Protection Mainstreaming

Overview

Protection mainstreaming is defined as the inclusion of humanitarian protection principles into the crisis response by ensuring that any response is provided in a way that avoids any unintended negative effects (do no harm), is delivered according to needs, prioritizes safety and dignity, is grounded on participation and empowerment of local capacities and ultimately holds humanitarian actors accountable vis–à-vis affected individuals and communities. IOM is committed to mainstreaming protection across all of its programming as it ensures safe and good programming. IOM incorporates following **four protection mainstreaming principles**, which are fundamental to crisis and post-crisis response:

1. Prioritize safety and dignity and avoid causing harm
2. Secure meaningful access
3. Ensure accountability
4. Ensure participation and empowerment

Key Considerations

Protection mainstreaming is the process of incorporating protection principles and promoting meaningful access, safety and dignity in humanitarian action while making sure that response is participatory and that it is accountable to the people IOM seeks to assist. Protection should be mainstreamed across two fundamental levels that are at strategic and operational levels. At the strategic level, it is crucial to ensure that the response targets the most at risk and does not create any unintended negative consequences affecting the general context of the crisis or the affected population (for example, migrants, displaced population and communities hosting them). In order to ensure that protection is mainstreamed at the strategic level, assessments and analyses have to integrate elements that would allow for the identification of who is most at risk and thus, in need of assistance. The results of these analyses have to be reflected in response planning (for instance, IOM response planning, inter-agency response planning) and help prioritize affected individuals or groups and decide the nature of the intervention. At operational level, it is significant to ensure that the four protection mainstreaming principles are integrated in every project IOM implements, before, during and after a crisis. To ensure that protection mainstreaming is integrated at the operational level, the protection mainstreaming principles should become part of each phase of the project life-cycle: project development and design; project endorsement; project implementation and monitoring and project evaluation.

Persons with disabilities are diverse in their experience, in the ways that attitudinal, physical and communication barriers impede their participation and inclusion in humanitarian action, and in their identity, including their age, gender, ethnicity, location and race. Due to the intersectionality of these factors, persons with disabilities face greater marginalization and discrimination. Barriers can be either classified as a threat if put in place purposefully by an actor or as a vulnerability if happening as an inadvertent act. In both cases, these barriers lead to exclusion, which increases the likelihood of persons with disabilities to face threats and vulnerabilities at a higher level than the rest of the crisis-affected population. By making use of enablers persons with disabilities can improve their individual resilience. Falling risk and rising resilience imply improved protection.

Relevance to IOM's Emergency Operations

Adhering to the IASC Statement on the Centrality of Protection and Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action, IOM reaffirms that the protection of all affected and at risk individuals and communities must be at the heart of humanitarian decision-making and response, and all humanitarians have the responsibility to protect affected or at risk individuals and communities before, during and after a crisis strikes.

In practical terms, IOM ensures that service and assistance delivery preserves the physical integrity of individuals and communities, their dignity, and is culturally appropriate and minimizes any harmful and unintended negative consequences. Assistance and services are provided according to needs and not on the basis of age, sex, gender identity, nationality, race, or ethnic allegiance. Services and assistance are provided in good quantity, within safe and easy to reach locations, are known by the affected individuals and are accessible by all various groups including medical cases, persons with disabilities, discriminated groups. Affected individuals and communities play an active role in the measurement of the quality of interventions that affect them and put in place effective and easily accessible mechanisms for suggestions and complaints from the population and, in so doing, increasing accountability.

Inclusive participation to decision-making processes is fostered to support the development of self-protection capacities and assist people to claim their rights and empower themselves. In addition, persons with disabilities are estimated to represent 15 per cent of the world's population. In humanitarian contexts, they may form a much higher percentage. They are among the most marginalized people in crisis-affected communities and are disproportionately affected by conflict and emergency situations.

Consistent with its efforts to mainstream protection, IOM is also committed to strengthening the protection of persons with disabilities. This is grounded in the IOM commitments made through the UN Disability Strategy (UNDIS) which was launched in 2019, which requires IOM to step up its activities on disability inclusion. IOM is also supporting the IASC in the dissemination and implementation of the Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (2019).

Coordination

Particularly in the past few years, IOM has scaled up its engagement with the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) and the areas of responsibility (AoR) thereunder.

Since 2013, IOM is one of the core members of the GBV AoR, contributing to strengthen its capacities on information management, among other things, and of multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Call to Action on Protection from Gender-based Violence in Emergencies.

With regards to child protection, IOM is a member of the Alliance for the Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (Alliance CPHA) and of the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CPAoR) of the GPC. From 2017 to 2020, IOM has acted as Chair of the Inter-Agency Task Force on unaccompanied and separated children (IATF UASC) of the Alliance CPHA and continues to play a significant role in the protection of migrant and displaced children.

IOM also co-created and currently co-leads the GPC Task Team on Anti-Trafficking in Humanitarian Action; is an active member of several other inter-agency taskforces; and is recognized as an active player in the IASC Reference Group in Results Group 2 on Disability Inclusion. It also sits on the Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Advisory Group (EORE AG), reporting the GPC via the Mine Action AoR. IOM is a member of the ProCap/GenCap advisory groups and, at the end of 2019, IOM became a member of the Strategic Advisory Group of the GPC.

At the field level, IOM is a proactive member of protection clusters, sectors and related working groups/task teams while implementing a wide array of protection thematic areas such as child protection, counter-trafficking in crisis, addressing GBV, disability inclusion, alternatives to immigration detention, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), accountability to affected populations (AAP), as well as housing, land and property.

Lessons Learned / Best Practice

Safety & dignity and avoid causing harm

IOM delivers services and assistance in ways that aims to preserve the physical integrity of individuals and communities, that are culturally appropriate and that avoid any unintended negative consequences. In **Iraq**, IOM extended its NFI distribution to target both displaced and host communities as a means to mitigate community-level conflict over resources. In **Jordan**, transportation assistance is tailored by taking age, gender, and disabilities into consideration ensuring cultural appropriateness and reasonable accommodation. In **Nigeria**, IOM multi-sectoral teams regularly undertake safety audits to identify and address protection risks, including risks of GBV, related to site infrastructure. In **South Sudan**, IOM continues to focus on enhancing staff capacity in integrating protection and GBV risk mitigation measures to trainings on Protection, GBV and PSEA core concepts and principles.

Meaningful access

IOM provides assistance and services according to needs, making sure that assistance is provided in an adequate scale, within safe and easy reach, and are known by the affected communities. In **the Central African Republic**, for the distribution of NFI and shelters kits, community dialogues are organized to agree on location of distribution centres to reduce burden on transportation, ensure the safety of beneficiaries and communicate the selection criteria. In **Jordan**, while designing cash-based interventions, gender, age and disability are considered to determine the most appropriate cash recipient for the household and method of cash delivery (iris scan, ATM card). In **the Federated States of Micronesia**, for food distribution, IOM partners with local community members to ensure safe access for beneficiaries living in remote and isolated islands. In **Türkiye**, IOM works through community centres in multiple locations for beneficiaries living in rural and remote areas to enhance access to critical services such as counselling, referrals, psychosocial support, training, and recreational activities.

Participation & Empowerment

IOM fosters inclusive participation to decision making processes, builds on affected individuals and communities' capacities in the development and delivery of assistance. In **Niger**, IOM conducts several focus groups discussions to increase the community's direct participation in decision making processes. In **Burundi** , for shelter repairs targeting female-headed households, IOM established construction committees comprised of women and at the same time provides cash for work for their involvement. In **Uganda**, IOM facilitates stakeholder meetings in which key decision makers are consulted, including community religious and cultural leaders. In **Pakistan**, women are specially encouraged to attend community meetings to raise their concerns and influence decisions.

Accountability

IOM enables affected individuals and communities to play an active role in the measurement of the quality of interventions and to improve policy and programming. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, community-based

complaint mechanisms are implemented in all reception centres. Moreover, Migrant Community Representative Councils participate in the management and operations of these centres. In **Zimbabwe**, IOM receives community feedback from cyclone affected IDPs. In **Türkiye**, IOM collects feedbacks through multiple modalities including SMS, hotlines, and surveys.

Links

- IOM Protection Mainstreaming in Crisis Response website
- Global Protection Cluster Protection Mainstreaming website

Media

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_VWl0B0mRX8
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUPzwGvHVj8&feature=youtu.be
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3dIVh0ShYE&feature=youtu.be
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrSpBPF3YFY
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ChbjsphWVjw&feature=youtu.be
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BpyieqausE0&feature=youtu.be
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX5N-8ztqEU&feature=youtu.be
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZ7mmyi9tNE&feature=youtu.be
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5LkP0GHt0U&feature=youtu.be

Contacts

For more information on protection mainstreaming, contact the HQ Protection team at: DOEProtectionHQ@iom.int.

Key Points

- IOM has committed to mainstream protection across all phases of its crisis response.
- Protection mainstreaming addresses "how" crisis and post-crisis response is performed and is the responsibility of all actors.
- All humanitarian actors have an ethical responsibility to incorporate protection principles into their humanitarian response programmes.
- Persons with disabilities are estimated to represent 15 per cent of the world's population. In humanitarian contexts, they may form a much higher percentage and are among the most marginalized people in crisis-affected communities.

References and Tools

- IASC Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action
- IOM mainstreams protection in International Humanitarian Evacuations of Migrants
- IOM Protection Portfolio
- Protection Mainstreaming in IOM s response to migration crises

- The Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action
- United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy

Document date

Document last updated: Oct 2023

Page