Community-Based Protection | Survey Findings and Analysis

Prepared by a joint UNHCR-NGO-Academia team,

drawing from a global CBP survey, March 2014,

for the 2014 UNHCR-NGO Annual Consultations CBP Session

Community-based protection (CBP) has been gaining increasing attention among NGOs and academia, and in particular, within UNHCR. In June 2013, UNHCR provided a paper to Standing Committee outlining "progress made in strengthening the delivery of community-based protection and resulting adjustments to UNHCR's field-based protection workforce."[1]

Later in 2013, UNHCR released a Protection Policy Paper on CBP that "sets out key lessons that have emerged in recent years during the delivery of CBP. It aims to help UNHCR staff and partners at all levels to integrate community-based approaches to protection in their humanitarian work."[2]

Building on this momentum, UNHCR joined with NGOs and academics who also prioritize CBP to organize a dedicated CBP session for the 2014 Annual UNHCR-NGO Consultations. This paper, while designed to frame that session, also seeks to contribute to the growing body of work on CBP.

1. Survey data collection

In preparation for the CBP session, UNHCR, NGOs, and academics worked together to explore what is working in community-based protection. Specifically, we wanted to understand:

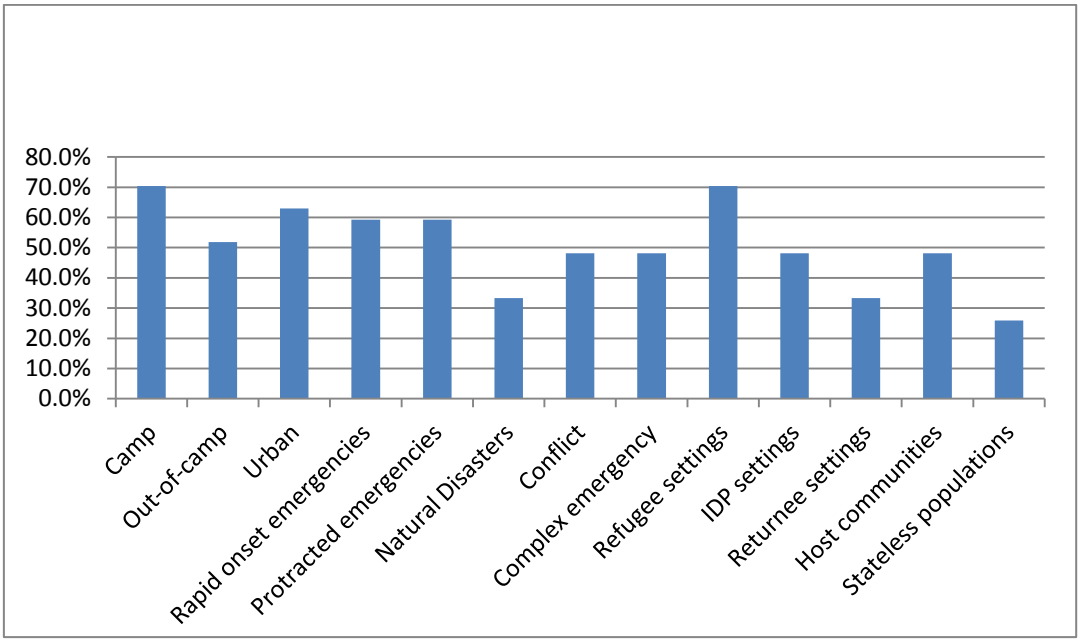
- How did your organization go about identifying, assessing, and supporting community-based protection mechanism(s)? What approaches achieved what types of protection outcomes?
- Did you encounter harmful or unhelpful community practices or power structures? What were they and how did you respond or address them?
- How did your experience change your understanding of protection needs and priorities in your context?
- What partnership investments and organizational shifts were needed to implement a successful CBP model?

With this in mind, we created both a quantitative survey and a method for submitting CBP case studies. We then solicited responses through InterAction and ICVA listserves, UNHCR's network, the Community Child Protection Exchange, and the Child Protection in Crisis Network. The survey had 38 respondents from 18 different organizations, including a substantial number of responses from UNHCR staff. An additional eight detailed case example were submitted. Responses to the solicitation came from all around the world, including:

- Africa: Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Somalia, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda
- Americas: Colombia, Ecuador, United States of America
- Asia: Afghanistan, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand
- Europe: Greece, Serbia
- MENA: Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine Territory, Syria, Turkey

Beyond the geographic spread, survey respondents reported that they are supporting CBP across a wide range of operational contexts:

[1] http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5209f0344.pdf
[2] http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5209f0b64.pdf



While we appreciated the wide geographic coverage and range of operational contexts of survey respondents, it is important to note the limitations of the survey methodology, including limitations from how survey questions were framed and the overall number of respondents.

2. Analysis of survey findings

With these responses in hand, and noting their limitations, the team from UNHCR, NGOs, and academia undertook a process of coding and analyzing the survey results. The results presented in the chart on the following pages come from answers to the following survey questions:

- Please define what community-based protection mechanisms mean to your organization.
- Please provide examples of community-based protection mechanisms you have encountered in emergencies.
- Which of these protection mechanisms has your organization supported?
- List which harmful community-based protection practices you observed.
- Did you try to stop, respond to or address these harmful mechanisms? If you answered yes, how?

In coding and analyzing survey responses, we noted groupings within how respondents answered the first three questions above. In particular, respondents seemed to have varied starting points in how they defined CBP mechanisms. In some responses, external agencies are seen to be the initiators of protective action, which is informed by the community (column one). In other responses, CBP is seen to be a method in which external agencies work to better engage communities in their own protection (column two). In the final grouping of responses, CBP is seen to be protective action that originates within and is led by communities, and which receives some measure of support from external agencies (column three).

While we have arranged responses to selected survey questions into these three groupings, the three columns in the following chart are simply meant to frame our conversation during the Consultations Session. It is our hope that these columns help participants digest survey findings, engage in a constructive conversation about how their agencies understand and define CBP, consider current gaps in our thinking and practice, and begin to look forward to future opportunities for collaborative work on this topic.

What is community-based protection?	Agency-led protection that ***is informed by*** communities	A method used by agencies ***to better engage*** communities in their own protection	Protective action that ***originates within and is led by*** communities to protect themselves
Aim/objective	External agency (e.g. UNHCR, NGO) uses participatory methods for gathering data, mapping and analyzing risk, and planning protective action External agency ensures diversities in community are considered when programming	External agency and community partner together for protective action New mechanisms may be created (e.g. 'protection committees'); these mechanisms often maintain some level of dependence on external agency	Pre-existing and self-driven community mechanisms organize community members to take protective action for their own benefit Mechanisms are primarily resourced and supported by the community, and rely on locally sourced skills, knowledge and experience unique to the context; external agencies seek to support the protective action of these mechanisms
Illustrative quotes from survey responses	"this can help [the agency] better design suitable protection strategies" "understanding local culture" "we implement"	"mobilizing the community" "helping the community to have solutions of their own challenges and working with them to be self sustainable" "engaging the community in solving the problems affecting the community"	"threats and challenges…are identified by the community themselves" "community's leading role" "gives control of resources and decision making to community groups"
Examples	Agency undertaking participatory assessments before implementing protection activity Specialized agency support for community-identified persons with specific vulnerabilities Agency awareness raising sessions with community groups on key protection threats Establishing refugee committees and focal points for agency purposes	Design and execution of community action plans, where refugee themselves assess their own situation and capabilities Community policing or neighborhood watch team established in partnership Development of real-time information networks	Community providing shelter to vulnerable and newly displaced persons Community-initiated structured dissemination of self-protection measures in face of armed attacks Mutual psychosocial support within pre-existing women's, youth, or local faith groups
Example roles of external agency	Hire community outreach staff Undertake focus group discussions and participatory assessments Utilize Age, Gender Diversity Approach Utilize Heightened Risk Identification Tool	Work with community groups to strengthen awareness of their rights and capabilities Work with community groups to map threats, undertake a safety audit, create a 'problem tree,' create an action plan Provide financial support for refugee committees	Notion of self management fostered within the community Existing community mechanism's leadership, decision making supported Access to information, key decision makers, or targeted financial support provided at times for community mechanism

What is community-based protection?	Agency-led protection that ***is informed by*** communities	A method used by agencies ***to better engage*** communities in their own protection	Protective action that ***originates within and is led by*** communities to protect themselves
Example harmful practices	Self-proclaimed representation and representatives Information misrepresentation and manipulation Pretending that there is participation of children and women Exclusion of certain social groups, stigmas associated with GBV and LGBTI	Referral of a case without capacity to do so Child protection committee activities without proper training Exposing unaccompanied minors to threats in living arrangements with community members Working at cross-ends with other community-based structures	Stigmatization of Sexual and Gender Based Violence Early marriages and restriction of movement of females Isolation of persons with mental disabilities and elderly Selling/spending assets/resources for survival/security Paying bribes to get across borders or through road blocks
Example methods to reduce harmful community practices	Engaging more members of the community and avoiding dealing with single or small number of representatives Involving individuals from outside the refugee program Information campaigns and sensitizations Use of international commemoration days and pamphlets to send messages	Develop training materials Learning activities to map threats and analyze power dynamics Establishing joint procedures and referral protocols to respond Working with all stakeholders to address the issue	Longer-term engagement that addresses the issue through culturally-sensitive conversations Holding debates with men and women Various workshops to empower women Learning, over time, which sorts of mechanisms to support or not
Related 'Key Lessons' from UNHCR's CBP Policy Paper[3]	Select community counterparts with care Effective protection measures require accurate diagnosis Community work requires expertise and training	Community-based protection is a *process*, not a project Communities are well placed to identify their protection challenges, but external partners also have a key role	Communities already employ protection measures Promote sustainability from the start Support and work with existing community and national structures

3. Reflections from the UNHCR-NGO-Academia team on the survey findings:

The chart above helps us conceptualize the different *understandings of CBP* among survey respondents. The identification of these groupings, in itself, a meaningful contribution, especially given the range of agencies interested in CBP. As we continue our conversation and work together, we can be increasingly specific about which understanding(s) of CBP we are in fact discussing and working towards.

As we consider the operational implications from this survey, it is useful to note the survey responses to the question of what resources an agency needs in order to support CBP:

[3] http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5209f0b64.pdf

Training	96%
Financial	92%
Partnerships	88%
Tools and other resources	76%
Skilled Staff (i.e. community-based protection specialists/community mobilizers)	76%
Organizational policy	68%
Change in organizational processes	48%
Donor requirements	48%

Agency investment in CBP, however, will likely be guided by how an agency defines CBP. For example, respondents in column one may prioritize internal agency policy or staff outreach skills; respondents in column two may prioritize committee formation tools or financial resources; and respondents in column three may place greater emphasis on mapping existing community structures, staff skill sets in fostering dialogue with those structures, and building relationships and trust.

Interestingly, most survey respondents defined CBP within column three, but in practice fell into the first or second column. In particular, only a handful of respondents had practical examples of column three in practice. As a result, additional work is still needed to understand how agencies identify, map and assess existing CBP mechanisms.

Similarly, we noted a gap in *staff training* packages and *agency tools* outside of column one, including in articulating *methodologies* and developing *indicators*.

We were pleasantly surprised by the thoughtful responses to our questions about *harmful community practices* and how agencies sought to reduce these practices. We took note, in particular, that all three columns had their own examples, including the potential for manipulation and misrepresentation in column one. Much more work could be done, however, to further document and analyze potential community and outside agency strategies to reduce harmful community practices, and compiling these in a practical resource for agencies interested in supporting CBP.

Finally, we undertook the survey with large questions in mind. While some are answered in part by the findings above, we have much *still to learn*. In particular, we are interested to further explore how CBP mechanisms are identified and supported within specific operational contexts: camp vs. non-camp or urban, conflict situations vs. natural disasters, and rapid onset vs. protracted situations. Similarly, further consideration of how to support CBP across various types of protection work (e.g. child protection, rule of law, gender-based violence, etc.) is still needed.

4. Where to go from here

Noting the survey results and the reflections above, the following are recommendations for further exploration, both during the CBP session at the 2014 Annual UNHCR-NGO Consultations, and beyond:

- What definition of CBP does your agency use? What protection outcomes are achieved as a result? In which operational contexts? For what types of protection issues?

- What attitudes, tools, resources, staffing, and agency characteristics are needed to support CBP? Which of these is your agency currently investing in? Which would benefit from further collaborative work?

- What other practical steps can agencies take to better identify, assess and support community-led protection?

- Are there distinctions in the role that UNHCR can play in CBP from the role NGOs can play?

- How do donor funding modalities, and programming and reporting requirements help or hinder the ability of external agencies working to strengthen CBP mechanisms? What shifts in attitudes and funding mechanisms would you recommend to donors to better support community-led protection (column three)?

- What else needs to be done to understand and respond to harmful or unhelpful community practices or power structures? What practical tools would be most useful to your agency?

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ChildFund International
Church World Service
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Dan Church Aid
Finn Church Aid
Food for the Hungry
Group for Children and Youth "Indigo"
InterAction
International Catholic Migration Commission
International Emergency and Development Aid (IEDA Relief)
International Council of Voluntary Agencies
International Rescue Committee
Legal Resources Center South Africa
Leonum Advisors
Local2Global Protection Project
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