

MODULE 4

REFUGEE PROTECTION: ACTORS & ROLES



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Summary

This module is designed to **describe and differentiate between the actors involved in providing refugee protection.**

The participants will describe the actors on the basis of a number of criteria, such as **their level of operation** – local, national, regional, international – **the mandate or particular areas of expertise** that various actors have, and **the links** that exist or should exist **amongst actors** in order to heighten the potential for refugee protection.

An important outcome of this module is to encourage participants to “map” the actors in any given refugee protection situation and to be able to shape views about **the complementarity of actors.**

This is an interactive session that actively engages the participants by getting them to describe their own programmes. Participants produce **actor maps** that will be used throughout the workshop as a key reference point for the need to ensure clear division of responsibility of refugee protection actors and the importance of complementarity.

There is potential in some sessions for tension or controversy to arise given that there will likely be a variance of views on which actor should be doing what, when, and with whom. The facilitator should be alert to this and ensure that due **attention** is paid to these **concerns** and to any **security or confidentiality concerns.**

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Map the actors that can and do provide protection to refugees;
- Describe the mandated roles of some of the international, national, and non-governmental actors working with refugees;
- List the current protection activities of the actors;
- Describe how working in a complementary fashion improves protection for refugees.

Key Messages

- States have the primary responsibility for protecting people on their territory;
- Host communities, NGOs, the media, the international community, and others can all contribute to refugee protection and are often the first to act;
- No single actor is able to meet all protection needs for refugees; therefore, it is in the interest of all actors to work in a complementary fashion.

Preparation

- **Review** the materials in the handouts and annexes relating to actor-mapping and complementarity;
- **Ask participants** to write a one- or two-sentence summary of their organisations' activities/**mission statement** prior to the session;
- **Obtain** a sufficient number of cards or post-its of different colours for the actor-mapping exercise.

Module 4 Breakdown		
Timing	Method	Resources needed
Activity 1 - Mission Statements: Who's Who?	10'	Plenary exercise
Activity 2 - Actor Mandates	10'	Presentation
Activity 3 - Actors and Roles	70'	Group Work
Total: 90 minutes		Module 4.ppt Mission statements from participants Trainer Guidance 1 - Additional Mission Statements A container Large post-it notes or coloured paper and tape Handout 1 - Actor-Mapping

Source

- “The Challenges of Complementarity”, the fourth workshop on protection for human rights and humanitarian organisations, International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva 2000.

Activity 1 - Mission Statements: Who's Who?			
Timing		Method	Resources needed
Defining mission statements	10'	Plenary exercise	Mission statements from participants Trainer Guidance 1 - Additional Mission Statements
Total: 10 minutes			A container

Note to trainer

- ✓ *Before starting the session, ask participants to write a two-line summary of their mission statement or principal activities. They should not identify their organisation.*
- ✓ *Include mission statements of organisations not represented at the workshop but that are present in the context.*
- ✓ *If you need some addition mission or mandate statements, you can find them in “Trainer Guidance 1 - Additional Mission Statements”. It is recommended that both the ICRC and UNHCR be included as a matter of course.*

Collect the mission statements in a hat or other suitable container.

Ask a participant to pick one out and read it.

Ask the other participants to guess which organisation the statement refers to. Repeat this about ten times.

If desired, **give points and create** an energised atmosphere.

Inevitably, not everyone will be able to guess whose mission statement is whose – this is an important lead-in to the presentation on mandates and mission statements.

Ask:

- What does this exercise illustrate?
- Did you recognise all the actors?

Conclude by highlighting the importance of understanding one another’s roles.

At the end of the exercise, the mission statements can be attached to a flip chart and stuck on the wall for participants to refer to throughout the course.

Activity 2 - Actor Mandates			
Timing		Method	Resources needed
Defining mandates	10'	Presentation	Module4.ppt
Total: 10 minutes			

Note to trainer

- ✓ *This presentation is designed to be snappy. Do not spend too much time in discussion, as there will be plenty of opportunity for this in the following exercise.*

Slide 1: Refugee protection: Actors & roles

Slide 2: Objectives

- **Map the actors** that can and do provide protection to refugees;
- **Describe the mandated roles** of some of the international, national, and non-governmental actors working with refugees;
- **List** the current protection activities of the actors;
- **Describe** how working in a complementary fashion improves protection for refugees.

Slide 3: Responsibilities

Explain that, under international law, it is the state that has the primary responsibility to provide protection and assistance to civilians in their country, as well as to refugees. All other roles and responsibilities are defined in relation to this.

Slide 4: Mandates

Ask participants for examples of each type of mandated agency. Certain actors have an express mandate given to them by states, for example, the UNHCR. Other actors have an express mandate to deal with particular situations, for example, the ICRC in situations of armed conflict. Others, still, have an express mandate for either a specific category of persons, such as the UNHCR and refugees, UNICEF for refugee children, or for particular needs, for example, the WFP for food.

Slide 5: Mandate of the UNHCR

If there are UNHCR representatives, **ask them to elaborate on their role.**

Slide 6: Mandate of the ICRC

If there are ICRC representatives, **ask them to elaborate on their role.**

Slide 7: Humanitarian agencies

Stress that humanitarian agencies are not obliged to assist or provide legal protection, although some may argue that there is a moral obligation. Their role is voluntary or informal and should be defined in relation to the formal roles.

Slide 8: Formal/Informal

Use this slide to show formal and informal relationships. **Ask:** Why would an appreciation of others' mandates and missions lead to better refugee protection? **Emphasise the need for complementarity amongst actors** and the need for an **understanding** of the different competencies and capacities of the actors.

Activity 3 - Actors and Roles			
Timing		Method	Resources needed
Actor-mapping	70'	Group work	Module4.ppt Large post-it notes or coloured paper and tape
Total: 70 minutes			Handout 1 - Actor-Mapping

Note to trainer

- ✓ *Be prepared for any tensions between participants representing various actors at the workshop that might arise because of institutional beliefs about other actors' roles, competency, failures, successes, and relevancy.*
- ✓ *Try to keep this session running collegially and be prepared to remind the group that part of learning is working out differences of views. This session is an opportunity to overcome any negative institutional beliefs.*
- ✓ *Do not assume that your group will know what an actor-mapping exercise is. Be sure to make the following two points:*
- ✓ **Actor maps are dynamic**, as relationships between actors change all the time; and
- ✓ **Actor maps** can be used as a **planning tool** to position oneself in relation to other actors, e.g., showing areas of overlap where alliances can be made, or gaps in provision.
- ✓ *You may find it useful to refer to "Handout 1: Actor-Mapping", which details an alternative way of doing an actor map.*

Introduction (5 minutes)

Divide the participants into groups of five or six, evenly distributing (if possible) participants from the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, NGOs, and the UN amongst the groups.

Introduce this group-work exercise with **Slide 9** or a flip chart prepared with instructions.

Slide 9: Task instructions

- Try to put yourselves in the position of refugees in this context;
- **Make a list** of all the actors that play a role, positive or negative, in protecting you (one actor on each post-it note);
- **Arrange the actors** on a flip chart to make an actor map that shows the respective roles of actors and links between them. Use markers to add text and connecting lines if necessary;
- How would you like the map to look? Use a different colour to indicate those potential protection providers that are not currently activated.

Group work (30 minutes)

Allow the group 25 minutes to complete their maps.

Encourage groups, where necessary, to expand their NGO category, identify and map the range of NGO actors with different protection functions (e.g., assistance, advocacy, training, etc.).

Prompt them to consider the role of non-agency actors, for example, refugees themselves, local communities, etc.

Gallery walk (10 minutes)

Ask participants to stick up their actor maps and then go and view the other groups' maps. They should note **similarities** and **differences**.

Feedback and discussion (20 minutes)

Take **feedback** in plenary when groups have finished looking at each other's maps.

Ask participants to sit down and ask for initial reactions from them. If possible, **elicit adjustments to actor maps** from participants themselves, and introduce or reinforce the key messages and any other salient points that come out of the discussion.

Draw some **conclusions**, as follows:

- Each actor on the map can be subdivided further, and it is important to remember when dealing with them that they are not monoliths and can have internal contradictions. Also, **the same actor will behave differently in different contexts – there are no guarantees**.
- Participants have been asked to put themselves in the position of a refugee. In reality, a refugee may not have drawn an actor map that looks anything like those produced. This underlines what a complex maze refugees are obliged to navigate in the search for protection, and **how much educating refugees themselves can enhance their likelihood of finding protection**.
- Refugees cannot be expected to seek out protection actors if they do not have the necessary knowledge, which is why **NGOs have to bring protection to them** and provide guidance to the correct agency.
- **Missing actors**, such as the ICRC, the National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, UN agencies operating in the context, churches, the media, the host population, embassies, and private-sector institutions, as well as refugees themselves, do not have to appear on the maps if not relevant, but they can often be left out by participants when they are.
- **Scope**: do actor maps stay within the context, or do they acknowledge the international sphere in which the national context is embedded?
- **Detail**: to what degree do actor maps acknowledge the complexities of different actors or groups of actors? For example, have they broken down categories such as local authorities, the UN, etc., into sub-groups? Equally, has anyone identified the vulnerable sub-groups within categories, such as refugees, asylum-seekers, or host population?
- **Who do the maps show to have a leading role** in refugee protection? Are different players, such as the government, NGOs, and the UNHCR given different levels of importance by each map?
- **How do the different protection roles and responsibilities of NGOs and others on the map relate to each other?** If we consider protection to be, as per the *Field Guide*, "the gamut of activities through which refugees' rights are secured", do NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, and the UNHCR divide up this range of activities, with some taking advocacy roles, some taking assistance roles, etc., or do they divide their work geographically or by target group? Alternatively, is there no conscious division of labour (this could mean that there are some missed opportunities for mutual support, or some instances of duplication of effort)?
- **It is important that human rights actors be covered at this point and, in particular, how human rights and humanitarian action MUST be complementary**. A good tool to use at this point is the **complementary mapping** that is part of "**Handout 1 - Actor-Mapping**". It will help you to show how denunciation by human rights organisations such as Amnesty International and persuasion by organisations like the ICRC can be complementary activities.

Wrap-up (5 minutes)**Slide 10: Aide memoire**

Use this slide to show the full range of actors.

End by making the following points:

- **NGOs have a role to play in refugee protection;**
- **Primary responsibility** for protection lies with the host government;
- The Red Cross/Red Crescent movement has a specific role in refugee protection, providing services such as tracing and family reunion;
- Others also take up these roles, for example, UNICEF and the ICRC do tracing. The important point is to **emphasise cooperation;**
- NGOs and other actors **working in different ways** on protection are most efficient in this work when their work is coordinated and/or complementary.

Trainer Guidance 1 - Additional Mission Statements**ICRC - The International Committee of the Red Cross**

The International Committee of the Red Cross is an impartial, neutral, and independent organisation whose exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance. It also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles.

IFRC - The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is the world's largest humanitarian organisation providing assistance without discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class, or political opinions.

Founded in 1919, the International Federation comprises 181 member Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, a Secretariat in Geneva, and more than 60 delegations strategically located to support activities around the world. There are more societies in formation. The Red Crescent is used in place of the Red Cross in many Islamic countries.

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilising the power of humanity. Vulnerable people are those who are at greatest risk from situations that threaten their survival or their capacity to live with an acceptable level of social and economic security and human dignity. Often, these are victims of natural disasters, poverty brought about by socio-economic crises, refugees, and victims of health emergencies.

IOM - The International Organisation for Migration

The IOM was established in 1951 as an intergovernmental organisation to resettle European displaced persons, refugees, and migrants. It is not part of the UN system, but it maintains close relations with UN bodies and operational agencies. The IOM has as partners a wide range of international and non-governmental organisations.

The IOM has become a leading international organisation working with migrants and governments to provide humane responses to migration challenges. Its mission is to work with its partners in the international community to:

- Assist in meeting the growing operational challenges of migration management;
- Advance understanding of migration issues;
- Encourage social and economic development through migration;
- Uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

NGOs - Non-Governmental Organisations

Non-governmental organisations have missions and mandates covering a wide range of activities. Some of them deliver services contracted to them by mandated organisations. For example, a range of NGOs assists the UNHCR in carrying out a number of protection and assistance activities. Other NGOs have self-appointed mandates ranging from human rights reporting, advocacy, legal services, and other protection-related activities. Often, humanitarian and human rights NGOs complement each other's work but might not make that widely known if it would compromise either's ability to carry on with their work.

OCHA - The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

The OCHA's mission is to mobilise and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors in order to:

- Alleviate human suffering and disasters in emergencies;
- Advocate for the rights of people in need;
- Promote preparedness and prevention;
- Facilitate sustainable solutions.

UNHCR - The United Nations High Commission for Refugees

The UNHCR, the United Nations' refugee organisation, is mandated by the United Nations to lead and coordinate international action for the world-wide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee problems.

The UNHCR's primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state and to return home voluntarily.

By assisting refugees to return to their own country or to settle in another country, the UNHCR also seeks lasting solutions to their plight.

The UNHCR's efforts are mandated by the organisation's Statute and guided by the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol.

International refugee law provides an essential framework of principles for the UNHCR's humanitarian activities.

Its Executive Committee and the UN General Assembly have also authorised the organisation's involvement with other groups. These include people who are stateless or whose nationality is disputed and, in certain circumstances, internally displaced persons.

"To ensure the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge... To protect refugees and to promote solutions."

The UNHCR seeks to reduce situations of forced displacement by encouraging states and other institutions to create conditions that are conducive to the protection of human rights and the peaceful resolution of disputes. In pursuit of the same objective, the UNHCR actively seeks to consolidate the reintegration of returning refugees to their country of origin, thereby averting the recurrence of refugee-producing situations.

The UNHCR offers protection and assistance to refugees and others in an impartial manner, on the basis of their need and irrespective of their race, religion, political opinion, or gender. In all of its activities, the UNHCR pays particular attention to the needs of children and seeks to promote the equal rights of women and girls.

In its efforts to protect refugees and to promote solutions to their problems, the UNHCR works in partnership with governments, regional organisations, and international and non-governmental organisations.

The UNHCR is committed to the principle of participation by consulting refugees on decisions that affect their lives.

By virtue of its activities on behalf of refugees and displaced people, the UNHCR also promotes the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter: maintaining international peace and security; developing friendly relations amongst nations; and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

UNICEF - The United Nations Children's Fund

UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs, and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential.

UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strives to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles and international standards of behaviour towards children.

UNICEF insists that the survival, protection, and development of children are universal development imperatives that are integral to human progress.

UNICEF mobilises political will and material resources to help countries, particularly developing countries, ensure a "first call for children" and to build their capacity to form appropriate policies and deliver services for children and their families.

UNICEF is committed to ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged children: victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, all forms of violence and exploitation, and those with disabilities.

UNICEF responds in emergencies to protect the rights of children. In coordination with United Nations partners and humanitarian agencies, UNICEF makes its unique facilities for rapid response available to its partners to relieve the suffering of children and those who provide their care.

UNICEF is non-partisan, and its cooperation is free of discrimination. In everything it does, the most disadvantaged children and the countries in greatest need have priority.

UNICEF aims, through its country programmes, to promote the equal rights of women and girls and to support their full participation in the political, social, and economic development of their communities.

UNICEF works with all its partners towards the attainment of the sustainable human development goals adopted by the world community and the realisation of the vision of peace and social progress enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

WFP - The World Food Programme

In 1994, the WFP became the first United Nations organisation to adopt a mission statement. It is the foundation on which we build our policy, defining the who, what, where, and how of our mission to eradicate global hunger and poverty.

What is the WFP's mission?

As the food-aid arm of the UN, the WFP uses its food to:

- Meet emergency needs;
- Support economic and social development.

The agency also provides the logistical support necessary to get food aid to the right people at the right time and in the right place.

The WFP works to put hunger at the centre of the international agenda, promoting policies, strategies, and operations that directly benefit the poor and hungry.

WHO - The World Health Organisation

The WHO is the United Nations' specialised agency for health. Established in 1948 and governed by 192 member states, the WHO's objective, as set out in its Constitution, is the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health. Health is defined in the WHO's Constitution as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It has programmes working with a range of populations around the world.

Handout 1 - Actor-Mapping

Actor maps are a good tool for creating a picture of how different organisations (actors) relate to one another in a refugee situation. Assessing the roles and responsibilities of the various actors in a refugee situation will lead to a better understanding of how and when to coordinate. It is best used to assess a particular context where the problem to be solved relates to who should do what and how they should work together.

Actor maps are best done in small groups, but, with a high degree of facilitation, a larger group can create an actor map. You may decide that it is best to divide participants into groups on the basis that they have been working together, or you may decide to create groups on a random basis. The trainer will need to make this choice depending on the range of participants in the training session and the outcome desired.

To get the actor-mapping exercise started, it may prove useful to pose the following questions:

- What are the roles of the various actors in the refugee situation?
- What do the other actors expect from us?
- What do we expect from the other actors?

You may also want the groups to colour-code the actors according to their type, for example, a UN agency or a government agency or a non-governmental agency. They could also be divided on the basis of their function or the particular group that they work with (children, women, the elderly, etc.).

At the end of this exercise, ask groups to share their actor maps with the workshop to compare results. They should identify points of coordination, gaps, and any areas of duplication.

Here is a sample actor map that is copied and adapted (refugees are central instead of NGOs) from the **Sphere Project: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, Training Materials, Module 2: The Humanitarian Charter, Optional Toolkit, Section C: The Implications of the Humanitarian Charter**. See www.sphereproject.org/training/pages/m2.htm.

