to provide and its limitations in human and material resources. Persons of concern can then make informed decisions about what they would like to prioritize and what results they can reasonably expect.

We often collect information from the community and its leaders without clearly stating what the outcomes might be. We may implement activities without checking to see whether the different community members agree to the priorities established. People have a right to understand why we are seeking their participation and what the longer-term results will be. Their participation must be guaranteed throughout the process and not limited to certain aspects defined by us. We should seek regular feedback on the implementation of activities and progress achieved.

Accountability is the process through which an organization makes a commitment to respond to and balance the needs of different stakeholders in its decision-making processes and activities, and delivers against this commitment. In providing protection, for example, UNHCR staff and partners must ensure that individuals of concern are able to participate meaningfully, be informed of the protection risks, and monitor the progress made in addressing those risks.[24] Accountability involves raising awareness of rights and responsibilities and developing the capacities of duty-bearers, such as community leaders, local and national authorities, and UNHCR staff and partners, to fulfil their obligations. Duty-bearers should be involved in participatory assessments, including protection-risk analyses, and planning, implementing and monitoring responses.[25] Regarding persons of concern as rights-holders will help make their interactions with UNHCR and other partners more equitable.[26] Accountability also entails being clear about who is responsible for what, particularly as regards the role of the State in providing protection, and what limitations might exist.

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Mechanisms through which people of concern can evaluate our services and attitudes are essential for accountability and empowerment (see section 3.2.7 on Community-based monitoring and evaluation). But an evaluation is not an end in itself. Accountability also implies that an organization is willing to listen to the outcomes of such evaluations, learn from the process, and take action in order to improve.

In May 2007, UNHCR introduced an Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Accountability Framework.[27] Since it defines accountability for senior managers for mainstreaming and targeted action, particularly in facilitating participatory assessments and supporting a rights- and community-based approach, it can help staff in carrying out their responsibilities.

2.4 Why use a rights- and community-based approach?

It builds or strengthens the capacities and autonomy of individuals and communities

- Community members take responsibility for analyzing protection risks and jointly developing protection strategies, assistance responses and solutions.

- It recognizes and supports the ways in which persons of concern protect themselves through their own social networks and community resources while ensuring individual rights.

It promotes respect for rights and the accountability of leadership structures, agencies and States

- Community members see that their systems are recognized, reinforced and respected.

- Persons of concern learn about their rights and can support gradual change through which practices that violate human rights are identified and openly discussed, particularly in relation to women and children.

- It clarifies roles and responsibilities in relation to rights-holders and duty-bearers, including humanitarian agencies and governments.

It underpins age, gender and diversity mainstreaming

- It improves understanding of the relations between women and men, different generations and the diverse groups within the community.

- It requires participation of all groups in decision-making processes and representative structures that respect the rights of individuals.

- It provides for age, gender and diversity analyses of the situation, of protection and programme responses, and for targeted action to address discrimination.

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It improves the quality and effectiveness of UNHCR operations

- UNHCR staff and partners are more likely to be alerted to protection problems in a timely fashion if a relationship of trust is nurtured.

- It ensures that activities are of direct relevance to the communities and will meet their various protection needs. Failing to understand a community and its ways of working can lead to inappropriate interventions that will fail.

- It reduces opportunities for exploitation and abuse.

- It generates an attitudinal change whereby refugees and other displaced persons, rather than external actors, are at the centre of decisions, responses and solutions, and their skills and contributions are recognized.

- It improves UNHCR's accountability to people of concern through participatory monitoring and evaluation.

It provides a basis for sustainable responses and durable solutions

- It improves understanding of the local context and allows the UNHCR operation to be more closely linked with other development initiatives[28] and with government structures.

- It focuses on solutions from the beginning, in partnership with the community, and thus can reduce the potential for protracted displacement situations.

- By involving all members of the community, it leads to greater effectiveness and long-term sustainability of programming.[29]

3

Implementing a community-based approach

This section gives an overview of the different stages of the community-based approach, beginning with situation analysis, including stakeholder analysis and participatory assessment, and planning. It then explains the different aspects of community mobilization and empowerment, from mapping leadership and management structures to community-based action planning, monitoring and evaluation. It also highlights the need to identify individuals at heightened risk and to establish individual case management systems based on work with the community.

Communities and cultures are not static; they constantly change. Communities of refugees, internally displaced persons, and returnees have social and cultural traditions, religious practices, economic activities, associations and networks, protection mechanisms and political structures that existed prior to displacement. Displacement disrupts many of these familiar ways of life, but it can also be an opportunity for learning new skills and incorporating new knowledge, activities and structures into daily life. Implementing a community-based approach during humanitarian crises involves mobilizing individuals and communities and supporting them in their decisions about how to cope with the upheaval,

re-establish community structures and ensure that protection and solutions respect individual rights.

3.1 Situation analysis

Its purpose. Situation analysis enables humanitarian workers and the community to understand the context of the displacement or crisis in order to determine the most appropriate course of action, prioritize work and plan operations to deliver protection effectively. It is a crucial step in results-based management as it informs project design and the formulation of objectives and anticipated results.

What it is. Situation analysis in UNHCR is composed of three interlinked phases: information analysis; stakeholder resources and capacity-mapping; and participatory assessment, to gain a common understanding of protection risks, capacities and solutions. These can lead to a participatory planning process to establish UNHCR Country Operation Plans, inter-agency humanitarian appeals or work plans, or community action plans. Situation analyses should be undertaken regularly, regardless of the stage of the operation. Representatives of community-based organizations should be involved in inter-agency and stakeholder planning meetings.

How it is carried out. The analysis is undertaken through a desk review of existing information, including data gathered about the population. It also involves identifying the different stakeholders to learn about their interests and priorities, and mapping their activities, resources and expertise. A participatory assessment is then conducted with the different members of the population to understand their protection risks, capacities and proposals and to test the validity of the existing information and analysis. Working together, all actors should analyze the final results of the assessment, the protection risks, proposed solutions and resource implications in order to determine priorities, programmes and budgets and prepare action plans.

3.1.1 Information analysis

This phase helps determine what is already known about the persons of concern and their situation by analyzing documentation and data. It allows

us to prepare for participatory assessments and consultations with a protection focus.

It is important to know about the community's culture and protection mechanisms prior to flight. Information about the host community and all other stakeholders should also be gathered. To identify potential protection risks and those groups with specific needs, gather information on the number of unaccompanied and separated children, single-parent-headed families, single women, persons with disabilities, older persons and grand-parent-headed households, and how women's and men's roles have changed. Analysis of this information, which might reveal groups who need priority protection, including assistance, can then be shared with the community and validated with the populations concerned during participatory assessments. UNHCR's Strengthening Protection Capacities Framework, which is a tool for identifying gaps in protection, can also help structure the analysis.[30] The following information should be analyzed:

Country Operation Plans, annual protection reports, standards and indicators, security and mission reports (on child protection, community service, gender, sexual and gender-based violence, and Inspector General reports), in order to identify protection incidents, security challenges and assistance needs; to highlight persistent problems and gaps; and to identify community coping mechanisms and solutions.

ProGres database and all other information related to the registration of persons of concern, in order to understand the profile of the population by age, sex, family composition, ethnic/religious origins and specific needs.[31] Community-services and protection staff should ensure that data on groups with specific needs are regularly gathered and updated, and that persons at heightened risk are identified and monitored.

Existing assessments and analyses, such as food basket-monitoring reports, joint WFP-UNHCR food assessments, health reports, including data from health-information systems, HIV/AIDS studies, environmental assessments, economic surveys and feasibility studies for livelihoods, in order to learn about the diet and purchasing power of people in the local area, and about the impact of displacement on natural resources.

3

Studies of national legislation and provisions relevant to persons of concern from an age, gender and diversity perspective, in order to understand how and whether people of concern enjoy freedom of movement, equality, the right to work, access to services, and family and child protection.

Government reports and plans on national health, education and other services, to see how they incorporate the needs of persons of concern, particularly in the case of internally displaced persons and returnees. It is also important to review UN country plans to see how they incorporate persons of concern and to advocate that they be included.

Political analysis documents reviewing the situation in the areas of displacement and country of origin, reports from non-governmental organizations, universities, human rights organizations and other civil associations, such as local women's groups, that provide analyses of the human rights situation, and ethnographic and anthropological studies.

Maps of the area of origin and the area of displacement. Note the proximity to the border or conflict area, resources available and, in the case of urban populations, where people live.

Note factors such as land availability, plot sizes and the location of key infrastructure, natural resources, local markets, services and known zones of conflict, landmines, violence, exploitative practices and insecurity, and specific places or routes that are known to present a danger to persons of concern. This map can be used later in participatory exercises with focus groups to stimulate discussion about protection and related problems within the host area. In urban areas, note the distance to services, including the offices of UNHCR and its partners, and centres to which resources could be directed to better serve persons of concern.

When reviewing existing information using an age, gender and diversity perspective, consider:[32]

The profile of the community, including capacities and skills, and who is most at risk.

How the community is organized, its formal and informal structures and the roles these play in community life.

The extent to which women, girls, boys and men of all ages and diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities, participate in community management and decision-making, and who might be excluded and why. Community-protection mechanisms to support persons with disabilities and other groups with specific needs, and identify those who are at heightened risk.[33]

Resources available to people, such as land, tools, skills, and informal markets.

The power relations between the different community members: Who has power over whom? How is it exercised? To whose benefit?

The services and facilities available to persons of concern within the host community and local government.

The interaction between the host population and persons of concern, and points of tension.

The main protection challenges and the possibilities for durable solutions.

The situation in the place of origin and the changes due to displacement.

Which topics and individuals should be the focus of the participatory assessment phase.

3

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Ten questions to ask when analyzing registration data

Determine the percentage of the population by sex, age group, and other factors, and consider:

✓ Is it the same as the local population? Does it coincide with the data from the country of origin?

✓ Is there a higher-than-average percentage of women? Children? Older persons? Persons with disabilities?

✓ If one group, such as adult men or young children, seems under- or over-represented, find out why.

✓ Has the registration team been trained on how to identify and register groups with specific needs and persons at heightened risk?

✓ Have groups with specific needs been registered in detail in coordination with community services? If not, why not and how will this be done?

✓ Have those responsible for registration understood the criteria for unaccompanied and separated children?

✓ Does the population profile indicate potential protection risks for any particular group?

✓ Who might be at heightened risk? Why? What immediate action is being taken to protect these persons? Has a confidential, individual case-management system been established?

✓ Do you have data on the leadership structure? Are any groups, especially minorities, youth and women, not represented? If so, why?

✓ How does the socio-economic status and ethnic, linguistic and religious composition of the refugee population compare with that of the local host population?

3.1.2 Stakeholder analysis

Stakeholder analysis involves identifying all those individuals or groups that might be affected by a particular action and that therefore have a particular interest in participating in the planning of activities or can influence an operation. Stakeholders can be both duty-bearers and rights-holders. Stakeholders include operational and implementing partners, national and local authorities, UN agencies, members of the commu-

nity, including community leaders and traditional chiefs, civil society (local NGOs, women's groups, human rights groups), school-board members, religious organizations, and host communities and their organizations. We should document their level of influence, map their activities and work with them to plan activities.[34] Partnership among stakeholders is essential for establishing a community-based approach and reinforcing each other's work. Some important stakeholders are:

Governments of the country of asylum and country of origin

Governments of the country of asylum and country of origin have primary responsibility for protecting refugees and IDPs and returnees, respectively. In practice, however, States vary in their ability or willingness to fulfil their obligations. In refugee contexts, they might impose restrictions, such as limited or no access to employment, education or other essential rights, or insist that persons of concern be confined to a restricted area or a controlled environment that affects the protection of the persons of concern. Some governments have established a clear framework to ensure the provision of protection, security and assistance to persons of concern through national departments, while others may be willing to extend their services as part of their responsibilities under the 1951 Refugee Convention. For IDPs and returnees, State responsibilities should be reviewed in the context of international human rights law and national legislation. It is important to work with government authorities from the outset and make maximum use of their expertise and structures to implement programmes to support persons of concern, when feasible, instead of developing parallel services.

3

Line ministries can provide valuable expertise and support

Democratic Republic of Congo. *During the influx of Angolan refugees into Kimvula, nutritionists from the Ministry of Health guided the operational response. The Ministry of Education has incorporated peace-education modules into the national curriculum.*

Mozambique. *Health facilities in the refugee camp are supervised by the Ministry of Health, which also provides drugs and monitors the recruitment of national and refugee health personnel.*

Liberia. *The Ministry of Education leads an inter-agency group that is integrating the peace-education programme into its national curriculum.*

Chad. *In 2004, the Ministry for Social Welfare in Chad seconded national community-services staff to support the emergency operation in response to the influx of refugees from Darfur.*

Colombia. *Colombian Law provides for the adoption of measures to prevent forced displacement and for the provision of assistance, protection, socio-economic consolidation and stabilization of persons internally displaced by violence. The Ministries of Education, Health and Interior form part of the National System of Integral Attention to Displaced Persons. UNHCR works with the system to ensure equal access to and enjoyment of rights by IDPs.*

Afghanistan. *The Ministry for Rural Development and Rehabilitation and the Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons played a key role in disseminating UNHCR's community- and village-based information to other actors.*

Any additional structures or services set up by humanitarian actors should be planned so that they complement national systems and can be immediately or eventually absorbed into them. This should be the norm for internally displaced persons and returnees, based on the principle of non-discrimination among nationals. We should encourage governments to establish and chair refugee education and health committees. Local authorities can also play a key role in defusing tensions with the host community and should be included in planning from the beginning of the operation.

Ten tips on working with governments

✓ Remember that you are a guest in the country and are there to support and work in collaboration with the government.

✓ Be humble, respectful and learn from your hosts.

✓ Your attitude and negotiating skills are your best assets in establishing a relationship of mutual respect.

✓ To ensure that programmes are sustainable, assess refugee access to national services and work to incorporate their needs into government services and micro- and macro-planning.

✓ Ensure non-discriminatory access to basic services for internally displaced persons and returnees.

✓ Provide support to national structures to integrate the needs of persons of concern into existing systems, such as health and education, rather than establishing separate services.

✓ Analyze the impact of national legislation on persons of concern and advocate adherence to international legal standards.

✓ From the outset, explore all possibilities for supporting experts in national and local ministries, such as family welfare, child protection, health, education, sports, and cultural affairs, in establishing and providing services to persons of concern. The national authorities should assume the lead coordination role.

✓ Encourage national authorities to participate in the assessment, planning and implementation of community-based activities, while taking into consideration freedom of expression and security.

✓ Promote direct contact between the displaced and host communities and the authorities to facilitate mutual understanding and strengthen the displaced community's advocacy capacities.

3

The host community

Host communities are affected by the influx of refugees, internally displaced persons or returnees. Mass arrivals in rural areas have a significant impact on the environment and already scarce resources. Host families, particularly in IDP contexts, take displaced persons into their homes, provide support and protection, and share scarce supplies. But the response is not always so generous: In urban areas, rents can be inflated, accommoda-

tion can be hard to find, and wages in the informal sector can plummet if the labour market is saturated. While some in the host community might see the potential benefits of new arrivals, such as being able to work and trade with the newcomers, others might see them as responsible for any deterioration, perceived or real, in their circumstances. In order to calm tensions between the two communities, maintain a continuous dialogue with the host community, keeping it informed of what is happening and supporting individuals in any way possible to address some of the challenges they face. Whenever possible, include the host community in participatory assessments and address their concerns in any humanitarian response.

3

Ten tips on working with host communities

✓ Analyze the impact of displacement, new arrivals, additional or outstanding protection gaps and all interventions on the host community.

✓ Identify the host community's formal and informal leaders, including women and youth representatives, and establish contact as early as possible.

✓ Include the host community in participatory assessment exercises.

✓ Working with the host community, identify the protection risks facing the displaced population and discuss how to prevent them. Discuss the impact of displacement on the community's resources and daily life.

✓ Discuss plans with the host community and seek their ideas and perspectives.

✓ Ensure that interventions do not exacerbate tensions between the different communities.

✓ Encourage the establishment of a joint host/refugee/internally displaced committee to analyze the situation and resolve conflicts.

✓ Include local leaders in training programmes, such as on human rights.

✓ Where possible, ensure that the local community also benefits from services. Address host-community concerns in a timely manner.

✓ Monitor the dynamics between the displaced and the receiving communities.

3

UN, NGO and other agencies

It is important to identify all of the UN, NGO (partner and non-partner) and other agencies that are, or could be, involved in the operation, including local community-based organizations, women's associations and human rights groups. Map their activities to avoid duplication, and work with them to ensure that any gaps are adequately bridged. Assess the agencies' strategies, capacities and contributions and the extent to which they support community participation and a community-based approach. Often, partners working in the communities are some of the best sources

of background information and can answer many questions. For example, health staff will know about practices such as female genital mutilation and forced underage marriage; education staff are likely to know about military recruitment and the situation of children with disabilities. In many cases, the mapping will highlight agencies' skills and expertise in participatory assessments. Mapping should also identify non-traditional partners, such as those in the private sector, since they might be able and willing to support development activities.

Many agencies have mandates on issues that include, but do not necessarily focus on, displacement, such as health, education, or agriculture. They can be important partners in ensuring that displaced persons are included in the national strategies agreed with governments. In some cases, UNHCR can help them advocate with the government to include protection in the national agenda.

Work with national and international partners and UN agencies to learn about their participatory methods and agree on coordination mechanisms, using multifunctional[35] teams, to support the implementation of a community-based approach. Encourage the pooling of resources and expertise to benefit the operation and strengthen local capacities. In turn, this will allow for a smooth handover to communities, national organizations and development agencies when it is time to withdraw.

UNHCR staff should participate in the inter-agency cluster approach when it is applied (see section 5.4 for further information) and promote a community-based approach and age, gender and diversity mainstreaming.[36]

Ten tips on working with UN and non-governmental partners

✓ Focus on building mutual respect and common goals.

✓ Avoid overlaps, turf wars, competition and over assessment.

✓ Focus on bridging the protection gaps.

✓ Build equal relationships, especially with non-governmental partners, and seek their advice, expertise and views.

✓ Make sure you understand the mandates and roles of other UN organizations and partners and can clearly explain those of UNHCR.

✓ Promote multifunctional-team participatory assessments and learn from others how they implement a rights- and community-based approach.

✓ Inform the community, both orally and in writing, who is doing what in order to minimize confusion and inefficiencies.

✓ In situations of internal displacement, ensure that you have a full understanding of the inter-agency dynamics, particularly of the cluster approach and its principles, if it is being applied.

✓ Identify key civil society agencies working on human rights, children's rights, women's rights, community-based psycho-social support, and employment for young people.

✓ Encourage civil society agencies to extend their national programmes to areas hosting persons of concern and advocate that the needs of those persons be included in their planning.

3

The donor community

Donors often operate with global strategic priorities and will focus their support on activities that clearly relate to these. When these priorities do not match those expressed by the community of concern, UNHCR should act as mediator between the two sets of interests and represent the priorities expressed by persons of concern to the donors in a comprehensive manner. This will be more feasible if a participatory assessment has been carried out to establish the community's priorities. UNHCR should facilitate direct discussions between persons of concern and donors by organizing field visits, facilitating donors' participation in assessments and planning meetings, and increasing donor interest in the operation and the

priorities of the people of concern. Above all, it is important to include donors in analyzing protection gaps and challenges, and inform them of the limitations of UNHCR's interventions due to factors such as political and financial constraints.

*In **Colombia**, UNHCR has a local fundraising strategy that provides regular, up-to-date information on protection and assistance for IDPs to news media, representatives of donor governments, and humanitarian agencies, through the Internet, local newspapers and television, leaflets, and posters. Individual meetings with donors and potential donors, both international and national, are organized at the beginning of the year to discuss planned activities. Throughout the year, donors are kept informed about the progress of implementation. They are invited on field missions to increase their understanding of the protection concerns and to jointly monitor the implementation of projects.*

Formal and informal leaders

Identify the leaders among the persons of concern and in the host community, whether democratically elected, self-elected or informal. If they are largely male, check if there are female leadership structures, such as those of midwives, female elders, or traditional healers. Find out if there are any norms, or expected behaviours, when contacting these leaders and respect them when you do so. Take note of those individuals who might be helpful in establishing contacts with the wider community. Clarify the role and objectives of the organization and ask for their cooperation. Explain that you will soon be undertaking a participatory assessment with all members of the population and ask for their guidance and support in arranging it. Failure to meet, in advance, those people recognized as leaders by the community can result in hostility and mistrust, which might hinder the implementation of activities and undermine the relationship with the rest of the community. (Tips on contacting community leaders are provided in sections 3.1.3, "Establishing contact with the community," and 3.2.1, "Community mapping of leadership and management structures.")

There are often other important community figures who can be influential. These individuals might not be identified as such at the beginning of

an operation, but their influence will become apparent as the team spends time with the community.

It is important to be aware of the potential or actual presence of armed groups and different political tendencies within the community. This knowledge is basic to understanding community dynamics and will often influence the outcome of humanitarian interventions. While frequently difficult to obtain, this information must be gathered, documented and factored into all work within the community and with governments, as it is essential for providing protection.

3.1.3 Establishing contact with the community

Establishing contact with the community is crucial, since these first efforts may set the pattern for the evolution of the relationship among UNHCR, its partners and the community. How to make contact with persons of concern will depend on the community and the context. There are no fixed rules; individual staff and members of the multifunctional team must use their experience, skills and knowledge to decide which groups or individuals can be approached and by whom, and which issues to raise. National UNHCR and partner staff, host communities and local authorities can be important sources of support, since they might have already established contact. However, we should be aware that these relationships are complex, particularly in the context of internal displacement, and so we should avoid acting on preconceived ideas or prejudices.

3

Internally displaced persons scattered over wide areas
Internally displaced persons in Chechnya were placed with host families and in collective centres scattered over wide geographical areas, making it difficult for a small emergency team to undertake proper assessment and monitoring. Each collective centre was asked to elect male and female representatives who then collected data on age, sex and skills, which helped identify health staff and teachers. The representatives oversaw the maintenance of the collective centres and monitored the distribution of assistance. The partner agency working with each centre then established educational activities for the children in the centre, in collaboration with those persons of concern who had a background in education, while health partners engaged the skills of the identified health staff. Five months after the emergency began, the same system was used to assemble the representatives of the collective centres to discuss people's concerns about returning to their areas of origin.

3

First contacts in emergency situations are likely to focus on working with the community to collect and analyze basic registration data in order to assess protection risks and the most urgent needs, including physical security, safety, shelter, health, food and non-food items, education, water and fuel. These discussions, with small groups of women, girls, boys and men of diverse backgrounds and ages, are useful starting points for determining who will do what and how assistance should be distributed. Meetings with women, including older women and girls, will provide an opportunity to discuss protection risks, access to health care and education, and to obtain information about their preferences in such matters as sanitary materials and fuel supplies. Meetings with boys can be valuable in learning about potential forced recruitment. Information about the mobility of persons with physical disabilities, any discrimination they face, and their access to services is best obtained through meetings and home visits.

Access to women
In eastern Chad, UNHCR deployed a gender expert to support gender mainstreaming and initiate activities for the numerous women survivors of sexual abuse. The refugee community was conservative, and identifying survivors required both tenacity and sensitivity. By ensuring that soap was regularly distributed, which was important to the community, the gender expert managed to negotiate access to women and was welcomed by the men. This was the beginning of an ongoing interaction between the gender officer and the refugee men and women in this community, and it provided an important first step in building confidence among the women there.

In some instances, there might be no organized groups with whom UNHCR and its partners can work. This is likely to be the case in urban areas, where displaced persons are dispersed, or when people have just arrived at a camp or a transit centre from different areas and do not yet know each other. Nonetheless, people are likely to start interacting around some common interests, such as health, religion or business opportunities. If there are no groups, the team might begin by identifying individuals who can guide the team members and help them mobilize the community.

Even in an urban context, displaced individuals are usually concentrated in specific areas. They often have access to informal networks, and there might be meeting points, such as religious and charity institutions, market places or community-based host organizations, where information can be obtained on how to establish contact with persons of concern. In both urban and rural contexts, a clear outreach strategy must first be developed, in coordination with stakeholders, based on the mapping exercise undertaken as part of the situation analysis.

In a protracted camp situation or in settlements, it can be useful to work with organized interest groups or existing community associations, such as religious groups, farmers' groups, trade associations, women's groups, youth clubs and other social groups, as an entry point into the community. Members of these groups will help explain the community structure and suggest ways of establishing contact with those who might not have regular access to humanitarian workers, such as persons with disabilities and older people.

3

Ten tips on making initial contact with the community

✓ Understanding community practices and traditions prior to establishing contact can help identify the appropriate approach for engaging with different groups and members of the community. Focus on learning and listening, particularly at the beginning.

✓ Take every opportunity to discuss and meet informally with persons of concern (at the health post, during registration, at distribution points, in the queue for water).

✓ Those who manage to establish first contact with the humanitarian workers might become "gatekeepers": They might not mention other groups in the community that require support if they believe resources are scarce.

✓ Identify an existing committee or a community-based organization through which you can access the community and begin to pass on messages. Meet the host community and the authorities.

✓ Be aware that messages might only reach certain groups, such as other community leaders, and not all members of the community. Develop outreach strategies with the leaders and others to ensure that everyone is informed, including children.

✓ Make sure that information is delivered in a language that everyone can understand, is culturally sensitive and is correctly perceived and understood.

✓ Arrange meetings at mutually convenient and agreed times and make sure that you arrive for meetings on time. Do not make persons of concern have to wait for you!

✓ First impressions matter! Those groups or persons in the community who do not meet UNHCR or its partners may draw their own conclusions about the organization based on whom the staff chose to meet with, how they behave and what happens after their visit.

✓ Ensure that after the first contact, immediate follow-up action is taken. Be aware of and monitor security issues, especially for internally displaced persons.

✓ Transparency, respect and consistency are essential for building trust, confidence and collaboration between UNHCR and its partners, including persons of concern.

3.1.4 Participatory assessment, expectations, time and resources

Participatory assessment is a process of building partnerships with women and men of all ages and backgrounds. Through structured dialogue with and meaningful participation by the concerned groups, we can identify protection risks and priority areas for action. At the same time, community capacities and resources to prevent protection risks and identify solutions can be jointly identified, and the responsibilities of external stakeholders[37] clarified. Consult with community representatives prior to undertaking any assessment exercise.

3

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Participatory Assessment in an Urban Context: South Africa

- *The participatory assessment in South Africa was preceded by several discussions among UNHCR, NGO partners and the government. A coordinator ensured a smooth flow of information among all actors.*

- *The multifunctional team (MFT) was as inclusive as possible. Efforts were made to ensure that UNHCR staff, implementing and operational partners, and key government counterparts working in the areas of documentation, security, health and education, participated, and that a balance between genders and national and international staff was considered.*

- *Due to the vast and diverse areas in which refugees reside, four MFTs were established, each covering the main urban locations of Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town and Durban.*

- *A workshop was organized before the participatory assessment to ensure that all actors had a common understanding of the process and its aim.*

- *The sub-groups were selected not only by age and gender, but also by nationality, specific needs and level of risk.*

- *Complementary meetings were organized with banks, police, refugee community leaders, the Department of Health, and refugee women's associations with the aim of identifying protection concerns and risks and discussing with the concerned authorities how they could be resolved.*

- *The findings from the four MFTs fed the discussion of the final workshop, where all the actors jointly analyzed the results and agreed on the way forward. Key areas included improving the issuance of documents and access to services, which did not require additional funding.*

- *UNHCR ensured that the concerns and the specific recommendations made at the workshop were followed up, including by incorporating them into UNHCR's and its implementing partners' 2007 projects submission.*

- *UNHCR and MFTs ensure that adequate, up-to-date and continuous feedback is provided to the refugees and that the refugees can always voice their concerns to UNHCR.*

From "managing expectations" to real partnership

"All we see of the humanitarian workers is the dust from their 4x4s when they drive through our settlement."

"Re-establishing the equilibrium between humanitarian aid organizations and affected populations is therefore central to participation...it often comes down to one's personal approach, mindset and attitude."[38]

It is important to realize that how a humanitarian agency and its staff are perceived will determine the nature of the relationship between persons of concern and external humanitarian workers. The image projected in the way we operate can and does generate expectations. The big white cars, the increase in rents in the towns where we set up our offices, and often our own manner of entering into relationships with people can create images of power and money.

Humanitarian workers will always have an impact on the political and power dynamics within the community. Staff must be able to recognize the importance of building trust, speaking to all, being transparent, and understanding how we influence the social dynamics within the community simply by choosing with whom we speak–or don't speak–during our visits. Communities that have had negative experiences with humanitarian workers in the past might be reluctant to engage enthusiastically with a new group. We thus might be too quick to conclude that the community is not motivated to help itself, rather than try to find out why they respond the way they do. It is up to us to overcome these challenges.

3

Whose expectations?

While conducting participatory assessments in 2005 and 2006, many UNHCR staff were concerned that they would not be able to meet expectations, and that persons of concern would present them with long "shopping lists" of expected services and assistance. But those notions are not the result of participatory processes; on the contrary, they result from a lack of true participation on both sides. The solution is not to end the dialogue and retreat to the safety of our offices, but to build a relationship of true partnership and openness with the communities of concern. Regular dialogue and feedback are very important.

3

Contrary to what some humanitarian workers might think, people of concern are not always expecting to have a wish list fulfilled; indeed, they might be more realistic than we are. As humanitarian workers, with the conscious or unconscious thought that "we are here to save and protect you," we tend to focus on the list, rather than on building a partnership with people of concern in which we are facilitators, not leaders or sole decision-makers (see section 3.2.5 on community-based action planning). Not all suggestions will require funding; some are about clarifying, simplifying or changing procedures, as shown in the example on participatory assessment in South Africa above. People need to have information about our capacities and limitations, financial and otherwise, in order to make informed choices. Regular discussions and feedback will enable us to work through expectations and address short- and long-term needs.

Managing expectations means being open and honest and recognizing that persons of concern are both rights-holders *and* duty-bearers, based on a realistic analysis of their capacities. For example, parents of children with disabilities have a duty to protect the child, but efforts to uphold this obligation must take into consideration the barriers they face and the support to which they have access.

Ten tips on creating real partnerships

✓ Be aware of how your own behaviour can send the wrong message. Think about first impressions: Do people see you walking around and showing an interest in their lives? Ask questions in a pleasant but serious manner; do not make assumptions.

✓ Explain who you are and why you are there. Have a sound reason for any meeting or activity, clear goals and explain the benefits for both those organizing it and the community. Always ask, "Why should people come to this event?" rather than assuming that they should.

✓ Explain what you can and cannot do, the procedures and techniques you adopt and the limitations you or the organization might face in responding to their questions and wishes. Do not make false promises or provide inaccurate information.

✓ The level of participation and interest is linked to the amount of information provided. Giving only partial information might lead to distrust, especially if it concerns resources, and can lead to false expectations and an inability to respond adequately.

✓ Ask people to discuss their protection concerns and expectations with you. Be frank about your limited capacity and be open to listening and learning about their capacities and resources. Explain delays and difficulties as they occur. Be consistent.

✓ Discuss how follow-up actions will be undertaken and how you will report back to the community. Clarify the links among the planning, programming and budgeting processes in appropriate language.

✓ Provide ample time for people to speak and ensure that your approach is sensitive to their culture. Simplicity and humility are essential for communication and participation.

✓ Do not immediately propose solutions to problems; let people digest the information and then lead a discussion on how to respond, the resources they can invest, and what they require from your organization or elsewhere.

✓ Agree with the community and partners on the ground rules and responsibilities, and establish joint problem-solving mechanisms and a system for regular feedback on progress. Conduct participatory assessment regularly, not just once a year.

✓ Be aware of discriminatory behaviour/attitudes by international and national staff and community workers. Think rights-holders and duty-bearers.

3

Time and other resources

Building trust and an inclusive partnership with the community of concern takes time and resources. These will vary, depending on the diversity of the community, whether you are in an urban or rural setting, the geographical dispersion of the persons of concern and the size of your team.

A community-based approach is often perceived as a time-consuming activity, since it does not always have a quick and visible impact. Nonetheless, this investment in a strategy and joint partnership will enable us to deliver protection and sustainable solutions effectively, rather than simply offer quick fixes that often present problems later.

We must also remember that persons of concern are often under stress and face economic difficulties. We should therefore take into account their own schedules, working hours, and family and other obligations.

For example, in Mexico City and England, the multifunctional teams undertook participatory assessments during the weekend, since many of the people of concern worked during the week.

An investment of time at the beginning can save time later, such as when we work with the community to gather and analyze data rather than trying to do it ourselves. A lack of information leads to protection mistakes that can cost lives. Devote time to understanding the community's priorities, developing common objectives, agreeing on how the community wishes to participate and who will be responsible for what. If these steps are carried out properly, with respect for the pace of the community, long-term difficulties, such as security problems due to poor communication, will be avoided. In addition, joint planning will lead to better advocacy strategies with donors and host governments.

And in emergencies?

Although rapid responses are essential during emergencies, brief conversations with different groups, such as women queuing for water, adolescents gathered in groups, or people awaiting emergency health care, can elicit information about the population at risk, including both protection concerns and the community's capacities.

In the Tsunami response in Sri Lanka, Save the Children's shelters met international criteria for disaster-relief housing. They were clearly favoured by displaced families and they cost less than comparable solutions. The shelters were a success because the people to be housed were consulted before any construction began, and they were included in the building process.

In the East Timor emergency IDP operation in 2006, participatory assessment was conducted through both individual and group discussions. Participatory assessment was part of a larger protection strategy and not considered a one-time exercise. In follow-up to the initial discussions, teams would return to the same IDPs every week to monitor their protection. This allowed the staff and the persons of concern to form a trusting relationship and obtain more in-depth information.

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Ten tips on time and resources

✓ Discuss any approach or action with the community and other partners to see if they have better ideas and/or agree with your approach.

✓ Be on time! Give accurate information on where meetings will be held and how long they will last, and finish them on time.

✓ Check to see that schedules for meetings and trainings accommodate women's and children's schedules.

✓ Remember to first ask the people in the community about what you might need to find out or do. That could save the organization time and resources.

✓ Mapping the community's skills and capacities may obviate the need for external experts/labour, and can increase opportunities for work and capacity-building.

✓ Focus on solutions from the outset to avoid protracted—and expensive—displacement situations.

✓ Invest in participatory assessments. Once they become a way of doing business, they will facilitate planning, improve comprehensive needs assessments and support advocacy work for operations and funding.

✓ When writing up a project or operation plan, value and record any contributions made by the community, such as women providing food for a workshop or community members interpreting, and encourage the community to be proud of their contributions.

✓ Work with all other agencies and partners to identify resources and advocate solutions, such as coordinating with UNICEF on education and the provision of birth certificates, and with ILO on marketing studies and skills training.

3.1.5 Participatory planning

Participatory planning[39] brings the various stakeholders together to undertake a final analysis of information gathered through the desk review, the study of the context and the population profile, the stakeholder analysis and the participatory assessments. The priority protection risks, needs and preferred solutions are analyzed from an age, gender and diversity perspective, forming the basis of the planning exercise. Through the exercise, common

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goals and actions are agreed and the different rights-holders and duty-bearers are also identified. The capacities and contributions of the community members and other stakeholders will be assessed jointly in order to determine what areas are adequately covered and what gaps exist. The final outcome should include any budgetary requirements and agreements on what efforts will be undertaken to meet these and by whom.

We should ensure that persons of concern are well represented at the planning stage and are given appropriate and timely information so that they can participate meaningfully. This will involve working with the community to identify women and men of all ages and persons with disabilities who will participate in the planning exercise. UNHCR and other agencies must also be willing to adopt transparent procedures. In some IDP situations, this might be difficult if there are security concerns with government partners. In these cases, it might be necessary to have separate planning meetings.

The participatory planning process concludes the situation analysis and links the findings of the participatory assessments to the design of the programme or project. These final outcomes will vary in format, depending on the type of organization and the goals of the participating stakeholders. For example, the result for the *community* could be *Community Action Plans*, to be supported by different agencies. The process can also support the development of a *Country Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP)* and *Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP)*. In all cases, the different community, government and inter-agency priorities and goals should be discussed, and broader planning exercises, such as national recovery and reintegration plans in the context of return, can also be included.

For UNHCR, the outcome will be the Country Operation Plan, which is the mechanism used by each country to present the overview of the situation, the operation's objectives, expected results and required budget. The UNHCR Country Operation Plan will normally present government, community, partner and UNHCR priorities and should not preclude support to any Community Action Plans. After the programme is designed, budgeting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes begin. Staff should keep community groups informed about outcomes and changes, both good and bad, to the programme. Their participation in implementing, monitoring and evaluating the programme is crucial.

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As we spend more time in the community, we will build stronger working relationships with individuals and representatives of all sections of the community, and they will become more familiar with the process. As a result, operational planning will improve—and so will our delivery of protection. Monitoring and evaluation require continuous dialogue with the community to know whether responses are adequate, to confirm that the community is involved in implementation, and to verify the quality of services and whether we are building on their capacities and jointly finding solutions.

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Ten tips on community participation in planning

✓ Invite all relevant national and local ministries, civil society actors, UN agencies, operational and implementing partners and community-selected representatives.

✓ Work with the community to identify the women and men, of all ages, who will represent them at the participatory planning process.

✓ Identify what preparation is required for community members to be able to participate meaningfully, including training on the planning process.

✓ Provide community representatives with the mapping of the population and agencies, and their activities.

✓ Share with all participants the results of the stakeholder mapping, the information analysis, and the findings from the participatory assessment analyzed from an age, gender and diversity perspective.

✓ Agree on protection strategies, overall objectives, activities and coordination mechanisms, including which agency will do what and the role the community will play. Identify which rights are being fulfilled and who are the duty-bearers.

✓ Review the objectives to ensure that these are rights- and community-based. Include targeted actions to address any identified discrimination.

✓ Provide the community representatives and other leaders with the outcome in summary format so it can be shared with the community as a whole.

✓ Ensure that community representatives have clear mechanisms for disseminating the outcomes of the participatory planning to *all* the members of the community, and that all members of the community participate in the feedback and monitoring process.

✓ Remember to support the representatives and other community leaders throughout the process by discussing progress, sharing information and evaluating the long-term results.

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3.2 Community mobilization for empowerment

Purpose: Community mobilization is a key component of the community-based approach. Its aim is to help communities know and enjoy their rights by working with them to strengthen their capacity to address protection

risks; identify short- and long-term solutions; agree on priorities; develop and implement action plans that respect individual rights; and monitor and evaluate results. Communities will mobilize themselves when there is trust and confidence and when they see benefits emerging from the process.

Mobilizing opportunities
Since mothers and children spend a lot of time in therapeutic feeding programmes, these might be good occasions to encourage women to work together to address some of the root causes of malnutrition, perhaps through agricultural projects.

What: In practice, community mobilization involves establishing contact with community members and leaders, building an understanding of the social and power dynamics in the community, and bringing people together to agree on the best and most acceptable ways of working in partnership with the community. It does not always occur spontaneously; in fact, it often requires guidance from effective facilitators.

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Reviewing the findings of the situation analysis will facilitate the community-mobilization process and may reveal obstacles to mobilization, such as misperceptions about other actors, distrust among different groups, a lack of expertise to support the process, lack of analysis of the root causes of problems, and/or lack of information, including about human rights, particularly women's and girls' rights. It is important—and most effective—to use participatory methods when working to mobilize the community. See Annex 2 for some useful tools and details on how to use them.

How: A community-mobilization process in the context of conflict, displacement and humanitarian crises can involve the following steps:
community mapping of management structures;
community-based representation;
community-based protection responses and solutions;
community capacity-building;
community action planning;
community action teams; and
community-based monitoring and evaluation.

All these steps are related to each other but will not necessarily follow the order shown here. For example, we might need to strengthen community capacities in order to undertake a community-based analysis of protection responses and solutions. Our responses should be flexible and dynamic to meet the demands of quickly changing circumstances.[40]

> *Mobilizing in the Afghan camps in Pakistan – Save the Children, Sweden*
>
> *Community representatives were mobilized to identify children with disabilities and to create a support structure within the community to integrate these children socially. People who volunteered to help in one camp asked Save the Children to provide training. A centre was opened to assist seven children. Once people saw the improvements it made in these children's lives, other camps began demanding support to open similar centres. Some 300 male and female volunteers supported 700 children with disabilities in 45 centres. After a while, some children were able to integrate into the regular education system and others were taught social survival skills that enhanced their capacity to integrate into the community.*

Those who identify themselves as having a common interest may join together in community-based organizations. They may work together on specific activities, such as those to improve their living and economic conditions, on political issues, or to provide protection for their members.[41]

In urban settings, it might be helpful to raise awareness among persons of concern of the benefits of working together while promoting respect for individuals' rights and gender balance. Encouraging the formation of interest groups can assist those who are marginalized and/or have specific needs in gaining access to leadership structures and decision-making processes.

3.2.1 Community mapping of management structures

Every community has its own management system, structures and coping mechanisms, either traditional or newly emerging, to handle their own problems, events and politics. In displacement situations, persons of concern may have been displaced in family units, groups or villages and may maintain some management structures.

Where there is a structure, those in the community may feel protected by their traditional leaders and/or supported by host-community structures. It is important to build on these systems and to map the structure of the receiving community. For example, during the conflict in ex-Yugoslavia, the role of local authorities and communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in facilitating shelter and receiving internally displaced persons was fundamental to their protection and well-being.

However, leadership structures can also institutionalize exploitation and abuse of power and status, particularly if they are not monitored. Humanitarian assistance can exacerbate discriminatory practices, such as excluding minority groups from services, resources and decision-making processes, and can lead to heightened protection risks. It can also lead to self-interested individuals assuming leadership roles by default because of the attention given them by outside actors. Entire communities might be dominated by a minority.

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It is important to understand and then improve existing structures to ensure that the community is represented equitably and that the structures allow for the meaningful participation of women, adolescents, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups. Mapping and documenting the different kinds of community structures and identifying leaders with the people of concern can help give us a full picture of how the community works.[42] If we rely only on our first contacts and a few leaders, or only on leadership structures, problems will inevitably arise. This is not only because these might not be representative, but also because if people observe that all interaction takes place with a few individuals and other structures are ignored, accusations of corruption can arise.[43] Such situations can also lead to sexual exploitation and abuse among persons of concern.

To support structures that are representative of all, teams will need to spend time in the community with a wide range of people, discussing whom they consider to be leaders and why, and which structures they think function best and why. This can be done through participatory assessments. Participatory exercises offer excellent opportunities to learn about the community and can, in turn, serve as awareness-raising exer-

cises about participation, human rights, representation and leadership (see Annex 2 for practical tools).

The power of leadership

In Chad, the leaders of one refugee camp opposed any income-generating activity since, based on an earlier experience, they believed that any such activity was the first step toward the withdrawal of UNHCR and its partners. They threatened and discouraged refugees from participating in projects and even destroyed coffee shops and other refugee initiatives. Some of those leading the negative response were from the refugee group that had been considered to be integrated when UNHCR had phased-out its programme. The lack of trust led to a tragic security incident in 2004, and highlighted the importance of good mapping and the need to spend time building trust and understanding about projects before they are introduced.

The mapping process should include committees of elders, midwives' committees and traditional justice systems. Observing their methods of working will help us understand how to work well with the community and assist in identifying human rights issues. Through mapping, we should obtain a clear understanding about the role of each committee, its rules, how the different committees interact with each other, and how people can present problems or offer suggestions to the committees.

The elders' committee in a camp in Tanzania used a "talking stick" to communicate: People could only speak if they were holding the stick. This procedure improved active listening, eliminated interruptions and enabled an orderly discussion. Unfortunately, only men participated in the committee, but women declared their intention to change that.

Many displaced persons, particularly young men, arrive individually, without their families or familiar groups around them. These individuals, who usually end up in urban areas, might not have access to the kinds of structures that can help them cope with displacement. Our first step will be to mobilize these individuals around common interests.

Ten tips on mapping management structures

✓ Observe the composition of groups who come forward to interact with the humanitarian agencies and note their age, gender, ethnicity, religion, and political affiliation. Check with other agencies and community members whether these are the usual leaders and whether there are others you might not have met.

✓ Identify the different leadership styles and note those who are particularly respected, who are open and interact with all members of the community. When possible, avoid working through those who have strong political agendas.

✓ Work with the community to map all the different structures, noting which areas they cover. Ask different members of the community whom they turn to for support when they have problems and who might organize the response.

✓ Hold discussions with minority groups to assess their level of participation in leadership structures.

✓ Note how groups with specific needs, such as persons with disabilities, older persons and child-headed households, are supported.

✓ Find out from young people, particularly adolescents, how they participate, such as through education or training committees, and at what level.

✓ Hold discussions with groups of women about who is a leader and why. If women are not represented in leadership structures, speak with the women and with male leaders to determine why.

✓ Note how leaders and other structures deal with taboo issues and individual rights. If possible, use these issues as discussion points to assess people's awareness of their rights.

✓ Discuss with leaders whether any groups are excluded in order to understand whether there are obstacles to their participation and whether the situation can change.

✓ Give the information back to the community, in the form of maps and flowcharts, so that they can validate the findings and use them in their discussions.

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3.2.2 Community-based representation

Regardless of the diverse positions and attitudes among existing leaders, it is important to find ways to work with them in order to ensure access to the wider community. It is not helpful to establish parallel structures at the leadership level, as these might be undermined by existing leaders and, in the long term, important protection issues might be pushed underground.

If the mapping exercise reveals that groups are excluded, work with partners and progressive community members to define strategies to gain the support of leaders to introduce change. Work with the community to analyze the obstacles and protection risks that under-represented groups face when they wish to have access to or influence decision-makers. Share information with partners *and the community* about UNHCR[44] and UN policies[45] so that they understand why it is necessary for us all to discuss and take action on these issues.

Camp elections in Damak, Nepal
In 2005, refugee women expressed concern about election procedures at the camp, since people were asked to line up behind the preferred candidate in public. As a result, a secret voting system was introduced for the election of committees, from the sub-sector level to the executive level, making election procedures more democratic. In an effort to ensure that all groups in the camp were represented, caste and age were added to the selection criteria for the committees. A code of conduct was introduced in the camp-management committee to increase accountability.

Where leadership structures are just being established, we can work with persons of concern to ensure that the structures are as representative of the wider community as possible. For example, we can advocate clear selection criteria for candidates, support the meaningful representation of women in the committee, explain why it is important for persons with disabilities and youth to be represented, and ensure that groups that have been discriminated against have the support and capacity to participate fully and equally in any meeting. If this is not the case, we should negotiate or mediate on their behalf. In an urban setting, pre-established formal committees might not exist, so it might be helpful to establish such committees to strengthen informal networks.

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It is important to identify people who might be able to influence the more hard-line leaders, and encourage progressive and committed members interested in representing their group. We should enhance their skills as well as those of the more traditional leaders, encourage these people to work jointly with the traditional or established leadership, and support them in convincing traditional leaders about the benefits of sub-committees and sub-area leaders or representatives, or more representative structures, by welcoming new members into the existing leadership structure.

Where certain groups are not represented or committees are not addressing their needs, we should work directly with these groups to raise awareness about their situation. These groups can be encouraged to organize themselves separately with the aim of joining others once all parties feel confident about working together. Promote the right of children to participate, particularly those with disabilities and adolescents, and give them the opportunity to express their concerns and their priorities for action using a variety of media, including photography, drawing or art competitions, and taking affirmative action to include children with disabilities in focus group discussions.[46] Spend a day with children to learn about their activities and challenges.

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A committee elected at the start of an operation might not be as popular or representative ten years later. The community should monitor all committees; regular, fair and transparent elections should be encouraged. Community members can help ensure that the committees remain representative by systematically recording the profile (age, sex, background) of the people who attend meetings and noting who contributes to the discussions. Afterward, they can discuss what this might mean for the rights and needs of those who are excluded. Regular participatory assessments can help monitor and promote leadership structures or committees that are inclusive and representative.

Ten tips on supporting representative structures

✓ Working with the leaders and other members of the community, identify what methods are used to transmit information to all.

✓ Analyze with community members the ground rules for interaction with the leaders and committees, how representative they are, who attends meetings, and who speaks or feels free to speak.

✓ Discuss with the leaders how they promote a caring, protective environment and how those at greater risk are supported. Analyze the consequences of exclusion with the leaders and with those groups that are left out.

✓ Identify community values that support inclusive approaches and individual rights. Mention these in discussions to highlight the fact that rights, inclusiveness and participation are part of their approach and are not "alien" concepts.

✓ Support the community in defining good leadership and who in the community reflects that definition. Discuss with these people why groups, such as women and youth, are excluded and agree on strategies for change.

✓ Do not just promote 50 percent participation by women or the participation of young people. First prepare leaders to support these changes.

✓ Hold workshops on governance to ensure that the community supports fair and representative elections, including rotating and time-limited leadership, human rights, including women's and children's rights, and gender equality.

✓ Facilitate a process through which community volunteers organize fair elections. Invite observers, such as local authorities and humanitarian workers, to provide material support for the elections, and support the community in monitoring the ballot to ensure fairness and prevent intimidation.

✓ Be careful not to create committees for the sake of having committees. Agree on clear goals and ensure that traditional leaders support the initiative.

✓ Work with partners and community-based organizations to develop ground rules that are transparent, guarantee fair access for all and representative participation, and promote leaders' accountability and their role as duty-bearers in the community.

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3.2.3 Community-based protection responses and solutions

Given its mandate, UNHCR focuses particularly on rights-based responses to protection risks.

Community-based protection requires using participatory methods, such as UNHCR's *Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations*, for gathering data, mapping high-risk security areas and analyzing the challenges and protection risks the communities face, including access to markets, support to older persons and persons with disabilities, how people are using assistance, whether everyone is receiving assistance, safety in school and in the community, and prevention of teenage pregnancy and alcohol abuse. UNHCR's People-oriented Planning framework is helpful for analyzing, with the community, how people's roles have changed since displacement, and their access to protection, including assistance. It can also be used to identify the resources they have brought with them, how these are managed and who does what in the community.[47] Understanding these changes will help identify the risks that may be associated with, or exacerbated by, the actions of external actors that are not carefully considered.[48]

Normally, communities and individuals develop mechanisms to respond to most of the protection problems they face. In many situations, they will already be dealing with the problem adequately, although people might welcome additional support. We should spend time learning what the traditional methods were for responding to the needs of unaccompanied and separated children prior to displacement. If children's rights are respected, we should replicate these practices rather than introduce different systems.

There may be situations where community members do not recognize a practice as a protection risk or a violation of human rights, and there will be no community response or the response might be inadequate. This is often the case for sexual and gender-based violence. We might need to inquire discreetly about what happens to a woman who has a child as a result of rape, how the community perceives such an issue, and what the community's reaction will be toward the woman and/or child. When the community response does not meet international human rights standards, we should work with people to change their responses.

The right to education

In a camp in Uganda, the refugee men explained that they considered it to be the children's responsibility to get up early and go digging in return for money or in-kind payment to pay for food for the family. Once the children had covered this family need, and if sufficient money was available for school fees, the children were then entitled to attend school—if they had the energy to do so, could arrive on time, and bring firewood with them for the supplementary feeding programme.

In Jordan, meetings with young Iraqi women revealed that they had not been to school for the last four to five years of exile. Their parents had been hoping for a resettlement solution and thus had not wished to enrol them in local schools. Five years later, their daughters were angry with their parents, as their friends in Iraq had completed their schooling.

The right to health

Because of a lack of treatment facilities, persons with mental disabilities were chained to one place to restrict their movement and eliminate any threat they might pose to themselves and members of the community.

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We should raise awareness about **human rights**, including the rights of women and children, with the community, using workshops and discussions to analyze the community's human rights practices: which rights are being respected and by whom. It can be helpful to compare human rights standards with community values and identify areas where they coincide. Discussion points can include: which rights are not being met and why; whether all people can exercise their rights or whether certain groups are excluded and why; and who a rights-holder is and who is a duty-bearer. This can lead to discussions about what actions should be taken, as a community, to improve adults' and children's enjoyment of their rights. Such a comparison can provide a basis for agreeing on what constitutes a protection risk and how respect for individual rights should inform any protection response.

The criteria for reviewing a community-based protection response could include the following:

Compatibility: Does it uphold the values of the community and human rights standards?

Coverage: Does it extend to all individuals in the community?
Comprehensive: Does it address the root causes?

To support community responses that meet human rights standards:

- Assist the community in developing a set of good practices from their own experience.
- Help document these practices to guide future decisions and establish precedents to which they can then refer when faced with similar situations.
- As good practices are identified, agencies should disseminate them as positive examples, promote them, and provide further support, if required.
- Find ways of extending these examples to support other areas of the community's work.
- Agree on complementary actions to bridge any gaps, such as access to loans for housing, credit schemes, and meetings with authorities.

When community actions do not meet human rights standards:

- Meet those individuals or groups who are adversely affected by the practice and ensure that they recognize the negative impact. Be aware of confidentiality and ensure that people will not be exposed to security problems. Do not meet with a group, such as that of women or children, that might later be targeted because of the subject matter discussed. Talk with others to find out about such practices, such as health staff, traditional birth attendants and teachers.
- Discuss alternative responses with the concerned community members and find ways to include these in future discussions and plans.
- Facilitate discussions with other community members about the negative consequences for the affected individuals and reflect on the impact on the family and community.
- Analyze where the practice came from and why it is considered important or valuable.
- Identify small entry points for change and awareness-raising, and provide support to individuals and groups who are willing to work for change.

- Ensure that people have understood which practices are unacceptable and why, and ensure that UNHCR and its partners do not support such practices.
- In cases where the community does not recognize the harm to the individual caused by the practice, UNHCR should intervene directly. This requires careful consideration to ensure that a real response is provided beyond immediate safety and/or the restitution of rights, and to avoid negative consequences for those affected and those intervening.

Sometimes, a lack of response is due to a lack of resources or knowledge of potential options. With external support, including directed discussions, progress can be made.

When traditional mechanisms have broken down because of displacement, the community might not give priority attention to groups that may have specific protection problems. When this is the case, these gaps must be discussed openly with the community so that mechanisms can be developed through which the community re-establishes its role as duty-bearer in the protection of members of the community. If there is no strong community network, as is often the case in urban areas, we should seek additional support from local associations or religious or other organizations.

Those to be identified, protected and monitored include:
- unaccompanied and separated children, especially child-headed households
- children formerly associated with armed forces, particularly girls
- persons with disabilities
- older persons, particularly grandparent-headed households
- persons with mental health and psycho-social problems
- single persons

Persons at heightened risk
While some people in the community may have specific needs, some of these, and others who do not fall under these categories, will be at "**heightened risk**." This means that the individual will have already been subject to physical violence, lack of protection and trauma and/or be likely to face such a situation in the immediate future. Without intensive monitoring

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and possibly direct intervention, the person might be left unprotected. For this reason, in addition to identifying groups with specific needs, we must further filter these groups, and others, to determine who is at heightened risk. These individuals might include a girl who may be subject to female genital mutilation, a man who has been subject to torture prior to flight with no access to psycho-social support, a youth who is being pressured by the family to join an armed group, and/or a woman at risk of domestic violence. Not all persons who have specific needs are at heightened risk, however. For example, a child with a disability may be well cared for by his/her parents, or an older person may have full family support.

Women and girls at heightened risk

Many of the problems faced by women and girls place them at heightened risk because of their status in the community and because of gender discrimination, which means that they may be shunned and excluded rather than supported. The community can help identify who is at heightened risk.

Research conducted by the Centre for Refugee Research at the University of New South Wales has demonstrated that in-depth consultations with women will greatly assist in identifying those **women and girls at heightened risk** in the community.[49] Such consultations have been conducted in India, Ethiopia and Bangladesh[50] and have demonstrated the importance of working with the community to understand who is most at risk and needs an urgent protection response. UNHCR's Executive Committee has acknowledged that "women and girls can be exposed to particular protection problems related to their gender, their cultural and socio-economic position, and their legal status, which mean that they may be less likely than men to be able to exercise their rights." EXCOM has also recognized that "specific action in favour of women and girls may also be necessary to ensure they can enjoy protection and assistance on an equal basis with men and boys."[51] Identifying women and girls at risk in a given situation requires us to identify the factors that threaten their rights. They include:

> *Risk factors in the wider protection environment due to* security problems; barriers to accessing and enjoying assistance and services; the position of women in society leading to inequalities; legal

systems and/or protection mechanisms that do not adequately respect, protect and fulfil their rights; and no access to immediate support, complaints mechanisms and medium and longer-term solutions.

Individual risk factors resulting from low status or situation in society; previous exposure, or risk of exposure, to SGBV and other forms of violence; and need for health care or other support.[52]

While all persons in a displaced community may find themselves at risk, the challenge is to define who most needs close monitoring to prevent further protection incidents.

> The participatory consultations held in the refugee camps in Bangladesh in March 2006 drew attention to the particular protection risks faced by the wives and daughters of men who were imprisoned. The consultations highlighted not only how the man often faced arbitrary arrest and detention, but how the wife was threatened with rape and young daughters were threatened with both abduction and rape. The consultations further revealed that men with wives and young daughters were potential victims of false accusations by powerful local authorities, since their detention then left the family vulnerable to harassment and sexual violence. Men were thus trapped in an exploitative situation, as they feared being detained. The consultations enabled the office to identify whom it should interview to determine who might be most at risk in the community. Follow-up interviews confirmed the accuracy of the community's assessment.

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To help staff identify who is most at risk in a community, the office is developing a Heightened Risk Identification Tool,[53] based on research by partners.[54] Once staff know who is most at risk, they will need to establish an **individual case-management system** for tracking referrals for urgent action, close monitoring and follow-up to find solutions. The tool also enables staff and partners to follow up on information provided by communities on who is most at risk (see section 3.2.7 on community-based monitoring and evaluation) and to ensure that those individuals are protected. The EXCOM Conclusion on children at risk highlighted the need

for improved child-protection systems including early identification and monitoring of those children.

Serious protection problems can arise when community leaders do not work with the different members of the community to ensure that frail older persons and persons with disabilities who have no family support can be assisted in obtaining food, fuel, firewood and other basic items. It is important to discuss these gaps with community leaders and other members of the community so that collective action is taken. There is a tendency for external actors to step in and solve the problem. While this might be easier in the short term, it can create problems later, when there is no humanitarian agency on the ground to fill the gap.

It may be appropriate to assist the community in establishing structures to address certain issues. For example, as duty-bearers towards children, parents, teachers, students and the local education authorities could be assisted in creating an education committee. Such a committee could expedite the establishment of schools and encourage community ownership of the school system. Community members could monitor school attendance and determine the causes of absenteeism. This, in turn, can help prevent military recruitment and sexual exploitation and abuse, and will strengthen community-protection mechanisms.[55] Such a committee could also consider broader child-welfare issues, such as unaccompanied and separated children, and be responsible for ensuring that these children attend school, too.[56]

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Ten tips on supporting community-based protection responses and solutions

✓ Study with the community how it responds to various protection risks. How are these issues discussed in community meetings?

✓ Identify those cultural norms and values that uphold human rights and highlight these when discussing respect for individual rights. Focus and build on good examples rather than only discussing negative points.

✓ Determine whether the community is receptive to the work and whether we are engaging more members in the process. Be wary of working with only a few, since we will not build a broad support base or real ownership that way and it could expose people to security risks.

✓ Train community members in documenting good practice and participatory methods, and in data collection and analysis, if relevant. All sectors of the community should be involved, reflecting the age, gender and diversity within the group.

✓ Agree with the community on criteria for analyzing protection risks and responses. Use flip-charts, diagrams or photographs and leave them with the community so that the information can be discussed further.

✓ Working with the community, establish systems to identify groups with specific needs and community-support mechanisms for the delivery of assistance to those who are housebound, frail or unable to collect their assistance.

✓ Agree with the community on what mechanisms (committees, targeted support, complaints mechanisms) will be established to identify and address protection gaps and ensure support.

✓ Identify, with the community, which groups might be at heightened risk. **Look out for and find out more about the specific risks facing women and girls.**

✓ *Use The UNHCR Individual Heightened Risk Identification Tool* to identify those individuals in urgent need of protection and take immediate follow-up action.

✓ Advocate with authorities to assume their protection responsibilities.

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In addition to raising awareness about protection gaps and working with the community to re-establish traditional responses (provided that they respect human rights), we should also invite national agencies to provide additional expertise and assume their responsibilities as duty-bearers. In some cases, local authorities will be obliged under their own national legislation to assume a formal role, such as legal guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children. UNHCR and others should intervene to fill gaps only *after* all these options have been explored.

Human rights and culture

UNHCR's Executive Committee's Conclusion on women and girls at risk stresses that "each community is different and ... an in-depth understanding of religious and cultural beliefs and practices is required to address the protection risks women and girls face in a sensitive manner while bearing in mind obligations under international refugee, human rights and humanitarian law."

In some cases, international human rights standards may not coincide with the community's **norms and practices**. These must be identified early on, and team discussions with relevant community members should be initiated as soon as possible to consider solutions. A well-thought-out strategy must be developed with members of the community who may be more sensitive to the issue.

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Traditional justice systems

We may find that a community has a well-established and respected system of justice based on traditional leadership, but which has no means of appeal and fails to recognize the rights of women or children. The same system might force women who are raped to marry the rapist to defend family honour, in violation of the woman's rights. Or the system might have nothing to say about the practice of fostering children in households where they are then treated as virtual slaves, or about older persons sentenced to death under traditional justice because they are accused of witchcraft. Thus, a traditional justice system may be useful for settling minor disputes within the community; but crimes such as rape or sexual abuse should be dealt with under the national legal system. In such cases, staff are expected to intervene with the authorities, leaders and other community members to discuss appropriate legal action that reflects the wishes of the survivors and respects the principle confidentiality. As humanitarian actors, we are required to respect and promote gender equality and the rights of all in our daily work.

Identify **areas of leverage**, where community structures and culture may work in favour of the protection of individuals and minority groups, particularly women and children, and strengthen these. Teamwork is particularly important in ensuring that community members understand that humanitarian organizations adhere to a rights framework.

Staff are presented with numerous challenges when bringing these issues to the attention of the community and trying to find common solutions. Incidents of sexual and gender-based violence, such as female genital mutilation, might be publicly denounced to "keep UNHCR happy," but the practice may continue "underground." As a result, those requiring assistance are less likely to seek it and might even be punished if they try to do so.[57]

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Education in Guinea

Refugee parents from Sierra Leone living in a camp in Guinea were sending their children to Koranic boarding schools. The children were not receiving formal education there, however; they were providing services for the teachers. As this was clearly exploitation of children, UNHCR denounced the practice as a human rights violation. The community did not agree, and the practice continued, although UNHCR could no longer locate either the teachers or the children. It was only after an analysis of the community structure and improved dialogue with the community that UNHCR was able to identify ways of working with the community through a team of imams. They were willing and able to persuade the Koranic teachers that the children had to be released for formal education. Koranic classes were then conducted in the evenings. Literacy classes focusing on human rights were also introduced. Thus, the community members became aware of children's right to education and also learned how their traditional practices could conform to international human rights standards.

The universality of human rights can be challenged by members of the community on the grounds that local culture and tradition should take precedence. Some UNHCR staff have resisted taking action to promote and protect the rights of persons of concern on the grounds that it would interfere with local culture. As UN staff members, it is important to review our own attitudes and move beyond such responses as "that's their culture." Cultural beliefs are neither homogenous nor permanent; they are continually being renewed and reshaped, including by conflict and displacement, the media, education, the Internet, and deliberate efforts to influence values through revisions of law or government policy.[58]

Ten tips on addressing sensitive issues

✓ Clarify from the beginning UNHCR's position on human rights. Emphasize that UNHCR's responsibility is to protect the rights of women and men, girls and boys, regardless of their ethnic, religious, social or other background.

✓ Do not imply that taking a community-based approach means doing everything that the community suggests or refraining from highlighting the organization's position on human rights. Begin raising awareness about gender equality and the rights of women and children at an early stage.

✓ Avoid appearing judgemental about community practices. Show respect, understanding and cultural sensitivity. Ensure that you are familiar with international legal standards and national legal standards that conform to international law.

✓ Remember that in every community there are individual(s) who are open to new ideas. Identify such individuals in the community, especially among leaders, and explore ways of having a constructive dialogue with the main decision-making body.

✓ The right advocates within the community are far more effective than external actors, such as UNHCR staff; but do not expose them to security risks.

✓ Assess the situation carefully: If an action violates individual rights, is it a response that has been developed recently or is it a long-standing practice? Discuss with the community any negative practices and seek to understand their importance to the community.

✓ Focus on the reasons behind the practices, the consequences for, or effects on, women, men, boys, girls, older persons and persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. Jointly look at opportunities to change the practice, who should be involved, and how to proceed.

✓ Do not force results. Work with the community to identify small areas for change, such as alternative practices that uphold values without violating rights, rather than trying to introduce radical changes overnight. Spend a lot of time in the community.

✓ When working towards the empowerment and equality of women, engage men and invite them to focus group discussions on issues such as masculinity, fatherhood, gender equality, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and gender-based violence.

✓ Working with the community, design and organize mass-information campaigns, awareness-raising activities, training, and theatre activities to ensure that *all* community members are aware of their rights and obligations.

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3.2.4 Community capacity-building

Capacity-building support should be designed jointly with the community and should be based on an analysis of the community's skills, capacities and objectives. These activities should be transparent so that everyone understands who will benefit, why and how those trained will support other members, and what options will be available later.

The training of community members in participatory methods, if required, should take place as soon as possible. Simple tools, such as transect walks and timelines, can be easily shared, although more analytical methods, such as ranking and problem trees, require more preparation and time.[59] One of the best ways to undertake these exercises is first to train community members in the methodology through practice, with the aim that they then conduct the same exercises with the community. This will create capacity in the community for ongoing data analysis, avoid institutional gaps as humanitarian workers rotate in and out of the community, and, in the long term, foster greater community participation in building representative structures.

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There are three areas of capacity-building that are particularly important:
(a) Organizational, leadership, communication, participatory and analytical skills combined with an understanding of good governance and the promotion of gender equality and respect for human rights, including children's rights;
(b) Data collection, project design, planning, management, administration and evaluation; depending on the community, basic literacy and numerical skills might also be required;
(c) Technical skills for specific areas, such as business-creation, microcredit schemes, basic accounting and savings systems, agriculture, vocational training, marketing analysis and feasibility studies.

Organizing Community Centres

Initially, the centre established in Syria to support Somali and, more recently, Iraqi refugees, was used mainly to channel complaints and requests for urgent assistance to UNHCR. There was no clear management structure, and there was considerable tension among the different users. In an effort to change the dynamics at the centre, UNHCR encouraged the refugees to recruit their own team leader and assistant team leader. Everyone working at the centre received training on team-building, which helped them assume ownership of the centre and focus on serving the community. As a result, the team became stronger and members selected individuals for new managerial positions. The centre now has more than 300 persons enrolled in its activities.

Capacity-building can take many forms, including short awareness-raising sessions, coaching of small groups, on-the-job training, assuming responsibilities and new tasks, workshops, the provision of material support, exchanging information with other groups, e-learning, Internet access, networking opportunities, and exposure to and participation in public events. These opportunities should be extended to the host community, if possible.

In Romania, UNHCR responded to an identified communication gap among the host community, the authorities and the organization by establishing a project to empower refugees. UNHCR and NGOs supported the establishment of refugee committees in reception centres and a refugee women's organization. They provided training and material support to refugee initiatives. Those refugees who were trained as leaders were encouraged to become trainers themselves. Many of them worked as resource persons at training events.

In assessing, with the community, members' different needs, it is important to agree on the target audience and ensure that the different groups are represented equitably. Depending on the gender-power relations, it might be advisable to organize separate meetings and training for women and marginal groups, while also sensitizing men to the benefits of meaningful participation by women, particularly in decision-making structures. Children should also participate, since participation helps build

their self-confidence and equips them better for the future. Appropriate participatory tools should be used for them.

In a community where women are not usually allowed to speak in public, establishing a 50 percent quota on committees without providing targeted capacity-building support will make it difficult for women to take advantage of these opportunities and sustain them. It might, in fact, increase prejudices about their leadership abilities. Provide training and other support as required and ensure that schedules guarantee participation by women and arrange for community childcare to support their attendance. Promote attendance by persons with disabilities and use facilities that are accessible to them.

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The Refugee Central Committee in a Sudanese refugee community was composed only of men. As UNHCR requires 50 percent representation by women, there was concern that the leaders would comply to be politically correct, but that the women would not be able to participate meaningfully. UNHCR persuaded the groups of the importance of regular elections and negotiated space for women's representation. An agreement was reached between UNHCR and the refugee leaders for four of the 15 positions to be allocated to women. To ensure women's meaningful participation, the women were given the opportunity to elect their representatives separately. They were also taught leadership skills to build their self-confidence. As there had never before been formal meetings between men and women, neither group was comfortable. UNHCR thus negotiated for four additional women to accompany the four representatives as observers—and to give moral support. The four women representatives felt more secure in speaking, as they benefited from the advice of the additional four women before taking the floor. As all the representatives gradually became accustomed to the presence of the four women observers, those women, too, were allowed to participate. Through this process, the number of women representatives was doubled.

When organizing capacity-building activities, be sure that the selected facilitators are sensitive to age, gender and diversity issues and the promotion of a rights- and community-based approach. As much as possible, invite local or regional organizations, including academic action/research bodies, to deliver the training. If interpreters are needed, they should

become familiar with the training content and objectives beforehand. Whenever possible, encourage those who are trained to train other community members.

When working with communities to strengthen their capacities:

Raise awareness on a rights-based approach, including the roles of the community members as rights-holders and duty-bearers. Clarifying these two categories will facilitate the dialogue between community members and humanitarian agencies and will help establish the ground rules for the working partnership.

Encourage groups to chart their own course. Empowerment is achieved when the assistance provided supports the group's own plans and ideas. Groups and their individual members know their priorities best. The groups should establish their own agendas and contribute their own skills. External actors should provide information and support as required, provided that the activities adhere to international legal standards.

Build strong communication skills. Leaders of both sexes and all ages need to communicate effectively, not just to mobilize and motivate their members, but also to communicate outside the group. This may include sharing successful experiences and information so that others may replicate them or appealing to external parties. It may even include skills to negotiate better terms with other stakeholders. Often, such skills are transferred through alternative techniques, such as theatre groups, audio-visual material and other entertainments that local people can easily understand. Avoid lectures and seminars.

Develop action research. In deciding which course of action to pursue, a group needs reliable information. Since many displaced communities are unlikely to have access to such information, people may need support in devising their own research capacity and developing community-based data-collection techniques. UNHCR and partners can support this work by providing information about policies on protection, including assistance, and durable solutions, and facilitating access to a variety of local, national and international actors and related information. Such actions

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will increase group awareness, allow people to make informed decisions, and promote a culture of transparency that, in turn, will foster strong leadership.

Build awareness-raising and empowerment into all activities. Group meetings can be an occasion for debate about the causes of protection problems and possible ways to address these causes. For instance, functional literacy activities for women will not only enable them to read and write, but could also raise awareness about the root causes of their problems. Legal literacy classes can combine raising awareness on rights and a gender analysis of national laws with literacy skills. The radio is often an excellent medium for sharing information, and supporting groups in running their own radio programmes can be an empowering process as the groups gain visibility while offering an important service to the community.

Foster strong leadership. Real leadership must be chosen by the group or community members, while promoting age, gender and diversity balance. Informed choice is the single most important factor in determining success. UNHCR and its partners can help by providing training and any advice that the community-designated leaders might request. One way to provide structured support to community representatives is through training on literacy, if needed, leadership, communication and management, covering such subjects as participatory techniques, empowerment, gender awareness and women's rights, good governance and UNHCR's policies.

Tackle internal as well as external injustice. Many persons of concern depend on traditional leadership for their support and protection, particularly for organizing people to help deliver assistance. Forging unity among the different segments of the community, based on common problems and issues, and also on common solutions, is one way to overcome differences and increase participation in decision-making processes. Use capacity-building opportunities to consider situations of injustice and to build skills to address those situations, such as skills in conflict-resolution.[60]

Forge alliances with other local groups. Large numbers of similar interest groups that join together in coalitions and networks can overcome bigger

challenges and achieve wider goals by supporting each other's struggle and action. Build connections with local associations for young people, women's rights groups, and trade unions.

Avoid early failure. While groups must determine their own goals, UNHCR and its implementing partners should help them avoid actions that are unlikely to succeed, especially in the early stages. An accurate assessment of the situation must be undertaken, including consideration of such issues as: access to local employment; the potential for accessing markets to sell products produced from agricultural activities, home-based production and income-generating projects; access to government policies in relation to drinking water, trees and firewood, or land allocation; international and national rules, regulations and policies in relation to relief distribution; freedom of movement; and work permits. The community members must be fully informed of the opportunities and constraints prior to taking action. Networking with similar local groups and other experts in these fields will increase the chances of success and allow for the exchange of experiences and information. Participatory assessments can be used to evaluate lessons-learned and incorporate them into capacity-building activities.

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Balance external and internal contributions. External funding, whether from foreign donors or from local or national host governments and NGOs, should be understood to be a temporary measure to assist communities of concern in the initial stages of their displacement. Experience shows that most groups become stronger when they are self-reliant and independent.

Create the context for learning through transparency and information-sharing. Communities need information in order to participate meaningfully. Information can be shared through public meetings, notice boards, leaflets, and public announcements. Whichever means of communication and information are used, find out how the message is interpreted and perceived; don't assume that because it has been passed on or handed over it is understood. Communication should flow both ways, from humanitarian workers to the communities and vice versa, and from community repre-

sentatives to community members and vice versa. Use random checks to ensure that all community members have received information, especially those who are housebound or speak a different language from the majority. Ensure that information is child friendly and accessible to children.

Ten tips on building capacity

✓ Train several community members in the use of participatory methods and ensure age, gender and diversity balance among participants. Promote women and youth leaders.

✓ Use all trainings to raise awareness and understanding of values, such as inclusiveness and respect for all, age, gender and diversity awareness, and the rights of children, persons with disabilities, older persons and gender equality.

✓ Work with community leaders to inform all members about their responsibilities as duty-bearers, particularly parents, and rights-holders.

✓ Working with the community, identify the different capacities and skills of community members and agree where training and other capacity-building measures are needed.

✓ Monitor how different people use the various training and capacity-building opportunities and whether any particular group is being excluded, such as persons with disabilities, young mothers, children, or adolescents. If so, find out why.

✓ Build on the creative ideas of different age groups to deliver messages while fostering their leadership skills.

✓ Identify appropriately skilled partners to deliver the training and ensure that they will transmit values in keeping with a rights- and community-based approach.

✓ Train people on developing community action plans and participatory monitoring and evaluation tools.

✓ Follow up on how people are applying the skills acquired and are training others.

✓ Discuss with the people responsible for managing community projects how they are coping and whether they require particular support or training. Promote transparent accounting mechanisms.

3.2.5 Community-action planning

Community-action planning is participatory planning at the community level. Depending on the circumstances, the host community and other stakeholders can be involved as well. A community-action plan is developed from the analysis of rights and the prioritization of protection risks, assistance needs, capacities and solutions identified during participatory assessments and other activities. The plan is based on what the community feels able and willing to do to address the issues identified. At this final stage of analysis and prioritization, it is important to ensure that the interests of all the different groups in the community have been represented. If not, discuss what arrangements will be made to address these concerns, especially the protection risks of traditionally marginalized groups, such as action to prevent SGBV, improving shelter conditions for older persons and persons with disabilities, or improving assistance to child-headed households.

In discussing the available budget with a refugee community in a camp in Sierra Leone, UNHCR staff used a coloured pie chart showing what proportion of the available budget was spent on each sector, such as health, water and education. The pie chart was then used to discuss the community's priorities and determine how UNHCR should divide the budget the following year.

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While the collection and analysis of information should involve a large number of people, it may be more practical if the plan, itself, is drawn up by a smaller group, such as a planning committee or a community-action team. This group may take responsibility for developing the action plan and monitoring its implementation. This does not mean that there will not be a role for members of the community who are not on the planning committee: The implementation of the plan will depend on the wider community. The process for selecting planning-committee members should reflect considerations outlined in section 3.2.2, "community-based representation."

The first step in developing a community-action plan is to identify the protection problems and assistance needs that have been prioritized by the community. Then, ask the following questions:

- What actions are required to deal with the problem?
- What outcome or change is desired and will this remove the cause or the symptom?
- Who will benefit? Are we being inclusive?
- Does the project support individual human rights and strengthen protection of all the community members?
- What resources are needed from the community itself and from outside?
- Who will provide these resources (material, financial, human)?
- How will the resources be administered? Who will keep the accounts?
- Who will carry out the project or activity?
- What is the timeframe for implementing the project?
- Who will monitor the project? How will the results be evaluated?

Depending on the circumstances, the community might be able to use its own resources and contact donors directly. This would indicate that community members are making decisions that affect their lives. However, when rights relating to livelihood, employment and freedom of movement are not recognized, assistance is probably necessary. Still, the way in which the assistance is provided should promote self-reliance. All stakeholders should be kept informed of resource allocations to avoid duplication or competing for funding. At the same time, UNHCR must ensure that any community-action plan adequately respects and addresses the rights of all sectors of the population. This should be monitored through close communication with the community. If some groups are being excluded, it might be necessary to intensify the activities highlighted under section 3.2.3, "community-based protection responses and solutions," to ensure that their interests and priorities are addressed.

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*In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, focus group discussions with some 40 residents of a reception centre identified a variety of protection risks, including those relating to safety, health care, education, and access to legal information. A summary of the risks identified was produced for each focus group and residents then voted on priority areas. Stakeholders made a list of recommendations for future actions and jointly analyzed them. As a result, the following areas were prioritized for action:*

Health *– Advocacy for changes in legislation to institutionalize medical referrals and improve access to treatment and medicines. Adaptation of the medical transport services to better suit residents' schedules, and the introduction of psycho-social support.*

Legal advice, support and security *– Expanded counseling sessions at the centres and organized childcare, monthly tours of the reception facilities, and monthly meetings with the refugee council, manager, social worker and doctor. UNHCR regularized the issuance of birth certificates and advocated with the authorities to exempt residents from the renewal of documents. Nightly security patrols were introduced, and the role of the multifunctional team for prevention and response to SGBV was clarified.*

Assistance services *– Refugees were now able to select food baskets, older persons and pregnant and lactating women received appropriate food, and income-generation programmes were introduced in the centres.*

The resources needed for implementing the community-action plan will have been identified as part of the planning process. The community group will need to negotiate with external donors, the local government, and/or others for any outside resources they might need. Sometimes, joint action plans are required, such as those developed with the host community, usually in IDP situations, or with local authorities, particularly in returnee contexts.

UNHCR, its partners and other relevant institutions can support the community group in this negotiating process. They can suggest potential sources of support and advise on appropriate ways of negotiating for resources. UNHCR should also work with the community to implement the projects agreed to ensure that the community assumes ownership of the activities.

Ten tips on supporting community-action plans

✓ Ensure that those involved use participatory methods and that they have the backing of the community.

✓ Check that the plans reflect the age, gender and diversity profile of the community. If they do not, discuss this with those responsible to find solutions. Monitor for adherence to human rights standards.

✓ Work at the pace of the community rather than imposing the time-frames of external agencies. Remain flexible.

✓ Respect the ideas/wishes of the community while providing support/ideas as required.

✓ Ensure the participants/leaders share the action plan with the whole community and are transparent about the use of resources.

✓ Ensure that participatory monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are built into the plan.

✓ Raise awareness about the community's achievements.

✓ Advocate for support for the action plan among different external stakeholders.

✓ Ensure that the UNHCR or inter-agency funding mechanism provides support to the action plan if required/appropriate.

✓ Promote transparency and accountability among those responsible for the community-action plan.

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3.2.6 Community-action teams

Mobilizing men in the community around individual rights

South African men, like men in other parts of the world, often act in ways that contribute to domestic and sexual violence and high rates of HIV/AIDS. Recognizing that men's attitudes and behaviours can either impede or promote sexual and reproductive health, the international NGO Engender Health, in partnership with the Planned Parenthood Association, started the Men as Partners programme (MAP) in South Africa in 1998. In 2004, the MAP network expanded its programme of workshops, coalition-building and advocacy with the launch of "community-action teams," or CATs. These small, informal groups of volunteers provide an opportunity for men and women who have participated in MAP workshops to take action on gender- and HIV-related issues affecting their communities. The initiative was designed with the dual purpose of reaching a broader audience with MAP messages and helping CAT members sustain attitude and behavioural changes adopted while attending MAP workshops. By encouraging community members to get involved and assume ownership of attempts to change social norms, it was also hoped that the CATs would improve the sustainability of the MAP programme in general.

CATs are free to adopt their own sets of goals and interventions, provided that they operate within the general MAP framework, which aims to promote gender equity, reduce gender-based violence, improve sexual and reproductive health for men and women, and increase male involvement in the treatment and care of people living with HIV/AIDS. How these aims are interpreted depends on the context within which the CAT is operating and the interests of its members. For example, in a community where unemployment contributes to gender-based violence and high HIV infection rates, organizing a career fair may be the most appropriate course of action. For a CAT composed of artists and musicians, raising awareness through performance might be more appropriate.

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There are many issues that traditional community structures might not consider priorities or do not have the time to follow up. One way of fostering leadership skills among different groups and supporting change is to assist small, informal groups in setting up and developing their own activities. These community-action teams can introduce new ideas, in a non-threatening manner, on such issues as child rights and participation,

HIV/AIDS, working with men to stop violence, masculinities, environmental action, improving living conditions, and preventing and responding to specific threats to the community, such as violence against women and children. The teams have the advantage of being more flexible and less hierarchical than larger structures and are often attractive to young adults and children, particularly if they use media such as theatre and music to transmit their messages.

Ten tips on working with community-action teams

✓ Identify particular issues, such as protecting the environment or reducing the consumption of alcohol, that could mobilize small groups.

✓ Encourage the interest groups to discuss the issue and ways of addressing it.

✓ Choose an activity that would be of interest to the persons of concern.

✓ Think small: Many small-scale activities nurture community cohesion and can lead to activities that address bigger issues.

✓ Train and encourage the group to conduct participatory research on the issue in their community.

✓ Help the group to network with others facing a similar problem, including local associations.

✓ Encourage the members to set criteria for the selection of coordinator(s), define the roles and responsibilities of members, distribute tasks, decide on the resources they will contribute and develop monitoring and evaluation systems.

✓ Help the team develop values and criteria that promote respect for individual rights, diversity and tolerance.

✓ Build their skills, if required, in areas such as project management and accounting.

✓ Facilitate, if possible, access to the "outside" world and the Internet.

3.2.7 Community-based monitoring and evaluation

Of all the activities we undertake, community monitoring and evaluation are perhaps the most essential, since they identify shortcomings and provide for transparency and accountability. Monitoring and evaluation also

refer back to participatory assessments for determining what is or is not working. Through regular participatory assessments with the groups that are expected to benefit from projects, timely adjustments can be made to those projects, if necessary. Failure to monitor can lead to misdirected assistance and leave room for abuse and exploitation.

Community-based monitoring focuses on the implementation of activities to ensure that they are running smoothly and helping to achieve immediate objectives. Regular monitoring is important because planning processes are rarely perfect and situations change constantly. Monitoring is best conducted in partnership with those who are responsible for the project, those who participate and those who should receive the benefits. Monitoring must include regular visits to those with specific needs to ensure that they are not being excluded.

A participatory assessment in one country revealed that the school feeding programme, which had been put in place to encourage children to attend school, was, in fact, having the opposite effect on those most in need. Agreements had been reached between the community leaders, who were among the wealthier individuals in the camp, and the school director on criteria for providing incentives for the cooks, cooking materials and firewood. As a result, the poorest children were even less likely to attend school, since neither parents nor children could meet even minimum requirements. Children who did not provide firewood were sent away. Some parents were deterred from sending their children to school because they did not wish them to go hungry while others ate in front of them.

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Systems must be established early with community leaders to:
- monitor the provision of assistance to different groups, particularly those with specific needs and those at heightened risk, to avoid abuse and exploitation. (In all cases, due consideration must be given to confidentiality. In some instances, it might be inappropriate to involve the community.)
- hold discussions with the women, children and young people who are expected to benefit.
- have leaders or other community members regularly visit the homes of housebound people, child- and grandparent-headed households,

unaccompanied and separated children, and other groups with specific needs.
- regularly update UNHCR and agency staff on the status of such persons.
- receive reports on project implementation.
- solicit ongoing feedback from different members of the community on the quality of programme delivery, including the attitudes of those responsible for providing services.
- create confidential complaints mechanisms that are easily accessible to people of concern and ensure follow-up action.

Monitoring includes making necessary changes to the project or services and sharing information with stakeholders. UNHCR and agency staff should also conduct random visits to distribution sites and home visits to monitor the situation of different members of the community.

For people of concern to know what they are entitled to or what standards to measure us against, they must **know our mandate, role and policies**, who we are, and what we are doing. Therefore, we have a responsibility to provide this information clearly and in a language or medium they can understand.

Who controls the cooking stoves?
UNHCR distributed cooking stoves to a group of families, but during the participatory assessment it was discovered that some of the families were not using the stoves. Analysis revealed that families from one ethnicity were considered to be of a "lower caste" and thus the majority prevented them from using the stoves. A lack of knowledge about the community's dynamics resulted not only in a failure to ensure access to all, but allowed one group to use UNHCR assistance to discriminate against another group.

Mechanisms for enabling people of concern to present complaints to UNHCR and partner staff confidentially are important monitoring tools. All UNHCR offices are required to establish complaints procedures as per the UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and the follow-up instructions to offices issued in 2003 and 2004.[61] The model tools provided (information sheets and complaints referral forms)

should be adapted by staff in discussions with the community and circulated in local language.

Confidential individual case management systems
As highlighted in section 3.2.3, UNHCR offices must ensure that confidential individual case-management systems and committees are established with partners to provide **a system to follow up, monitor and find solutions for those individual persons who are at heightened risk.** The system for referral needs to be coordinated with the community. Any individuals at heightened risk[62] should be regularly visited by UNHCR and partner staff, with due consideration given to confidentiality and the potential for placing such persons at greater risk. UNHCR's ProGres database is a protection tool that can support an individual case-management system. Staff should use it to track those who have been identified as being at heightened risk. Staff will need to ensure that information is regularly updated to enable adequate and timely monitoring. These individuals might also be referred, as appropriate, to other support channels, based on agreements reached through SGBV standard operating procedures or Best Interests Determination procedures for children at risk. As well as providing immediate support, case-management committees should also consider longer-term solutions for and support to such persons, and to their caregivers and families, including the possibility of resettlement, where appropriate. While the individual case-management system is not community-based, it is an essential part of our protection work and builds on the work we do with the community.

Community-based evaluation is a review of the entire programme or project to see whether goals are being met and if the situation has improved. It can be conducted through participatory assessments, surveys and other methods. It is important that the different stakeholders agree which project or services are to be evaluated, with whom and when. The following questions can be used to guide an evaluation:

■ What has changed for the group or the community because of the project?

■ Do the changes correspond with the desired outcomes? If not, why not?

- Were the services delivered in an effective manner? Can the efficiency of procedures be improved?
- How were the project or services monitored and by whom? Does this need to improve?
- Was anybody excluded? If so, why? Was this detected quickly and addressed? If not, why not?
- Were those people at risk heightened risk and/or with specific needs contacted regularly to ensure that they had received the right support or service?
- Were people regularly informed of the progress of the project and how to access any related support?
- Were mechanisms set up to enable people to make complaints or discuss problems?
- Were the attitudes of those providing the services respectful and in keeping with organizational values?
- What have we learned from this experience? How will we apply this learning later?

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Community-based monitoring and evaluation cannot take place unless written, oral and visual information is provided to all members of the community in appropriate languages and in a comprehensible manner. As part of their strategy to support a rights- and community-based approach, all agencies should ensure that staff carry visible identification so that people of concern know to whom they are talking, which agency they represent and what they are offering. This should be complemented with regular information bulletins, in poster form, indicating what services each agency will provide and giving details of assistance programmes.

*The team in **Bangladesh** took photographs in the camp both before and after an agricultural project was implemented so that everyone could see the changes brought about through the project. Showing photographs is an excellent way of prompting discussion on what has changed, the progress made, and what still needs work.*

Impact reports through regular participatory assessments are a good way of disseminating information about changes introduced and progress monitored, and of evaluating the effectiveness of projects.

In the context of the Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming strategy, the UNHCR regional office in Budapest and its partners conducted participatory assessments in 2005 in Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. In August 2007, the office released a report entitled, "Being a Refugee: How Refugees and Asylum-seekers Experience Life in Central Europe," which documented the improvements made as result of redirecting UNHCR's work to the priority concerns raised by the community. In Slovenia, for example:

An introductory course in Slovenian language and culture was introduced;
Signs, in Turkish, about legal counseling were posted, and Turkish interpreters are now available for psycho-social services;
A house was established to provide free accommodation and intensive integration assistance for refugees for 12 months;
The government now offers additional language courses and vocational training for refugees; and
The employment agency now has officers dedicated to working with refugees and, as a result, more recognized refugees were able to find jobs.

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Ten tips on conducting community-based monitoring and evaluation

✓ From the outset, provide written, oral and visual information about your projects and services, or community-action plans, including funding, where appropriate.

✓ Work with leaders to agree on effective community-monitoring systems, particularly for persons with specific needs.

✓ Establish an individual case-management system and committee to protect, monitor and find solutions for persons at heightened risk, especially women and girls.

✓ Undertake regular participatory evaluations of UNHCR's work and programmes using focus group discussions and other methods.

✓ Keep evaluation tools simple, and ensure that all the different groups in the community participate.

✓ Build on previously agreed plans and participatory assessment findings to note progress and identify weaknesses.

✓ Listen and learn, rather than "discuss or defend," focus on the before and after to review impact and agree on steps to be taken to improve the situation.

✓ Discuss the results in the multifunctional team and share them with the community and partners as advocacy tools.

✓ Build any changes or lessons learned into the revised project. Document lessons learned and good practices and share them with other offices.

✓ Ensure that all staff wear identification with photos and names so that persons of concern can monitor and evaluate their attitudes and the quality of the services delivered by the different agencies.

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Knowledge, skills, attitudes and multi-functional teams

This section outlines the most important knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by humanitarian staff and the way in which a multifunctional team approach, which combines different professional skills and functions, can strengthen the community-based approach. It also provides guidance on how a team can first establish contact with the community.

4.1 Knowledge

"Not to know is bad; not wishing to know is worse."

Applying a community-based approach requires an understanding of group processes, conflict-resolution and mediation. This will enable the collective processes we eventually develop to take into account an individual's or sub-group's rights, and ensures that institutional and community objectives are met.[63] The multifunctional team should be equipped with basic knowledge, including:

■ An understanding of social sciences and expertise in communication techniques, which are essential for ensuring participation and under-

taking in-depth social analyses from an age, gender and diversity perspective;

■ Knowledge of international, regional and national legal instruments, which is useful when working with members of the community on human rights issues, and also helps us to be clear about the standards we must uphold; and

■ An understanding of UNHCR's policies, including EXCOM Conclusions and guidelines, particularly those relating to women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities and the prevention of and response to SGBV. We should also be familiar with such supporting tools as the use of resettlement, the operations management cycle, Standards and Indicators, ProGres, and relevant policies on HIV/AIDS. We should be fully conversant with the Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and UNHCR's Code of Conduct.

In addition, it is important to be willing to learn from those around us, including national and international staff, partners and government officials, to increase our knowledge and understanding. We should invest time in gathering information about the community, its history and current dynamics; at the same time, we should understand how our own age, sex and background facilitates or hinders their engagement with particular groups and communities. Knowledge of oneself and one's own weaknesses and strengths is useful in knowing how best to support community processes.

4.2 Skills

A few specific skills are required to ensure that the participatory process is successful and to support a rights- and community-based approach. The most important:

Communication skills are crucial in enabling people to work together on a common task or towards a common goal. Communication is a two-way process: Information is both received and transmitted through sharing and listening. Persons of concern can participate meaningfully only if they have access to the same accurate information as humanitarian workers.

Listening is the most important part of communication. Active listening requires a demonstration of interest in hearing what is said, in clarifying points and in being able to summarize information accurately. Communicating respectfully means **talking *with* people**, not at them.

Negotiating skills are important in facilitating complex processes with many different stakeholders who have various levels of power and decision-making capacities. Persuasion and negotiation are constantly required to open discussions about sensitive issues.

Good **observation** skills and **curiosity** enable people to discover many things that are happening in a community that might not be spoken about, such as how children are treated and what activities they are engaged in, or whether or not persons with disabilities are given a role in the community or are absent from community life. Observation also allows us to notice and interpret non-verbal behaviour. This is essential when trying to learn about how those who have less voice, or feel less free to use their voices, participate. It also helps us to be more aware of what effect we have on the community.

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Learning from the Nairobi-based multifunctional team

Previous assumptions	New assumptions
Urban refugees tend to be single young men.	Urban refugees comprise a diverse population that includes women and men, girls and boys, and people with a variety of specific needs.
Urban refugees are passive; they are waiting for UNHCR to solve their problems.	Urban refugees have developed a variety of coping mechanisms to protect themselves and establish livelihoods in the urban setting.
Urban refugees want resettlement and engage in manipulative behaviour to get it.	While resettlement is attractive, many refugees have built their lives and communities in the country of asylum.
Urban refugees are aggressive, requiring that UNHCR staff take additional security precautions when visiting refugee communities.	Urban refugees welcome interaction with UNHCR staff in their own communities, and it is generally safe to visit them, taking the usual precautions while in Nairobi.
UNHCR already knows everything it needs to know about urban refugees.	UNHCR can use multiple sources of information, including mapping, indicators, and community work, to learn about refugee communities in greater depth, particularly about persons who might not approach the office regularly.
Urban refugees come to UNHCR if they have problems.	Many of the most vulnerable refugees are unable to approach the office at all, while others approach infrequently.

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4.3 Attitudes

Above all else, our attitudes and the values we transmit will determine the nature of our relationship with people of concern. They will also enable good coordination and teamwork with other humanitarian agencies. It is all too easy to become burned-out and detached from the work, and sceptical of those with whom we are working, when there are few, or no, quick results.[64] Offices should make sure that there are opportunities for frontline staff to be debriefed in a constructive manner regularly to reduce stress and maintain a positive approach.

> *UNHCR's Code of Conduct* requires that staff "always seek to understand the difficult experiences that refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR have faced and survived, as well as the disadvantaged position in which they – particularly on the basis of gender, age or disability – may find themselves in relation to those who hold power or influence over aspects of their lives."[65]

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Our attitudes towards members of the community and our humanitarian peers are demonstrated in both verbal and non-verbal ways, and we need to be acutely aware of these signals to ensure that we maintain respect and impartiality in our work.

Body language is culture-specific, and **non-verbal messages** can be perceived differently, depending on who is interpreting them. It is important to face people when you are speaking to them, show sustained interest, and make eye contact as appropriate (without staring, since that can be perceived as aggressive). Messages are conveyed when you look at your watch when people are raising what they consider to be an important point, when you arrive at a community meeting with a ready-made checklist, when you sit *with* people rather than apart from them (unless this is part of the ritual if you are a guest), when you walk through the camp, meeting people, instead of remaining in the car.

The tone we use **when we speak** and our opening sentences often transmit clear signals to people about how serious we are about engaging in dialogue. Cutting off people who wish to raise points, not staying after a meeting to see people who are seeking individual time or leaving without making appointments all say something about our priorities. The use of non-technical language and avoidance of acronyms are basic signs of respect.

Showing **respect for traditions and customs** will build trust. Offering information about ourselves can also be helpful in reducing the distance between us and the community.

Seeing people as **human beings**, rather than "individual cases," "populations" or "caseloads," makes it easier to treat people with respect and dignity. Regular direct conversations with people, individually or in a small group, put a human face on complex problems and remind us of why we are humanitarian workers.[66] We should be aware of how we talk with children, and whether they find us approachable.

We should **try not to make assumptions** about people. Just because someone falls into a particular group, this does not mean that he/she will necessarily fit the stereotype of that group. For example, if a woman is described as a widow, we should not assume that she is necessarily in need of particular support (vulnerable). Until more is known about her, all that can be assumed is that her husband has died.

We should maintain respect for the humanitarian principle of **impartiality**.

People will also make assumptions about us and observe our behaviour. We might, for example, be perceived as external saviours or as foreign interlopers. We must clearly outline our proposed contributions and limitations in order to define our relationship with the community.

Ten tips on communicating well and demonstrating a positive attitude

✓ Be aware of your verbal and non-verbal behaviour; you are being observed. Take time to listen to people. Listen, too, with your eyes. Do not be afraid to remain silent; people might need to think before reacting.

✓ Be aware of what might keep people at a distance from you and what might build good relations.

✓ Be enthusiastic and reflect it in your voice and attitude. Be welcoming and reflect this in your facial expressions and body language. Pay attention to those who remain silent; include them by using eye contact.

✓ Delivering protection requires internalizing age, gender and diversity analysis and reflecting it in your interaction with communities. Be ready to take a stand and uphold human rights.

✓ Do not make assumptions; facilitate. Find out about traditional ways of communicating and use them, if appropriate. Relate theories and concepts to familiar life experiences.

✓ Value people's time, capacities and resources. Make sure your demands do not create a financial burden for people. Create the conditions for meaningful participation, including children's participation, without imposing too many new methods and procedures.

✓ Prepare with interpreters well in advance so that they understand the process and what you are seeking to achieve. Avoid misunderstandings and second-guessing.

✓ Find ways to inform those who do not read. Help people understand.

✓ Recognize and document people's contributions. Thank people for their availability, assistance and hospitality.

✓ Stop by the teashop or market, walk around the camp, offer to assist in small ways and spend time talking to people.

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4.4 Multifunctional teams

International protection involves more than providing legal protection; it encompasses all activities undertaken to uphold the rights of refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR. It also includes the measures that persons of concern take to ensure their own protection. Three evaluations undertaken on women, children and the role of community services noted that protection was most effectively delivered when teams worked in a multifunctional manner.[67]

> *In one refugee camp, the water-sanitation agency had established a community-based system of refugee community-outreach workers, while the camp-management agency had established a system through which refugee workers implemented camp-management activities, such as overseeing food distribution. It soon became evident that the philosophy behind each was quite different. One focused on refugee workers becoming community-outreach agents while the other hired refugee staff to oversee and deliver assistance. The resulting confusing and competing methods of working undermined efforts to promote a community-based approach.*

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Reviewing and analyzing protection risks, priorities and solutions through a community-based approach require a multidisciplinary perspective. In launching its age, gender and diversity mainstreaming strategy, UNHCR promoted the application of a multifunctional team approach to its protection work, providing a useful model for working in the field.[68] A multifunctional team brings together the expertise of management, programme, protection, field, public-information and community-services staff, both national and international, and government and partner staff to enable a comprehensive analysis and planning process and to ensure common goals and approaches in our work. Rotation is important, as it broadens the expertise available and helps avoid overloading certain team members.

It is essential to work as a multifunctional team when implementing a community-based approach, since the team employs all the expertise available in an operation and thus maximizes the benefit to the people of concern. If a team member or partner focuses narrowly on a task without taking time to communicate with and learn from others, the full advantages of a community-based approach will not be realized.

Each person brings particular skills to the multifunctional team:

- Expertise in community mobilization and outreach work, communication techniques and facilitation skills will help mobilize the community to participate, build trust and confidence, and foster the development of action plans that are based on their capacities and priorities.
- Field officers' knowledge of the daily lives of persons of concern is essential in helping other staff to understand community dynamics so that they can make contact with community members.
- An understanding of legal and human rights instruments is important in reviewing and discussing human rights with the community.
- Programme-management, planning and monitoring skills are crucial in ensuring that adequate support and follow-up is provided for agreements made with the people of concern.
- Skills in disseminating information and designing appropriate material are necessary for ensuring that all members of the community have access to information.
- In addition to their own expertise, government staff and local authorities understand the local situation and system and can facilitate processes and resolve many problems.

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UNHCR Nairobi's views on what is required to support a community-based approach

A number of conditions needed to be in place for UNHCR Nairobi to implement these new strategies and changes in assumptions. These included:

- **Accessibility and transparency vis-à-vis operational partners and refugee communities.** The office needed to open its doors to operational partners and be much more transparent about its procedures, including their strengths and weaknesses. The office also had to reply promptly and thoughtfully to partners and refugees.

- **ProGres.** The advanced, office-wide use of the ProGres registration system can ensure high-quality, efficient individual case management.

- **Senior management's vision and good inter-unit collaboration.** All staff members working with individuals and communities need to share assumptions and collaborate on strategy. Senior management played a crucial role in articulating this vision. It was particularly important for protection and community-services staff to understand this vision and develop management structures for cooperation since much of the strategy focuses on working with refugee communities to enhance protection.

- **Commitment to participatory assessment.** Participatory assessment is an occasion for staff to forge a common understanding of the main issues affecting urban refugees, and to see them in their own neighbourhoods and community spaces, rather than in the UNHCR office. To be a credible exercise, the office must follow up the participatory assessment with specific actions.

- **Small amounts of additional financial support.** UNHCR in Kenya must devote most of its resources to camp-based refugees, leaving little flexibility in the urban budget. However, small amounts of money from outside sources, such as the Strengthening Protection Capacities Project, can have a significant impact. For example, a grant of $30,000 allowed the office to organize programmes jointly with the city's education authorities. As a result, there is now a commitment to enrolling refugee children in free primary education.

Openness to change. The new programme required a willingness to take risks and revise assumptions and projects as lessons are learned. Supportive and flexible managers have empowered staff to be innovative.

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The **main purpose of the multifunctional team** is to support the representative and the office by following up on the implementation of UNHCR's age, gender and diversity mainstreaming strategy[69] through participatory assessments, ensuring proper analyses and follow up, feedback to the community and targeted actions to support those persons of concern who are discriminated against. The team may also identify skills gaps within the office and/or among partners and coordinate training events or coaching activities on such subjects as facilitating participatory assessments; age, gender and diversity analysis; sexual and gender-based violence; Best Interests Determinations; and identifying and registering persons with specific needs. Multifunctional teams are expected to strengthen internal and external coordination and situation analyses and thus improve the delivery of protection.

Interpreters play a crucial role in the work of any team, as they can have a significant impact on how the office's efforts to promote a community-based approach are received. Interpreters should be supported to understand the approach, the aims of the office and of the community, and how to translate what people say, rather than providing their own version of what those people said. Training for interpreters should focus on improving skills in interpreting, their self-awareness regarding their facial expressions and body language, and in fostering an openness to what they will be told.

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Ten tips on building an effective multifunctional team

✓ The nationality, age, sex, religion, ethnicity and combined skills of the team members should be carefully considered. Team members should be able to communicate with different sections of the community.

✓ Partners should be part of the team. The team should facilitate coordination among all UNHCR staff.

✓ The attitude and behaviour of team members, including interpreters, is critical. If colleagues make inappropriate statements, we should challenge them in a constructive manner.

✓ Team members should clearly identify their roles and create a positive relationship, without raising false expectations. Work in small teams when conducting participatory assessments.

✓ The team must respect the community and enjoy spending time with community members.

✓ All team members should build skills in analyzing the situation from an age, gender and diversity perspective.

✓ The team should ensure that the results of the participatory assessment and follow-up decisions are shared and evaluated with the community.

✓ In IDP settings, a multi-agency team should be established to facilitate coordination.

✓ The team should ensure that the office has a documented community-outreach strategy and a confidential individual case-management system and committee for follow-up on persons at heightened risk.

✓ The team should meet regularly with the Representative/Head of Office, who is responsible for guiding and leading the team. The team could also develop an annual plan with the office to guide its work and evaluate what it has achieved.

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Considerations for specific contexts

This section offers guidance on applying a community-based approach in different settings.

The community-based approach can be used in all types of UNHCR operations, since the basic principles and methodology remain the same. However, some specific issues might have to be considered and adaptations might have to be made to the approach, depending on the situation.

5.1 Emergencies

The nature of the emergency will determine the extent of community participation. However, as in other contexts, a significant level of community participation is possible and highly desirable.[70] Quick action is needed to address life-threatening situations, so the time for consultation and negotiation is very short. It is important to balance the time and effort spent on situation analysis, including participatory assessment and community mobilization, with the length of time the results of an assessment will be valid. In an emergency, conditions change all the time, so the situation analysis will require updating.

Take every opportunity to meet persons of concern. Although there may not be time to meet every group, it is vital that a range of representatives

from the whole community is included in the assessments.[71] Do not rely solely on the people who are easier to reach, such as existing leaders or young men who speak the humanitarian workers' language. As often as possible, talk with women, men, boys and girls of different ages and backgrounds to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation and the persons of concern.

Some tips on working in an emergency

- Through field assessments with people of concern, **map existing agencies, services and community structures**.
- The **security** of those consulted must be carefully considered. Individuals or groups communicating with aid agencies can become the object of resentment or even violence by other individuals or groups. Sources of information should therefore be kept confidential. In IDP contexts, ensure, when working with local authorities, that there are no repercussions on individuals or communities when discussing human rights violations.[72]
- Do not wait to consolidate the **priority needs** of all groups. Start with one group and respond before moving to another. Since the situation is likely to change, assessments should be carried out every three months, if possible, to ensure that activities are planned according to need.
- Work with national and international partners at all times. Coordinate and **avoid over assessment**.
- Early, quick assessments should review **protection risks and human rights violations** prior to and during the emergency. The root causes should be analyzed from an age, gender and diversity perspective with the aim of taking speedy remedial action and avoiding further abuses or displacement.
- Take immediate steps to analyze, with the community, the particular protection risks facing women and girls, and ways to **prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence**.[73]
- **Visit people** in their shelters/homes. Make time to listen to people.
- **Establish fixed points** where staff can make themselves available at regular times to gather information on groups with specific needs, answer questions and/or provide counselling.

- Quickly identify a team within the community that is able and willing to **organize community support** for those with specific needs.
- Set up community-based systems, upholding respect for individual rights, to identify and **provide protection and care for groups with specific needs**, such as older persons, persons with disabilities, and unaccompanied and separated children.
- Take immediate action to **prevent family separation**, reunite families if possible and initiate family-reunification procedures.
- Set up a mechanism for identifying, with the community, groups who are at **heightened risk**.
- Establish an **individual case-management system** for all persons identified as being at heightened risk, track follow up and monitor the individuals.
- Working with the community, **develop an information and communication mechanism** to ensure that everyone, including older women, persons with disabilities and other potentially marginalized groups, have access to information on assistance and other issues. Post notices in places where people are likely to meet, such as the water-collection point, the community centre, registration points or wherever assistance is being distributed.
- Avoid establishing patterns of behaviour or relationships during the emergency that might be difficult to change later on. Instead, **make temporary arrangements** that are reviewed regularly. Make sure that people are aware that any arrangements made in an emergency situation might change later.
- Establish specific **emergency-response plans** with partners and the community.
- Where persons of concern are struggling to survive, UNHCR and partner agencies have a great deal of power, since they are seen as a lifeline. This can distort relations between people of concern and the humanitarian agencies, since people may be reluctant to raise complaints about or disagree with activities that are implemented. **Think about the future** and consider the long-term implications of all decisions.

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Participation in emergencies

When the UNHCR emergency team reached Galkayo, Somalia, in January 2007, it was the first time an international agency had been present on the ground for some time. As this was an emergency and an IDP operation, participatory assessment was adapted to the specific context.

Since UNHCR needed to work with other agencies, the emergency team proposed to complement an IDP profiling exercise that was being rolled out by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) with a participatory assessment. By combining the two methodologies, an in-depth understanding of the situation would be obtained.

As UNHCR and DRC had limited staff on the ground, it was difficult to apply the multifunctional-team approach. Instead, a team was recruited locally and trained to do the assessment. Since the political context was highly sensitive, it was decided that "local authorities" would not be included in the focus group discussions, as the IDPs would not have felt safe or free to express all their concerns.

Relations among the different IDP sub-groups were particularly complicated, given the power structures, group-protection systems and clan differences, so IDP committees were consulted separately in order to distinguish the members of the committees from the rest of the community. Because of time and security constraints, only three age groups of each sex were covered in the initial consultation.

5.2 Urban situations

It can be difficult to apply a community-based approach in urban areas, since persons of concern are often dispersed over a wide area, and groups or individuals with specific needs are more difficult to reach and can be easily neglected. In most urban areas, persons of concern are often a mix of asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants, and are sometimes illegally in the country. Often, people do not come forward to seek assistance, since they may still have some resources, they may be unaware of existing services, they might be uncertain of their rights and/or they might fear being sent back to their country of origin.

Refugees, asylum-seekers or IDPs who live in urban areas are susceptible to a variety of protection problems and threats particular to urban settings. Women and girls are often exposed to sexually transmitted diseases, trafficking, labour exploitation and drugs, and might resort to survival sex. Persons of concern, including single women and female-headed households, often have problems acquiring housing and can be at risk of various forms of exploitation and abuse from landlords.[74] Urban programmes may attract a higher number of young men and should be developed appropriately. Dynamics among urban refugees or IDPs can influence relations with the host community and vice versa. Facilitating the development of a refugee or IDP community network might help reduce social isolation and establish mutual support between the hosts and the refugees.

Some tips on working in urban situations

- **Map people's locations** and which agencies, both government and non-governmental, are providing particular services in each region.
- **Provide information** so that refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and returnees become aware of their rights, obligations, restrictions and opportunities, and of how UNHCR can support access to basic services and support them in claiming their rights.
- **Reduce the sense of isolation** among persons of concern by supporting local-language teaching, and creating informal meeting places.
- **Encourage the formation of interest groups**, such as traders' groups, parents' groups childcare groups, and solidarity groups to assist newcomers. Involve the local community and civil society in joint projects with refugees and displaced communities.
- Make sure that **meeting places**, such as community centres or other activities, are located in neutral geographical areas so that groups of all backgrounds feel comfortable attending.
- **Encourage better relationships with host communities** in order to change the perception of refugees, IDPs or returnees as a threat to the local economy and the stability of the host community. Identify and work with local community based associations.
- **Identify partners and institutions** that are working in the area, and promote cooperation between the different actors and service

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providers. The situation of persons of concern should be addressed in the context of the wider population whenever possible.

- **Decentralize services** for areas hosting greater numbers of refugees and IDPs to minimize transportation costs and use hot lines to disseminate information.

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The UNHCR office in Nairobi revitalized its urban programme by introducing a community-based approach. The approach includes:

- *Inviting refugee communities to participate in the planning and implementation of programmes. Instead of focusing on leaders who tend to hold political agendas, UNHCR cultivates relationships with community organizers and self-help groups who help the multifunctional team conduct participatory assessments.*

- *Enhancing our knowledge of the refugee community by gathering information from multiple sources. The office acquires information through regular inter-agency meetings with NGO staff and participatory assessments.Various legal, social and economic indicators from the country of asylum and countries of origin are compared against UNHCR data to identify disparities.*

- *Using ProGres to strengthen individual case management. Without effective individual case management, UNHCR cannot build the trust of other agencies and refugee communities. Staff in the Nairobi office use ProGres to record and prioritize individual cases, which allows for quick identification of persons at high risk and swift action on their behalf. Since all units in the office record information in ProGres, it is easy to share information.*

Protection Responses:
- *Developing community-based protection responses. One activity involves providing paralegal training to refugees who are active in their communities. With a greater knowledge of Kenyan law and institutions, they will be able to provide basic legal assistance and advocate for their community.*

- *Providing community outreach. Different implementing partners deploy specialized workers among the refugee community. Some provide health care to women and children, some offer training and literary*

programmes for refugees who earn their livelihoods as domestic workers, and one female lawyer conducts a weekly legal aid clinic in the refugee neighbourhood, which is particularly useful for refugee women who may not have the time or money to travel across town to seek legal assistance.

- *Disseminating protection information among refugees.* Analyzing information provided by refugees about where they live and where they have faced protection problems, such as the location of a crime or detention, and using a GIS map, the office can not only better target services to refugees, but can also advise refugees about places to avoid for their own security.

- *Promoting refugees' access to public services.* UNHCR, an NGO partner and the City Council's Health Department established a programme through which refugees in one neighbourhood receive low-cost medical services on an equal basis with the host community. UNHCR also worked with the City Education Department, NGOs, and refugee communities to enroll refugee children in the city's free public primary schools.

- *Training government officials.* The office trains police trainers, judges, children's officers, and members of the provincial administration in refugee law and refugees' lives. As a first step toward developing a community-based approach in the Refugee Affairs Department, one government official is based part-time at the UNHCR office and has started participating in outreach activities.

Supporting the development of refugee communities. UNHCR launched a competition for small, capacity-building grants for self-help groups and community-based organizations. In 2006, 12 groups received support. In collaboration with other agencies, UNHCR is providing a series of training sessions for small self-help groups to develop skills in community mobilization and organization.

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5.3 Return and reintegration

The planning and realization of repatriation are usually governed by tri-partite agreements among UNHCR, host States and the country of origin. As repatriation often involves delicate negotiations, it might be difficult to include refugees fully in the process. However, their views, collected through the community-based approach, should form an integral part of the discussions with governments, especially during peace negotiations. UNHCR should promote and support the meaningful participation of women[75] and youth in negotiations.

Members of the returning population might find it difficult to integrate into their old society in their country of origin. Social structures may have changed and differences in values might emerge between those who moved and those who remained. Repatriation will require a careful and detailed situation analysis comparing the situation in the country of origin with that of exile, including analysis of demographic data disaggregated by age and sex, educational and skills profiles acquired before and during exile, job opportunities and skills required in the country of origin, and membership of social groups. The community-based approach will help identify the protection risks, needs and interests of both local and returnee populations so that trust can be rebuilt and a strong community can develop.[76]

> In 2006, at a conference in Oslo, returnee Sudanese women expressed their concern that young women who were returning from the refugee camps would be perceived by the receiving communities as "promiscuous" and carriers of new problems, such as HIV∕ADIS, because of their different experiences and new ways of dressing.

Reintegration is a process that requires the active involvement of communities and a comprehensive understanding by UNHCR staff and partners of the new realities a community finds on its return. Returning refugees or internally displaced persons are considered to be of concern to UNHCR until minimum national protection mechanisms are in place to ensure the sustainability of return. UNHCR's role is to facilitate the reintegration process by working with the community, the national authorities and other actors to support the re-establishment of national protection mech-

anisms. In particular, UNHCR should promote the active participation of returnees and women, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, in recovery and transition processes. It is important to apply the community-based approach at this stage so that the repatriation or return can be successful and sustainable.

Some tips on assisting a repatriation/return

- Ensure, through participatory assessments, that people of concern are repatriating **voluntarily** and that each adult signs a form declaring that this is so.
- Identify any groups, movements or individuals within the refugee or IDP community that might have the **power to influence**, for their own benefit, decisions over whether or not to return or repatriate.
- Work with the authorities in areas of return to **prepare the community for receiving the returning groups**. Facilitate dialogue among returnees, the receiving community and authorities. Whenever possible, set up "go-and-see" visits, ensuring that women and men of all ages and backgrounds are included.
- Working with the different members of the potential returnee community, especially youth, develop ways to **share information** about the situation in returnee areas and to present their main concerns to national authorities.
- Bring the receiving community and returnees together to identify what capacities and skills each group has and which can be of benefit in developing **coordinated projects**.
- Since UNHCR has an important advocacy role to play, **foster cooperation** between humanitarian actors involved in the repatriation operation and the development agencies, including government departments, responsible for sustainable development and reintegration.

Some tips on assisting reintegration

- **Include developmental actors** from the beginning in planning return and reintegration activities, and promote a community-based approach. Coordinate with them to ensure that areas of return are targeted and that the programmes of the different partners are consistent and do not duplicate each other.

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- Conduct common **inter-agency situation analyses** and assessments in the context of government recovery efforts.
- Promote efforts to **foster confidence-building**, **coexistence and reconciliation**, such as inter-community bus lines,[77] women's initiatives and other community-based coexistence projects.
- Ensure that any Quick Impact Projects are subject to a participatory assessment process. **Avoid pre-determined menus of projects** that limit people's options. Think about livelihood strategies early on.
- When considering **property restitution and land allocation**, be aware of the impact on the rights of women and unaccompanied and separated children.
- Identify and strengthen the capacities of the national society, especially through community-based organizations, to assume **ownership of the community-based approach** in return areas.
- Introduce projects to **reduce conflict and tension**, especially among youth, and to encourage positive communication and foster a community spirit.
- Support the development of **a broader recovery strategy** that integrates returnee communities.

5.4 Internally displaced persons

UNHCR is fully committed to working with internally displaced persons (IDPs) as outlined in its IDP protection policy paper.[78] In certain contexts, UNHCR's role with IDPs is governed by the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) "cluster approach," which aims to improve coordination among the different UN agencies and other partners to ensure predictability, accountability and effectiveness. In conflict-induced IDP situations, UNHCR is committed to taking the lead in three areas – protection, shelter and camp management – and applying a community-based approach.[79]

A community-based approach is also the guiding principle of the cluster approach, as outlined in the 2006 IASC paper, "Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response." The approach also forms a part of the terms of reference for IASC sector-leads at the country level. Even in an IDP setting, where there is no formal cluster arrange-

ment, UNHCR is committed to working in coordination with other agencies and using a community-based approach.

An IDP operation often takes place in a sensitive political context or in unstable areas with security concerns for everyone involved. There can be widespread distrust among national and local actors. Sometimes, the government's actions caused the displacement, yet the authorities must be consulted and engaged in the humanitarian response, and some form of coordination mechanism must be established. IDPs are often dispersed over vast areas and often stay with host families rather than in camps. Thus there are specific protection concerns for both IDPs and host families. People might also be persecuted and pursued in their area of displacement, and public interaction with external agencies might not be in their best interests. Staff working in operations in Chad and North Kivu, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, have noted limitations to using a community-based approach because of the insecure environments. Each context will require an evaluation with the different stakeholders, including the community, to see what is feasible and how much can be done.

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On the other hand, IDPs may not be restricted in their movements, as many refugees are, and, as nationals, they are entitled to work. As a result, there may be many opportunities for them to re-establish themselves, provided that their physical safety is not threatened and the economic situation is reasonable. Supporting community-based organizations might be more feasible in IDP situations, but the security situation will often determine what is possible.

UNHCR interventions for older persons of concern in Colombia focus on promoting and strengthening their capacity within displaced organizations to ensure that they participate in formulating age- and gender-sensitive public policies and income-generating projects for older persons.
As a result:

- *A technical working group on older citizens, organized by the Ministry of Social Welfare, included the rights and concerns of older IDPs on the agenda.*
- *Some 4,800 older displaced persons benefited from the national registration programme.*
- *The Colombian Institute for Family Welfare, with UNHCR support, prioritized older displaced persons in its socialization programme for the older Colombian population.*
- *In Apartadó, in northern Colombia, some 280 older displaced persons (100 men and 180 women) benefited from an income-generating project.*

An NGO, A.R.T. (Art for Refugees in Transition), started a project called "Recapturing cultural identity through the arts" to rebuild inter-generational relationships. The project was designed to enable older people to teach younger generations about their traditions and culture in order to keep both alive.

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Some tips on working with internally displaced persons

- A **rights- and community-based approach** should guide the cluster work and our activities on the ground.
- **Participatory assessment** is a crucial first step to bringing the views of the IDPs and their representatives to the attention of the cluster. Cluster leads should ensure that all groups participate, that age, gender and diversity analyses are conducted in all areas, and that multi-agency teamwork is promoted.
- Before any assessment is undertaken, **check to see what** *participatory* **assessments have already been conducted** and determine whether another one is needed, or if it is only necessary to focus on certain groups of the population that might not have had an opportunity to speak. Be clear about the purpose and explain it well.
- The **security** of persons of concern must be carefully considered. People should be informed in advance if the local authorities are participating. It must be made clear that this is a voluntary exercise.

- National partners (government, non-governmental and civil society) are of particular importance in IDP settings. UNHCR and its partners must develop common capacity-building strategies and **promote ownership by national actors**.
- If there are security problems, it might be best to **focus on ministries that are less related to security**, such as health, education and family welfare, and local non-governmental organizations and local associations, including human rights bodies. Consult separately with IDPs and then meet with authorities.
- Where people are in urban settings or scattered, focus on **community-based and church organizations** to find out where people meet.
- Ensure participatory assessment is undertaken with **host communities** and include their needs in responses as far as possible.
- **Authorities need to be involved** and consulted, and a rights-based framework should be used for planning. This might be difficult if a government is implicated in the causes of displacement. Flexibility will be important.
- Information on **service delivery** by authorities should be verified to ensure that services, such as access to education and school curricula, are non-discriminatory.
- Monitor the situation of IDPs with **host families** to ensure that the relationship between them does not become exploitative. Host families should be supported and included in any activities targeting IDPs, including participatory assessments.

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Notes

[1] "People of concern" is used throughout this manual to refer to asylum-seekers, refugees, returnees, stateless persons and internally displaced persons.

[2] "Reinforcing a Community Development Approach," UNHCR, EC/51/SC/CRP.6, 15 February 2001.

[3] "Towards Community-based Solutions: Evaluation of UNHCR's Community Services Function," EPAU/UNHCR, Casa Consulting, Geneva, 2002.

[4] The UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Strategy builds on a rights- and community-based approach, as it is fundamental to analyzing community dynamics and promoting the rights of women, the rights of children and the rights of groups who have traditionally been marginalized. The strategy includes the formation of multifunctional teams, regular participatory assessments, analysis of the findings as a basis for protection and programme planning, targeted action to empower and protect discriminated groups and an accountability framework. Age, gender and diversity mainstreaming is UNHCR's Seventh Global Strategic Objective (2008-2009). This requires that the organisation's work systematically incorporates an analysis of the impact of any policy or intervention on the rights of women, girls, boys and men of diverse ages and backgrounds to ensure their protection.

[5] See *Sexual and Gender-based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Guidelines for Prevention and Response*, UNHCR, May 2003. This definition of protection was derived from the Third Workshop on Protection, Background Paper, International Committee of the Red Cross, 7 January 1999, which states, "The concept of protection encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e., human rights law, international humanitarian law, refugee law)."

[6] "Age" relates to children, adolescents or youths, and older persons, and helps one consider how risks and needs change according to where people are in their life cycle. "Gender" refers to the roles assigned to girls and boys, women and men in any given society and how these influence and determine their status and access to and control over resources, power and decision-making. "Diversity" refers to differences among people that can lead to discrimination, such as disability or impairment, ethnic or religious background, etc. UNHCR refers to all three, since some groups might be overlooked otherwise.

[7] "The concept of resilience is founded on the observation that under traumatic or otherwise adverse circumstances, some people cope relatively well while others fail to do so ... When applied to people, it describes the capacity of the person to 'bounce back.'" Community Mobilization, Action for the Rights of Children (ARC) Resource Pack, January 2001, p. 11.

[8] The term "actors" is understood to include the community.

[9] "Community-based Protection in Somalia: A Study to Examine the Role of Protection in Community Mobilization," IDP working group, Nairobi, Kenya, November 2006, p. 38.

[10] Adapted from the *Handbook on the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*, Global Protection Cluster Working Group, 2007, Ch. 1 on "The Foundations of Protection" (provisional release).

[11] The concept of a rights-based approach has featured prominently on the international agenda and in inter-agency dialogues since the UN Secretary-General, in the 1997 UN Programme for Reform, called on all agencies of the United Nations to integrate human rights into their activities within the framework of their respective mandates.

[12] Adapted from J. Theis, "Promoting Rights-based Approaches" and *Child Rights Programming: A Handbook for Save the Children Alliance Members*, 2002. The Handbook clarifies that one of the key differences between the two approaches is that a rights-based approach implies accountability. It explains that "many rights have developed from needs, but a rights-based approach adds legal and moral obligations. Equally, in a rights-based approach, the holders of rights are encouraged and empowered to claim their rights. This means they are not seen as objects of charity (as they are in a needs-based approach), but rather as those who are claiming their legal entitlements," page 22.

[13] Many would argue that it is sufficient to refer simply to a rights-based approach. However, within UNHCR there is a need to emphasize both a rights- and a community-based approach until there is a better understanding of the concept. In practice, it strengthens the links between protection and community-services staff.

[14] UNHCR's Executive Committee Conclusion 107 (LVIII) on Children at Risk, para. (b).x, 2007.

[15] For more information on participation and participatory methods, see http://www.fao.org/Participation

[16] The UNHCR Regional Office in South Africa organized participatory consultations with children throughout the region to contribute to the UN Study on Violence against Children. The methodology was developed specifically to promote maximum participation by children and is outlined in the report *Refugee and Returnee Children in Southern Africa: Perception and Experiences of Violence*, UNHCR, June 2005.

[17] Art. 21, Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Art. 25, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Arts. 7, 8, 14, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; and Arts. 12, 13, 14, 15 and 17, Convention on the Rights of the Child.

[18] Adapted from L. Veneklasen, V. Miller, C. Clark and M. Reilly, *Rights-based Approaches and Beyond: Challenges of Linking Rights and Participation*, IDS Working Paper 235, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, December 2004.

[19] The Johari Window is a useful tool for community self-evaluation on participation and to analyze problems. Explanations of these tools can be found in L. Srinivasan, *Tools for Community Participation: A Manual for Training Trainers in Participatory Techniques*, PROWWESS, UNDP, New York, 1990.

[20] Adapted from L. Veneklasen et al., 2004.

[20] For more information on working with men and masculinities, see www.womenscommission.org and articles by Michael Kaufman, who also supported the organization of the White Ribbon Campaign.

[21] Some of these challenges are analyzed in M. Walkup, "Policy Dysfunction in Humanitarian Organizations: The Role of Coping Strategies, Institutional and Organizational Culture," in *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 10, No.1., 1997.

[22] These definitions of transparency and accountability were developed through an initiative known as the Global Accountability Project (GAP), as discussed in M. Blagescu, L. de Las Casas, and R. Lloyd, *Pathways to Accountability: The GAP Framework*, One World Trust, London, 2005. Available at www.oneworldtrust.org. For practical tips related to accountability see "*The Good Enough Guide: Impact Measurement and Accountability in Emergencies*, published by OXFAM GB for the Emergency Capacity Building Project, 2007.

[23] B. Dalle, "Transparency and Its Significance for Enhancing Accountability at UNHCR," August, 2006.

[24] See "The Human Rights-based Approach to Development Cooperation: Towards a Common Understanding Among the United Nations Agencies," Annex II in *Frequently Asked Questions on Human Rights-based Approaches to Development Cooperation*, Office of the United Nationals High Commissioner for Human Rights, Geneva, 2006.

[25] M. Pallis, "The Operation of UNHCR's Accountability Mechanisms," Institute for International Law and Justice Working Paper 2005/12, Global Administrative Law Series, 2005, p. 2.

[26] "Accountability Framework for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming," IOM/036–FOM/038/2007, UNHCR, Geneva, 2007.

[27] *Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2003, p. .

[28] *Handbook for Self-reliance*, UNHCR, Geneva, August 2005.

[29] See *Strengthening Protection Capacities Framework*, UNHCR, 2006.

[30] "Guidance on the Use of Standardized Specific Needs Codes," IOM/028/FOM/030, UNHCR, 2007. This IOM/FOM provides guidance on which persons fall within the different specific needs categories. While a person might have a specific need, this person might not be at immediate risk; for example, a child with a disability may be well protected and cared for by his/her family. Likewise, not all persons at heightened risk fall within the categories of specific needs. An individual at heightened risk is a person whose past and/or present circumstances indicate that he/she is likely to face a serious protection problem in the immediate future if there is no appropriate intervention to protect the person. Persons at heightened risk should be regularly monitored through a confidential, individual case-management system as outlined in Section 3.2.7. UNHCR is developing a *Heightened Risk Identification Tool* to help staff and partners identify and monitor such individuals (see Annex 4 provided in the accompanying CD-ROM).

[31] See steps 1 and 2 of *The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations*, UNHCR, 2006.

[32] Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme Conclusion No. 105 (LVII) on women and girls at risk, 2006.

[33] For more information see "How to Implement the Standards," a toolkit for child protection, Keeping Children Safe Coalition, Save the Children, 2006, p. 18.

[34] A multifunctional team approach is explained in section 4.4 of this manual.

[35] *Handbook on the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*, Global Protection Cluster Working Group, 2007.

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

[37] *Participation by Affected Populations in Humanitarian Action: Practitioners' Handbook*, Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action, 2003.

[38] *Participatory Planning in UNHCR: A Practical Guide*, UNHCR, January 2002.

[39] For example, the situation in eastern Chad has evolved from an emergency influx in 2004 to a stable refugee situation in 2005 to an emerging internal and cross-border conflict in 2006–2007. While these changes make it difficult to support community structures, those structures become all the more important for delivering protection, particularly when humanitarian agencies are required to evacuate suddenly.

[40] Before initiating an intervention with a community, and depending on the context, it can be helpful to assist community members in determining their readiness to take action. SARAR is one method for doing this, as it focuses on reviewing five attributes that are considered critically important for achieving full participation: self-esteem, associative strength, resourcefulness, action planning and responsibility for follow-through. For further information, see www.worldbank.org

[41] In Bangladesh, not only did obviously corrupt structures control the community, with adverse consequences, but less visible structures sometimes prevented people from freely participating in different activities. When community structures are identified and mapped out, and internal politics are understood, the participation of the broader community can be facilitated more effectively.

[42] The challenge of establishing contact with the community is explored in section 3.1.3.

[43] For example, UNHCR's guidelines on the protection of women and children; UNHCR's Five Priorities for Children (2001); UNHCR's Five Commitments to Women (2001). By sharing this information, communities will be able to better understand why UNHCR promotes the rights of children, women's participation and gender equality.

[44] UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security; UN Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005) on children in armed conflict.

[45] See www.savethechildren.net/arc (Action for the Rights of Children, Save the Children, OHCHR, UNHCR, UNICEF, October 2002) for practical ideas on how to work with children. See also UNHCR's intranet site under Community Development, Gender Equality and Children.

[46] M.B. Anderson, A. Howarth and C. Overholt, *A Framework for People-oriented Planning in Refugee Situations, Taking Account of Women, Men and Children: A Practical Planning Tool for Refugee Workers*, UNHCR, Geneva, December 1992.

[47] M.B. Anderson and L. Rienner, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – or War*, Boulder, Colorado, February 1999.

[48] The research undertaken by the Centre for Refugee Research at the University of New South Wales and other partners was important in the advocacy leading up to the 2006 Executive Committee Conclusion No. 105 (LVII) on women and girls at risk. The Conclusion outlines a series of measures to be undertaken to improve the identification and prevention of protection risks and the follow-up provided to those at heightened risk. This was followed by Executive Committee Conclusion No. 107 (LVIII), in 2007, on children at risk.

[49] See *Refugee Consultations, Bangladesh*, the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture, the Centre for Refugee Research at the University of New South Wales, UNHCR, 2007.

[50] UNHCR Executive Committee Conclusion No. 105 (LVII), 2006.

[51] For further guidance on women and girls at risk, see Chapter 3: Identification, Prevention and Response to Risks Faced by Women and Girls, in the *Handbook on the Protection of Women and Girls*, UNHCR, 2008.

[52] See Annex 4 in the CD-ROM for a draft version of the Heightened Risk Identification Tool, which includes guidance on how to use it.

[53] *The UNHCR Individual Heightened Risk Identification Tool* builds on a version developed by the Centre for Refugee Research at the University of New South Wales for Women at Risk. In early 2007, UNHCR worked with the University of New South Wales and the Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture to broaden the scope of the methodology to identify a wide range of individuals at risk.

[54] UN Security Council Resolution 1612(2005) on children and armed conflict.

[55] Summary Note, *UNHCR's Strategy and Activities Concerning Refugee Children*, UNHCR, 2005.

[56] www.savethechildren.net/arc, above note 41.

[57] *Sexual and Gender-based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Guidelines for Prevention and Response*, UNHCR, Geneva, May 2003.

[58] Adapted from "Addressing Cultural Relativism in Relation to Gender Equality and Women's Rights: An Approach by CIDA," in *Gender Training Kit on Refugee Protection*, UNHCR, Geneva, 2002, pp. 175–80.

[59] See Annex 2 for suggestions on participatory methods.

[60] UNESCO and UNHCR have developed a peace education programme for communities and teachers that focuses on life skills and conflict-resolution. If you are interested in the programme, contact the UNHCR Section for Community Development, Gender Equality and Children, Division of International Protection Services, Geneva.

[61] "Secretary-General's Bulletin: Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse," IOM/FOM/77/2003. Tools and guidelines for field-level implementation of the Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Director of Human Resources Management, UNHCR, 9 December 2004.

[62] See Annex 4 in the CD-ROM for a draft version of *The UNHCR Individual Heightened Risk Identification Tool*.

[63] For resource material on, for example, conflict-resolution and ethnic and cultural differences, see *Inter-agency Peace Education Programme: Analytical Review of Selected Peace Education Materials*, UNHCR/ UNESCO, 2005.

[64] For a recent example on the importance of maintaining the right attitudes when providing protection, see "Report on Girls' Schooling in Dadaab," CARE, Kenya, July 2007.

[65] *UNHCR Code of Conduct*, June 2004.

[66] Ibid. principle 1: 4.

[67] "Meeting the Rights and Protection Needs of Children: An Independent Evaluation of the Impact of UNHCR's Activities," May 2002; "UNHCR Policy on Refugee Women and Guidelines on their Protection: An Assessment of Ten Years of Implementation," May 2002; and "The Community Services Function in UNHCR: An Independent Evaluation," March 2003.

[68] For more information on the multifunctional team, see *The UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations*, UNHCR, 2006, p. 7.

[69] Multifunctional teams should also be familiar with the Accountability Framework for Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming, IOM/036/FOM/038/2007, which is included in Annex 1 under Policies.

[70] The evaluation contained in *UNHCR's Response to the Tsunami Emergency in Indonesia and Sri Lanka* recommended that: "UNHCR should commit to a genuine community-led approach and take measures to ensure that this commitment is turned into operational reality. This means changing the mindset from that of looking for community participation in UNHCR projects, to one of looking for effective UNHCR participation in community projects. Adopting a community-led approach is consistent with the core principles of humanitarian action, is at least as quick and cost-effective as other, more top-down, technocratic approaches, and has many other benefits." UNHCR, December 2004 – November 2006, p. 36.

[71] For further guidance, see Section 11, "Emergency Management, Initial Participatory Assessment," in the *Handbook for Emergencies*, third edition, UNHCR, February 2007.

[72] UNHCR's Confidentiality Guidelines (IOM/71/FOM/68/2001) established regulations on sharing information about individual refugees with third parties. Not only must the sharing of information serve the execution of our mandate, but we must also ensure that the information shared is not subsequently used for other purposes than those for which it was shared.

[73] See *Sexual and Gender-based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Guidelines for Prevention and Response*, UNHCR, May 2003, and the *Inter-agency Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings*, Inter-agency Standing Committee, September 2005.

[74] The UNHCR office in New Dehli, India, established a Women's Protection Clinic in the community in follow up to consultations with women which raised numerous protection problems. Additional information is available in the Handbook on the Protection of Women and Girls, UNHCR, 2008.

[75] UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security calls upon all stakeholders to promote the participation of women in peace negotiations.

[76] *Handbook for Repatriation and Reintegration Activities*, UNHCR, Geneva, May 2004.

[77] Support for minority returns by means of bus lines across boundaries proved invaluable in areas such as Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

[78] IDP protection policy paper, DIPS, UNHCR, 2007.

[79] http://www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Default.aspx?tabid=79

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