

What is Protection Mainstreaming?

Protection mainstreaming is the process of incorporating protection principles and promoting meaningful access, safety and dignity in humanitarian aid. The key protection principles that must be taken into account in all humanitarian activities are:

1. **Avoid causing harm:** prevent and minimize as much as possible any unintended negative effects of your intervention which can increase people's vulnerability to both physical and psychosocial risks
2. **Equality:** arrange for people's meaningful access to impartial assistance and services - in proportion to need and without any barriers (i.e. discrimination). Pay special attention to individuals and groups who may be particularly vulnerable or have difficulty accessing assistance and services.
3. **Accountability to beneficiaries:** set-up appropriate mechanisms through which affected populations can measure the adequacy of interventions, or address concerns and complaints
4. **Participation and Empowerment:** support the development of self-protection capacities and assist people to claim their rights, including - not exclusively - the rights to shelter, food, water and sanitation, health, and education

Why should we mainstream protection?

Mainstreaming protection ensures that the protective impact of aid programming is maximised. Through the incorporation of protection principles into aid delivery, humanitarian actors can ensure that their activities target the most vulnerable, enhance safety, dignity, and promote and protect the human rights of the beneficiaries without contributing to or perpetuating discrimination, abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation.

How do we mainstream protection?

Protection can be mainstreamed:

- By including protection principles in the general project management and as core principles in delivering humanitarian aid;
- By incorporating protection principles into project cycle management through protection mainstreaming indicators for each sector.

Who should mainstream protection?

All humanitarian actors share an ethical responsibility for mainstreaming protection across the humanitarian response, including general and sector staff, programming staff, advocacy staff, design, monitoring and evaluation staff, and their managers. Cluster lead agencies and partners are responsible for ensuring that activities within their respective sector are carried out with a "protection lens", and in particular for ensuring that their activities integrate protection principles. Field Protection Clusters can provide advice, guidance and training on protection mainstreaming.

What support is available for Protection Mainstreaming?

The Global Protection Cluster maintains a Support Package which includes:

- A tip sheet for field protection clusters in support of protection mainstreaming efforts
- Protection checklists with specific measures for other humanitarian sectors/cluster
- An annotated reference list of protection mainstreaming guidance, tools, and manuals
- A collection of examples of protection mainstreaming tools developed at country level
- Training manuals & modules on protection mainstreaming in humanitarian response