

MODULE 5

PROGRAMMING & PROTECTION



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Summary

This module uses case studies to **illustrate the principle of “do no harm”**, that is, in a refugee situation, humanitarian actors should be keenly aware that their **refugee protection activities could have positive and negative effects**.

Several case studies are supplied, and it is intended that only one or two of these will be used. The facilitator can decide whether to wrap up or guide feedback towards **the current context** or to leave this as a session for safe reflection on mistakes others have made and to revisit the current context in a subsequent session.

Learning Objectives

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

- Identify some of the negative and positive effects that programmes can have on the protection of refugees;
- Describe some of the factors that influence programme decisions;
- Describe factors that determine the protective character of a programme;
- Identify ways to adjust programmes to improve refugee protection.

Key Messages

- When making programme decisions, humanitarian actors should try to anticipate the range of implications these decisions could have on the protection of different groups and their environment;
- The participation of vulnerable groups in programme planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation will help to ensure that these programmes are responsive to protection concerns;
- Failure to coordinate with relevant actors can severely limit a programme’s impact on refugee protection.

Preparation:

- **Select the case studies** from Handouts 1 to 5 and **photocopy them**.
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Module 5 Breakdown			
Timing		Method	Resources needed
Activity 1 - Overview	20'	Plenary	Module5.ppt
Activity 2 - Group Work on Case Studies	70'	Group work	Handouts 1 to 5 - Case Studies
Total: 90 minutes			Trainer Guidance 1 to 5

Sources

- Better Programming Initiative, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_disasters.pl?BPIsummary.pdf;
- *Benefits Harms Facilitation Manual*, Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Atlanta 2001, <http://www.careusa.org/getinvolved/advocacy/policypapers/eBHguidelatest.pdf>;
- *Do No Harm, How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War*, Anderson, Mary B, London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999. See chapter 6 Framework for analyzing aid’s impact on conflict, pp. 67 to 76;
- *Growing the Sheltering Tree, Protecting Rights Through Humanitarian Action*, Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2002. See Chapter 2 on developing an integrated approach to humanitarian assistance and protection, pp. 25-34 and 49-55;
- *Humanitarian Protection: Improving monitoring to enhance accountability and learning*, Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action, 2003. See Chapter 2 on defining protection and engaging humanitarian responsibility, pp. 21-30;
- *Protecting Refugees: A Field Guide for NGOs*, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva 1999. See “Special Protection Issues”, pp. 86 to 115.

Activity 1 - Overview of Programming and Protection			
Timing		Method	Resources needed
Overview	20'	Presentation	Module5.ppt
Total: 20 minutes			

Presentation with slides (20 minutes)

Slide 1: Programming & protection

Slide 2: Objectives

- **Identify** some of the negative and positive effects that programmes can have on the protection of refugees;
- **Describe** some of the factors that influence programme decisions;
- **Describe** factors that determine the protective character of a programme;
- **Identify ways** to adjust programmes to improve refugee protection.

Slide 3: Programming and protection

Ask these questions and record answers on the flip chart.

- What is programming?
- What is programming for protection?

This is a useful way of introducing the connection between programming and protection.

Slide 4: Benefits-Harm approach

According to **CARE’s Benefits-Harms approach**, four reasons why programmes have unintended consequences are:

- Lack of knowledge about the contexts in which we work;
- Lack of thought about the unintended impact of projects;
- Failure to take action to mitigate unintended harm or to capitalise on unforeseen potential benefits;
- Not having a comprehensive risk-management system that examines all the risks an agency may encounter during humanitarian intervention.

Slide 5: Root causes

The following are amongst the reasons why we are not good at understanding the unintended consequences of our work, particularly if those effects are negative and outside the area of our intended impact:

- Issues of economic self-interest and institutional reputation push us to focus on intended positive impacts rather than the negative ones;
- Our expertise and our baselines for evaluation are usually in an area of intended impact: health project staff, for example, are expected to be health professionals, not security analysts;

- Time, resources, and priorities;
- The lack of training and building competencies with the available tools that would help programmers think through the unintended impact of their projects on people's human rights and protection interests.

Amongst a large number of NGOs, there is sometimes a **reluctance** to engage experts to prepare a programme design, and programmes are often prepared by staff who may not have the knowledge to cover all aspects of a programme.

Slide 6: Better programming initiative (BPI)

A tool that can help you in your programming work is the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent's "Better Programming Initiative" (BPI), according to which:

- When we choose to intervene in a specific context, we become part of it;
- An in-depth analysis of the context prior to our intervention, including the identification of dividers and connectors, will allow us to design our programme better;
- BPI recommends the identification of the impact of our programmes and a search for alternative solutions in order to decrease negative effects and increase positive ones. It also underlines that, "even in societies where tensions affect daily patterns of life, many aspects continue to connect people rather than divide them", and it advises aid workers to also consider these linking factors.

Slide 7: Dividers and connectors

Connectors are **positive factors for peace and cohesion**, and dividers are **negative factors** that may cause conflict and expose individuals to threats.

They provide a way of **analysing the proximate and secondary causes of conflict** or prospects for peace. They represent the pitfalls and potential to keep in mind when designing and implementing programmes.

Assume programmes have the potential either to support or undermine both the connectors and the dividers.

Activity 2 - Group Work on Case Studies			
Timing		Method	Resources needed
Case studies	40'	Group work, two options	Module5.ppt Selected case studies
Feedback	30'	Feedback in plenary	Handouts 1 to 5 - Case Studies
Total: 70 minutes			Trainer Guidance 1 to 5

Note to trainer

- ✓ *Select the case studies you will use before the session. Choose one or more that are relevant to the context.*
- ✓ *The cases are long, and it is therefore advised that each group be given only one case study.*
- ✓ *You can choose to distribute the same case study to all the groups or give different groups different cases. The second choice will make the feedback session longer.*
- ✓ *There are two options for introducing this activity as described below. Option A would be for a group with more knowledge of the relevant issues than Option B. The options describe different ways of presenting the cases.*
- ✓ *The case studies are fictional accounts designed to cover a range of issues. This should be emphasised in order to offset the inevitable guessing of which organisations were guilty of the good or bad practice illustrated.*

Case study activity (40 minutes)

Note to trainer

- ✓ *If you have a highly knowledgeable group, then distribute the text of the case studies.*
- ✓ *If you feel the text is too much for your group or the time available, then it may be possible to relay the case study to the group by simply telling a story, or you could choose to ask participants to assist in a small role play as a way of describing the case study. If you take this option, it would still be necessary to note key points on the flip chart.*

Divide the participants into groups of four or five.

If possible, **ensure** that there is in every group at least one experienced participant who is knowledgeable about programming.

Distribute (or explain) the case studies to the groups. Each group should receive one case study.

Explain that the cases demonstrate programmes designed to help vulnerable populations, where not all of the effects of the projects were foreseen.

Ask the groups to read the case study and answer the questions on the slide. Groups have 30 minutes to discuss the questions, and they should record their answers on a flip chart.

Slide 8: Case study questions

- What factors influenced the design and implementation of the programme?
- What were the positive and negative effects of the programme, and were opportunities missed?
- What could have been done differently to improve protection?

Feedback in plenary (30 minutes)

Ask one group to give their answers to **question 1**. Ask if other groups have anything to add.

Ask another group to give their answers to **question 2**. Ask if other groups have anything to add.

Finally ask a third group to give their answers to **question 3**. Ask if other groups have anything to add.

Use the guidance for each case study to complement the groups' findings.

During the feedback session, it is possible to create a checklist of things to do/avoid doing in different types of programming. Whilst the list would not be exhaustive, it would provide a useful conclusion to the session.

Alternatively, ask if any participants have additional comments to add, and conclude by stressing the importance of thinking about the potential harm that can be done without a proper analysis of the situation.

Handout 1 - Case Study: Education for Returnee Children

During a protracted period of conflict, up to 500,000 people fled Wanland to seek refuge in Kamuland. Following democratic elections in their country of origin, most of the Wanlandese refugees decided to repatriate. Although a few scarce pockets of rebel activity endured after the end of the war, the country was generally deemed stable.

Amongst the returnees, children were the most affected by the conflict psychologically and the most vulnerable in terms of security. During the war, child recruitment had been common, and many children lost at least one parent. Ninety per cent of primary schools were destroyed in the war.

An international NGO with experience in education, Hope for Children, received a large donation from a foreign government grant earmarked for returnee education schemes. The NGO sent a consultant to Wanland to see how best to work with the returning children.

After rounds of consultations with both returnees and the local population, Hope for Children designed a programme that used the labour of locals and returnees to rebuild schools, and it reconvened the original teaching staff as far as possible for each school.

The idea was to set up the system of primary and secondary education again, using local skills and resources, as well as a grass-roots strategy of consultation with returnees to determine the curriculum and structure of the primary and secondary education provided to children. It was also envisaged that the reconstructed schools would be a venue for giving children some information about children's rights and their parents information about human rights in general. However, the donor indicated that the focus of programmes under this grant should be primary education only, so this aspect of the project was dropped.

Overall, the project was a success: more than 50 schools were rebuilt, and around 5,000 pupils were enrolled in them. A dropout rate of 20 per cent, presumed to be related to factors such as trauma, continued migration, and children's involvement in agricultural work, still left a number high above the target rates of the project. Since it was widely known that other NGOs in the area dealt with these issues, they were not pursued by Hope for Children. Equally, the quality of teaching at the reconstructed schools was extremely high.

In practice, most of the teachers were not from the returnee community since the government did not recognise the teaching qualifications of those who had been outside the country for a certain amount of time. After some changes made to the agreed curricula in order to meet new public criteria, the government certified the rebuilt schools. Despite the delay for certification and related pay problems, teachers were committed and worked hard from the moment school premises were rebuilt.

At the same time, those who helped with construction work were able to earn money. The evidence of this income was an increase in small trade in the area, with bars and corner shops resurfacing from the previously shattered economy.

Case study questions

- What factors influenced the design and implementation of the programme?
- What were the positive and negative effects of the programme, and were opportunities missed? (This might include things such as the environment, the vulnerable population, and other actors.)
- What could have been done differently to improve protection? (Should changes be made within their organisation, their activities, and/or their relationships with other actors and organisations?)

Trainer Guidance 1 - Case Study: Education for Returnee Children

<p>Factors influencing programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Donor pressure not to work on rights; ▪ Internal pressures on aid agencies to accept funds first and think about implementation capabilities afterwards, e.g., take the funds or risk not getting any in the future; ▪ Donor requirement to work with returnees only; ▪ Lack of alternative funding; ▪ Historical sectoral strength; ▪ Lack of knowledge of the context.
<p>Possible effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Focus on returnee areas: tension between local and returnee population; ▪ One of the biggest problems facing returnees in some countries is establishing claims on one's own property (house or land). Afghanistan and Cambodia are but two examples where these disputes will take years to settle; ▪ Aid agency's credibility at risk in refugee response; ▪ Cash for men: increase in spending on alcohol, loss of funds for the household, and increase in domestic violence; ▪ Missed opportunity to refer traumatised children; ▪ Missed opportunity to prevent/respond to possible child recruitment; ▪ Missed opportunity to hold government responsible.
<p>Suggested improvements and alternatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lack of coordination with government or other NGOs should be remedied; ▪ Women should be included in the project; ▪ Dropouts should be followed up; ▪ Funding base should be diversified; ▪ Donors should be educated to demystify concept of human rights; ▪ Hope for Children should work on the basis of community outreach, not just using the criterion of returnees; ▪ The NGO's staff and school staff should be trained in protection issues such as child labour, rehabilitation of former child soldiers, domestic violence, etc.

Handout 2 - Case Study: Water and Sanitation Assistance

An armed conflict between Harshland and Gota resulted in the forcible displacement of some 50,000 ethnic Harshlandese people. Said population originally resided on Gotan territory now under the control of Harshlandese armed forces. The displaced are hosted in makeshift shelters along the pre-war border. Few humanitarian agencies are allowed in this area (and, if so, only under military escort), given the high prevalence of minefields.

The national Red Crescent society has negotiated access to a camp of 10,000 displaced persons in the disputed territories.

It supplies food and water and has set up food-distribution centres, water points, and sanitary facilities throughout the settlement. An equal number of latrines are available to men and women, and, upon requests from women who approached the national Red Crescent society, the female latrines were painted yellow and the male ones red, so there is no confusion whatsoever over which is which. Shower blocks, however, are considered unisex, since each shower unit has a lockable door.

After a while, the incidence of nutrition-related health problems in the camp is very low, indicating that food distribution is sufficient. However, 30 per cent of the sanitary facilities set up are in need of small repairs.

A meeting is called with the settlement elders, who decide that the best option is to create a revolving maintenance team from the pool of labourers who built the latrines. The elders then persuade these men to do this on a voluntary basis. Leaflets on how to use the facilities are also produced to try to prevent deterioration.

An international NGO that focuses on psychosocial interventions then receives permission to conduct a survey of the displaced population.

Findings reveal that, within the population, there are high numbers of adolescent mothers and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. There is also a slightly rising trend of gender-based violence within the camp and in its direct vicinity. Another perhaps related problem discovered during the course of interviews is increased tension with the local community, which does not receive any benefits from the project, and, in some cases, the local population live in comparable conditions of poverty without access to running water or sanitary facilities.

However, some of the representatives of the camp population have said that the local population are making good money out of buying up surplus food from the displaced at very low prices.

Case study questions

- What factors influenced the design and implementation of the programme?
- What were the positive and negative effects of the programme, and were opportunities missed? (This might include things such as the environment, the vulnerable population, and other actors.)
- What could have been done differently to improve protection? (Should changes be made within their organisation, their activities, and/or their relationships with other actors and organisations?)

Trainer Guidance 2 - Case Study: Water and Sanitation Assistance

<p>Factors influencing programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restrictions on access placed on NGOs by host government; ▪ Negotiations with the host government/local authorities not adequate from the NGO's point of view, leading to labour disputes (local labourers vs. refugees as labourers, even though there are sometimes problems with using the refugees as labourers); ▪ NGO mandate and area of expertise is food and water distribution; ▪ Elected camp leaders are male; this is not questioned or counterbalanced by the NGO; ▪ NGO fails to learn lessons from the fact, for example, that women beneficiaries have approached with suggestions for project adjustments.
<p>Possible effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sexual harassment and violence from military, locals, or displaced population; ▪ Lack of adequate sanitary facilities for women, as women no doubt number more than men, and, due to sex and gender roles (childcare), may need them more; ▪ Risk of attack and molestation of female population in showers; ▪ Increased tension between local and displaced population; ▪ In certain areas, there may be problems within the camps where ethnic minorities (e.g., the nomads, Kuchis, in Afghan refugee camps) are totally marginalised and end up moving elsewhere; ▪ If there is a presence of militia/rebel gangs, tension and violence in the camps can increase significantly; ▪ Mine injuries (not, perhaps, as a direct result of the project); ▪ Surplus food fuelling parallel economy.
<p>Suggested improvements and alternatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Counselling, education, practical solutions (such as locks), meeting with refugee women and men in camp to assess the extent to which their needs and priorities are in line with those identified by the organisation's set of recommendations for improvement of camp facilities; ▪ Use Sphere standards to decide what the minimum required number of water points and shower facilities per person might be, taking the requirements of the local population into consideration. The Sphere standard allocation of food and non-food items to refugees may exceed the local population's daily resources, giving rise to dissatisfaction in the local population. It is critical in many instances to involve host communities in the process; ▪ Lobby for camps to be away from borders; ▪ Use public education leaflets to look at health issues and raise awareness about mines; ▪ Separate shower facilities for men and women; ▪ Shower facilities and latrines to be well lit at night to prevent violence against women; ▪ Coordinate better with other NGOs so that, from the beginning, different sectors of work (e.g., Watsan and psychosocial) will be more compatible.

Handout 3 - Case Study: Human Rights Work in a Post-conflict Environment

After the break-up of a federation of states, a struggle for leadership broke out in Gloristan between two opposing factions, one in the north, and one in the south.

During the war, some villages in both regions became targets of looting and burning, and most of the local inhabitants were displaced, internally and across international borders. Eventually, the Northern forces routed the Southerners, and, in the direct aftermath of victory, the Northern militias went on a rampage, systematically destroying Southern houses and villages.

Though the war is now officially over, and the vast majority of those who fled have meanwhile returned to their homes, tension continues, and human rights organisations report ongoing abuses, predominantly perpetrated against Southerners, both those who have returned and those who remained during the conflict.

One such human rights organisation is Rights for All International, an NGO monitoring and reporting human rights abuses around the world. A local branch of Rights for All International was set up during the conflict, and, for historical reasons, a predominantly Southern national staffing team now runs it.

Because of funding constraints, Rights for All cannot afford to take on either expatriate staff or more nationals, which could balance out the existing ethnic prejudice of the organisation. Its staff are often threatened and intimidated.

Rights for All is perceived by some Gloristanis as an anti-government, anti-Northern organisation. In general, the ruling elite in Gloristan consider human rights NGOs to be subversive opposition forces.

Although Rights for All aims to monitor and report on human rights abuses on an impartial basis, since most of their staff do not speak Northern languages or have the requisite Northern connections, it is difficult for the organisation to produce the balanced reporting it would like to. In view of this, Rights for All keeps a low profile in the country and mainly passes information out of the country to its international counterparts, who use this information in analysis, situation reports, and issue-based campaigns to encourage states' observance of human rights.

Recently, Rights for All International issued an acclaimed report in Europe that was called *Returning home? Please give up your rights as you enter*. The report used the Gloristani case to highlight some of the problems facing returnee populations in post-conflict situations, such as intimidation, continued persecution, and denial of political freedoms.

Whilst this has had the effect of raising international awareness about the situation in Gloristan, some assistance NGOs say that the report has increased tension on the ground, causing security problems for both them and the populations they work with. One practitioner has even stated that the actions of Rights for All have jeopardised delivery of assistance programmes that are, after all, also about fulfilling people's rights, since people have a right to food, adequate health care, and education.

Case study questions

- What factors influenced the design and implementation of the programme?
- What were the positive and negative effects of the programme, and were opportunities missed? (This might include things such as the environment, the vulnerable population, and other actors.)
- What could have been done differently to improve protection? (Should changes be made within their organisation, their activities, and/or their relationships with other actors and organisations?)

Trainer Guidance 3 - Case Study: Human Rights Work in a Post-conflict Environment

<p>Factors influencing programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NGO staffing history leading to unbalanced ethnic representation;¹ ▪ Lack of funding to diversify staffing team; ▪ Lack of coordination with other humanitarian actors; ▪ Failure to build image and relations with other actors; ▪ Failure to work with government (lack of political openings and/or diplomatic know-how).
<p>Possible effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased tension between two ethnic groups; ▪ Increased governmental aversion/suspicion towards human rights and other foreign organisations; ▪ Increased insecurity for the staff of other organisations working on human rights and assistance; ▪ Decreased access to goods and services offered by relief agencies to displaced populations; ▪ Decreased opportunity for displaced populations to lobby for themselves.
<p>Suggested improvements and alternatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draw inspiration from the IFRC's Better Programming Initiative - Local Capacities for Peace Project, based on Mary Anderson's work, to make aid workers more aware of the unintended negative implications of their work; ▪ More-responsible NGOs have a full-time advocacy coordinator/officer to lobby on behalf of displaced people until they are eventually able to do this for themselves; ▪ Coordinate better with other humanitarian actors. Coordinate better with international counterparts to ensure that reports are accurate, objective, and representative; ▪ Work with local partner agencies and build their capacities so they are able to work directly with beneficiaries; ▪ Consult with political (e.g., embassies) and other humanitarian actors to select the appropriate timing for publication of reports that "name and shame"; ▪ Engage with the government, e.g., provide training to government officials.

¹ This was a very real and serious problem where a number of NGOs had majority Pashtun staff who had a difficult time working in Tajik and Uzbek areas. More-balanced HR/personnel policies have to be in place before embarking on ethnically divided areas.

Handout 4 - Case Study: Local Integration Assistance Programmes

During a civil war in their country of origin, some 157,000 refugees arrived from Harshland into Pulistan, where they were received in refugee camps.

After several years, the government of Pulistan and its international counterparts decided to relocate the refugee communities as part of a local integration scheme. Refugee self-sufficiency and sustainable settlement were regarded as the main objectives of the scheme. At the same time, the scheme facilitated repatriation for those who wanted to go back. The project was implemented by NGOs with considerable international financial backing.

Those families wishing to integrate were given plots of land, seeds, tools, and, where necessary, training and credit to start their own small businesses or farms. Land was rented under state schemes to the head of household. Where possible, locally selected trainers were used in order to ensure that training was in the most accessible language and dialect for the refugees.

Initially, many men chose to set up small farms. In most cases, they needed training, as the soil in Pulistan is very different from what they were used to, as is the variety of available crops. The training they received covered new farming techniques and grain storage, as well as financial and commercial management of small-scale farming enterprises, etc.

Initially, this aspect of the project was hugely popular, with 50 per cent more people (mostly men) signing up for agricultural loans than expected.

After two years, however, it became clear that there were several flaws in the project. Many of those who had taken loans had mismanaged their finances and were unable to pay the loans back. Some of them had no grain in storage and were right back at square one.

An investigation revealed that, in the refugees' culture, women generally managed the household finances and food stocks, not the male head of the household. This was further demonstrated by the fact that a far higher proportion of female-run businesses (mostly producing handicrafts) were successful.

Another problem was a lack of sufficient water in the region to support all the new agricultural activity. This was remedied in the short term by drilling more wells and creating water points for farmers.

But discontent grew amongst some groups. One day, on the very popular radio show "Africa's Destiny", the famous singer Papa Dumela, interviewed on this issue, accused the government of trying to distract the attention of the refugees by providing them with lavish assistance in order to keep them silent.

In the meantime, he said, the government was dragging its feet about affording refugees their political rights to become full Pulistani citizens and to vote, inherit property, and take part in politics. He even stated that a scheme to set up schools for refugee children in their own language was an attempt to further segregate the refugee communities.

Case study questions

- What factors influenced the design and implementation of the programme?
- What were the positive and negative effects of the programme, and were opportunities missed? (This might include things such as the environment, the vulnerable population, and other actors.)
- What could have been done differently to improve protection? (Should changes be made within their organisation, their activities, and/or their relationships with other actors and organisations?)

Trainer Guidance 4 - Case Study: Local Integration Assistance Programmes

<p>Factors influencing programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No inclusive settlement scheme: no option for accelerated naturalisation; ▪ Lack of involvement of local Pulistani communities in programme design; ▪ Lack of ongoing programme monitoring and “job-coaching” for farm entrepreneurs; ▪ Insufficient understanding of gender relationships in the refugee communities; ▪ Isolated implementation of the settlement scheme: media should have been informed and mobilised early on to foster understanding for the effort.
<p>Possible effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Land rights: women deprived of land, as land is primarily registered in the name of the male head of household; ▪ Resentment towards the refugee communities by local population groups; ▪ Exclusion of refugee community from political processes and decision-making; ▪ Antagonising communication, i.e., publicised criticism, between the Pulistani authorities and some refugee advocates; ▪ Lowering of water table due to the drilling of more wells – environmental damage.
<p>Suggested improvements and alternatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distribute land to all men and women on an equal basis and set up legislation to ensure that, in case of the death of the head of household, land is inherited by legal spouse rather than a male member of the “clan”; ▪ Focus training on the economics of small-scale farming on women, since they traditionally make these decisions; ▪ Early on, involve the church, media, and other key local institutions/authorities in the project-planning process to benefit from their expertise and get their buy-in, as well as the support of their constituencies; ▪ Give Pulistani-language lessons to refugees; ▪ Involve the local community in the project-planning process, and ensure that they also benefit from development interventions; ▪ Give children the option of bilingual schooling or integrating into local schools; ▪ Develop constructive and locally acceptable lobbying strategies to ensure the fulfilment of refugees’ civil and political rights.

Handout 5 - Case Study: A Clinic for Displaced Children

Following an armed struggle for independence in Harshland, the country was in ruins and its people traumatised. The children of the separatist state were the most affected and vulnerable.

At the end of the conflict, they lacked access to what were considered their basic entitlements, namely, information, education, protection, and care.

Many were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorders, malnutrition, tropical diseases (dysentery and malaria), and some had been separated from their families.

As soon as they had access to this vulnerable population, national and international NGOs and Red Cross organisations began to move in to work with them.

There was a proliferation of projects to deal with the numerous problems generated by the conflict, and a series of sectoral meetings were immediately set up to coordinate activity in each sector.

One organisation set up a children's clinic to provide curative medical care to children up to the age of 15.

Because so many of the children arrived at the clinic unaccompanied, beds were set up so that they could reside there temporarily.

After six months, when the national situation had stabilised, the government decreed that children separated from their families by the war were to be transferred from their temporary beds in the clinic to existing orphanages.

Some of the children were pleased to be moving to an orphanage, as they said they feared and disliked some of the volunteers who had been responsible for their care in the clinic.

Others were anxious about the change of environment and the possibility of being split up from new friends.

The organisation responsible for administering the clinic had hoped to wind down its operations entirely, but, due to new (still incomplete) regulations governing the national medical system, it was clear that the government would not be in a position to take care of all the children.

Case study questions

- What factors influenced the design and implementation of the programme?
- What were the positive and negative effects of the programme, and were opportunities missed? (This might include things such as the environment, the vulnerable population, and other actors.)
- What could have been done differently to improve protection? (Should changes be made within their organisation, their activities, and/or their relationships with other actors and organisations?)

Trainer Guidance 5 - Case Study: A Clinic for Displaced Children

<p>Factors influencing programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emergency response – lack of time; ▪ Not enough agencies specialising in working with children. Other agencies may not have qualified staff to deal with children; ▪ Pressure to spend donor money as soon as possible; ▪ Lack of institutional checks about staff working with children; ▪ Skills of the persons selected to design and run the project (medical only?).
<p>Possible effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trauma as a result of abusive behaviour of volunteers in clinic (if there was such abusive behaviour); ▪ Prolonged or even permanent separation from parents who were not or could not be traced; ▪ Children in limbo: officially accepted for transfer to overcrowded national orphanages; ▪ Abuse and exploitation of children (even in camps) by special-interest groups.
<p>Suggested improvements and alternatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Set up a smart registration and tracing service at the project's inception, either as part of the clinic's function or in partnership with another organisation (often the Red Cross/Red Crescent national societies and the ICRC); ▪ Provide preventive (immunisation), and not only curative, care; ▪ Work with government health services so that a separate and incompatible system is not developed for the clinic; ▪ Set up screening for staff working with children and monitoring/accountability mechanisms to identify and deal with abusers quickly; ▪ Include counselling for trauma related to conflict as one of the clinic's services; ▪ Include children in the decisions being made about their own future, and provide those children going into state-run orphanages with more information about the process and what to expect.