

THE GLOBAL PROTECTION CLUSTER | STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2016-19

CONSULTATIONS WITH THE NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

Oslo, 8 December 2015

1. The Senior Protection Coordinator travelled to Oslo to consult the Norwegian Refugee Council about its priorities for the Global Protection Cluster going forward. The Norwegian Refugee Council plays a significant role in the work of the GPC through the deployment of ProCap advisors and in the work of field clusters by co-ordinating with UNHCR. It can be described as a candid friend of the GPC in the range of support it provides while also being open about its expectations.
2. While NRC does not “do protection” as such it has much to say on a wide range of relevant issues, from the impact of counter-terrorism measures on humanitarian aid to the deployment of mediation experts to remedial measures in protection, through its casework in ICLA. Its perspective on the GPC going forward is helpful to the development of the strategic framework in a frank exchange of views.
3. The GPC needs to provide leadership in advocacy, assisting the field where it is too difficult to do advocacy, e.g. in South Sudan. The GPC could elevate issues so as to protect the field. Assertive governments making access to affected populations more difficult, this is an issue for the GPC.
4. The GPC could also help define the priorities of field clusters by defining at global level what the key issues are.
5. Humanitarians are putting more emphasis on logistics and less on protection. The focus on delivery is at the expense of protection, and that may be a result of the complexity of operations today, e.g. in Syria. Maybe a small review of the last 20 ProCap deployments to see where we have been successful and why; we need to validate our experience. There appears to be a lack of willingness to grasp the issues and challenge the consensus that we cannot do anything on protection. We need to rock the boat a bit and look for new avenues.
6. Casework, like the ICLA programme, is a good way of advancing protection but it needs to fit within a large objective. We need to look at the process and objectives holistically rather than just bits of the effort. There is a need for a strategic view. It is important for HCTs to develop protection strategies as a frame for action, developing a programmatic approach and setting outcomes for the humanitarian effort as a whole. A comprehensive and coherent approach is also capable of attracting funding. HCT protection strategies can be seen as guiding the work at local level, to make it more strategic and coherent and results-oriented.
7. More refugee situations today and we are meeting the old-school of protection, which is that protection is about legal protection. This is retrograde. The outlines of

the refugee crisis in Europe are throwing up new challenges and there is a need for new thinking.

8. The technical specialisation of protection experts can be off-putting and presents a barrier to finding a solution to a protection problem. The level of training given to deployees is still low, the dissemination of tools is important.
9. Remote management of operations is a major issue and the development of the capacity of local actors is key. How to localise effort and maintain international standards is a conundrum.
10. The missing link is between relief and development and we need concrete actions around it. And what can we do on prevention? The cluster needs to focus on structures and ensuring that cyclical problems are addressed through prevention measures.
11. The GPC spends too much time on processes and not enough time on supporting the field. There is a need to rationalise processes in Geneva and focus attention on where it is really needed. The field is less and less in need of generic guidance on international standards and more in need of guidance that is tailored to the specific context in which protection work is undertaken.