

Survey for the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Revised Strategic Framework 2016-19

October 2015



Professionals in
Humanitarian Assistance
and Protection



About GPC

The Global Protection Cluster coordinates and provides global level inter-agency policy advice and guidance on the implementation of the cluster approach to Protection Clusters in the field, supports protection responses in non-refugee situation humanitarian action as well as leads standard and policy setting relating to protection in complex and natural disaster humanitarian emergencies, in particular with regard to the protection of internally displaced persons.

About PHAP

As the only individual-based professional association bringing together all parts of the humanitarian sector, the mission of the International Association of Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection (PHAP) is to enhance the capacity of the global humanitarian community to respond effectively and professionally to current and future crises. A key means to this end is to focus on concrete, practical measures to enhance the availability, experiences, skills, competences, professional networks, and both formal and informal support structures of humanitarian personnel at all levels and in all parts of the system.

Special thanks goes to Gary Shapiro, Steven J. Dick, and Russell C. Burnett of Statisticians without Borders for comments and input on the survey and analysis.

October 2015

CONTACT

International Association of Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection (PHAP)

Rue de Montbrillant 87

1202 Geneva, Switzerland

+41 22 518 04 58

info@phap.org

DISCLAIMER: Neither PHAP nor any of its employees, nor any of their contractors, subcontractors or their employees, makes any warranty, express or implied, or assumes any legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, completeness, or any third party's use or the results of such use of any information, apparatus, product, or process disclosed, or represents that its use would not infringe privately owned rights. Reference herein to any specific commercial product, process, or service by trade name, trademark, manufacturer, or otherwise, does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by PHAP. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of PHAP.

Contents

Executive summary.	4
Introduction.	6
Methodology	6
About the respondents.	7
Defining humanitarian protection	10
Operationalizing humanitarian protection	23
Support relating to humanitarian protection	30
The role of the GPC.	33
National and local actors	35

Executive summary

This survey was carried out in September 2015 as part of the online consultations informing the update of the Strategic Framework of the Global Protection Cluster (GPC). The survey, available in English and French, gathered responses from 1323 individuals, from all world regions. It included questions in the following areas:

- **Definitions:** Defining protection, the IASC definition
- **Operationalizing protection:** Protection priorities, focus on displaced people, challenges for the protection cluster
- **Support needed for protection work**
- **Role of the GPC**
- **Local and national partners:** Accessibility, languages, and approach of protection clusters and Humanitarian Country Teams (HCT).

Defining protection

- A large majority of the respondents are currently using the IASC definition in their work and find it helpful in general. Somewhat fewer, but still a clear majority, found it useful for the particular contexts they are working in.
- A third of the respondents find the definition's width to be a problem, with many commenting that it is too broad and unspecific. Almost as many find that it does not sufficiently take into account local protection strategies.
- Less than a fifth of respondents believe that the IASC definition is problematic due to its cultural and historical roots.
- While two thirds agree that protection should be considered life saving, many commented that it is also much more than that.
- A fifth of the respondents think that the wording of the IASC definition should be changed. There are twice as many who oppose changing the wording of the IASC definition.

Operationalizing protection

- Free-text responses regarding protection priorities fell along several different dimensions, with most focusing on services and programs; specific target groups; law, policy, and advocacy; and specific issues and challenges.
- Almost half of the respondents find their current focus on displaced people more or less correct, while many comment on the tendency to exclude those who are not displaced.
- Two of the top three challenges identified for the protection cluster concern its focus being wrong – there is not enough focus on operational protection and advocacy. The other top challenge concerns the capacity of the cluster, pointing to its insufficient funding.
- Around half of the respondents with a peacekeeping operation active in their context identify confusion regarding roles and goals as the primary challenge. Only a tenth of respondents think there is too much coordination with peacekeeping missions.

Support relating to humanitarian protection work

- The top three categories of needed support all concern strengthening resources and direct capacity building of organizations and their partners.
- This is followed by five areas relating to advice, analysis, and information management.
- The least prioritized areas are advice on the use of cash and how to set up or phase out a cluster.

The role of the GPC

- Less than half of respondents are well acquainted with the GPC, indicated room for improvement in terms of ensuring that all relevant humanitarian actors are aware of the GPC and its activities, especially outside of Europe.
- The top priority identified is to provide guidance on protection-related policy, with promoting mainstreaming a close second.
- Two areas more directly concerned with local contexts are also prioritized highly: educating national actors on protection and advising on developing protection strategies adapted to local contexts.
- Three areas are clearly not prioritized by respondents: advising on access to existing funding opportunities, advising on effective communication about protection strategies, and other technical support.

National and local partners

- While four fifths responded that national and local agencies are included in the protection cluster in their contexts, only two fifths find that all participants are reliably able to understand and effectively participate in HCT and cluster meetings.
- Only half find that the dynamic in cluster and HCT meetings is respectful of local views and traditions, but at the same time a large proportion of respondents are unsure on this question.
- In many contexts, guidance documents are not translated into local languages, especially in Africa.
- Half of the respondents do not know whether the Principles of Partnership are used in the clusters.

Introduction

In 2015, the Global Protection Cluster will update its Strategic Framework and revitalize its structures to react better to the needs of the field and speak more forcefully for change.

The 2012-15 Strategic Framework and resulting work-plans have been largely delivered. The GPC needs to reflect the evolution of the humanitarian response system highlighted by the IASC Statement on the Centrality of Protection, Human Rights Up Front and the Transformative Agenda. But the GPC also needs to adapt its working methods to respond to multiple simultaneous crises and protracted situations and the recommendations of an independent Whole of System Review of Protection as well as the report of the High-Level Independent Panel on Peacekeeping Operations and the Brookings Study. The strategic framework should build on the implementation of the existing framework but be more outward looking, reflecting the views and expectations of the humanitarian community at large, the field, partners in the Global South and stakeholders like DPKO, DPA, states, IASC, global clusters and others. The framework needs to take into account the consultations on, and look forward, to the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016.

The consultations for the development of the new Strategic Framework follow three tracks: consultations at the HQ level with Permanent Missions, NGOs, UN agencies and departments and global clusters; consultations of and in the field with Resident Coordinators, protection clusters, local agencies, NGOs and donors; and on-line consultations. The results of the first leg of the on-line consultations are presented in this report.

The consultations are open and intended to encourage a radical rethink about the direction of the Global Protection Cluster in the next few years. The results of the on-line consultations are an important element in that endeavor.

A draft of the renewed Strategic Framework should be disseminated in November and adopted in December 2015.

Methodology

This report is based on a survey conducted in September 2015. The questions for the survey were prepared by the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) secretariat. PHAP sent out the survey to approximately 35 000 individuals in their network. Further outreach was carried out by the GPC and partners.

As certain questions applied to all respondents and some respondents chose not to answer all of the questions, or were excluded due to their responses to other questions, the number of responses varies between different sections of the survey.

The analysis takes its starting point in descriptive statistics of the responses. Crosstabulations were also carried out for each of the questions for the background variables and other relevant questions in the survey, with any notable correlations included in the analysis.

This quantitative part was then complemented with an analysis of the large number of free text responses and comments submitted by the respondents to the questions that allowed for this. Responses that are particularly illuminating have been included in this report. A full list of the free text responses is also available as an appendix.

The question regarding protection priorities required special analysis, as it included 1912 free text responses focusing on a number of different dimensions of protection work. The responses were categorized into 112 categories in seven dimensions.

This survey is part of a larger consultation process carried out by the GPC. As the results from this survey should be considered together with those of the other consultation efforts, no recommendations are made on the basis of this survey alone.

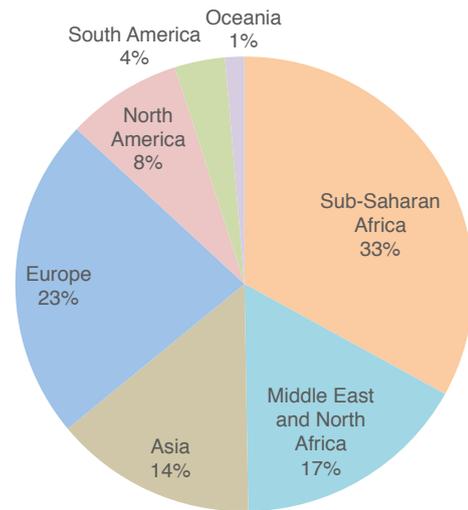
About the respondents

The survey had a total of 1323 respondents. The vast majority of the respondents (87%) chose to respond to the survey in English rather than French. As the survey was primarily promoted through English language channels, this ratio was not unexpected.

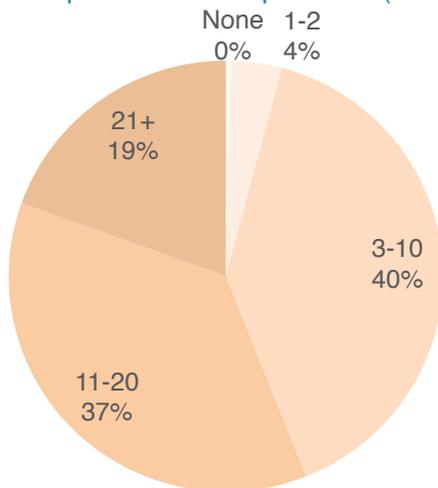
All world regions were represented among the respondents, but with a lower number of respondents from South America and Oceania. The distribution of where respondents were based roughly followed that of the PHAP membership, with Sub-Saharan Africa and the MENA region making up half of the respondents. The top respondent countries included both major international headquarters locations and countries with current humanitarian responses.

A majority (56%) of the respondents had more than 11 years overall professional experience. Fewer junior staff responded, with only 4% of

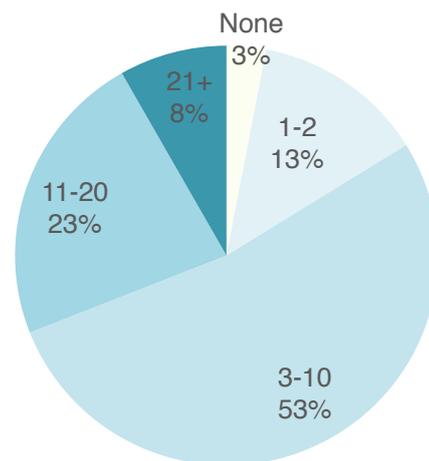
Region primarily based in (n=1323)



Years of professional experience (n=1323)



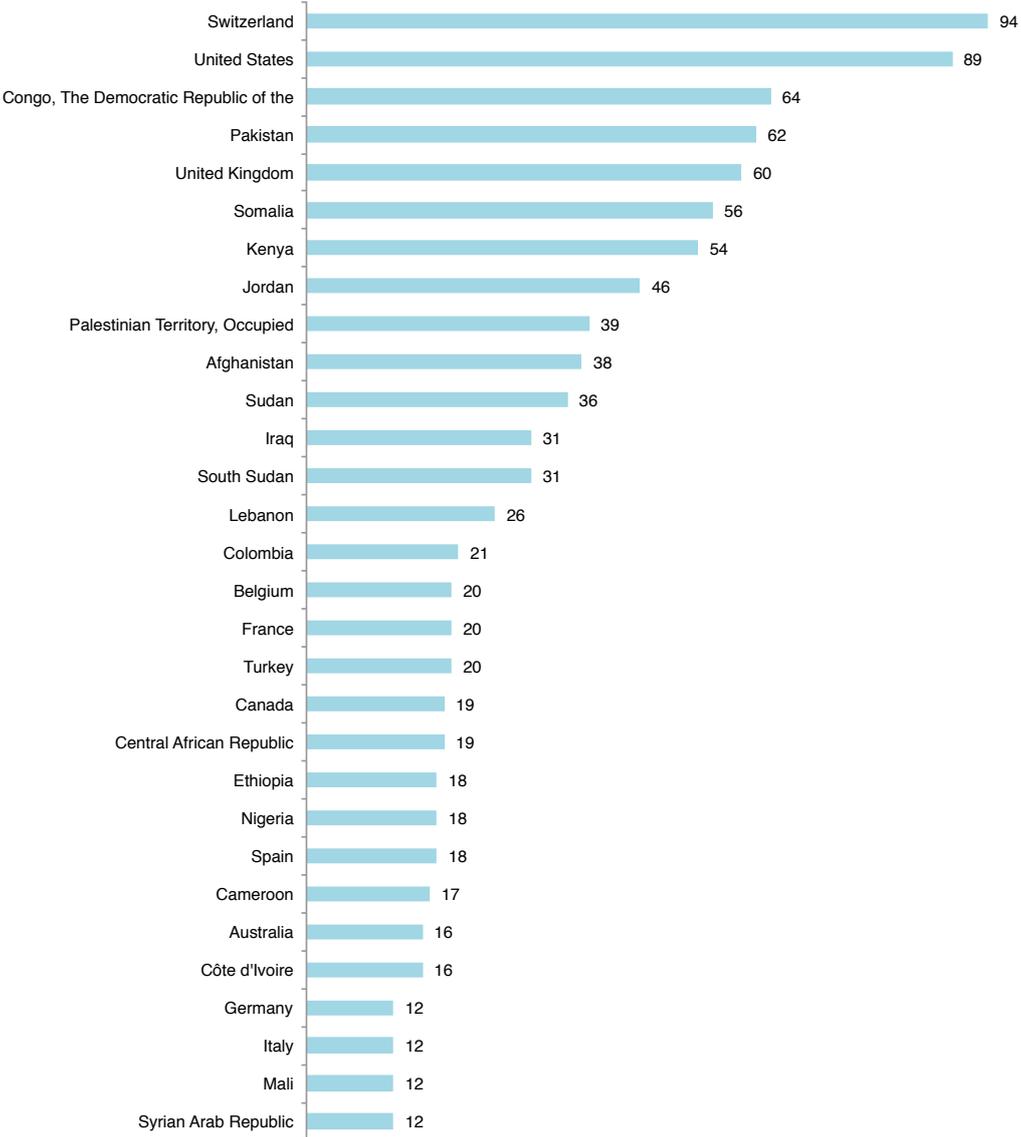
Years of professional experience related to humanitarian action (n=1323)



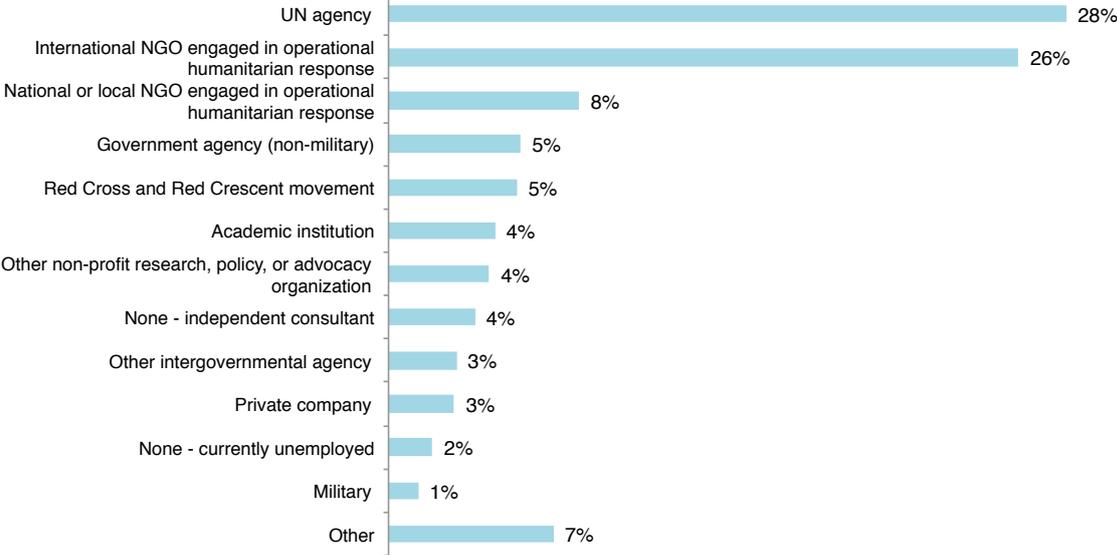
respondents having less than two years professional experience. The vast majority (84%) had been working in humanitarian action for three years or more.

More than half of the respondents were either working for a UN agency or with an international NGOs. However, considerable numbers from all other categories or organizations, including local NGO, the Red Cross and Red

Top countries primarily based in



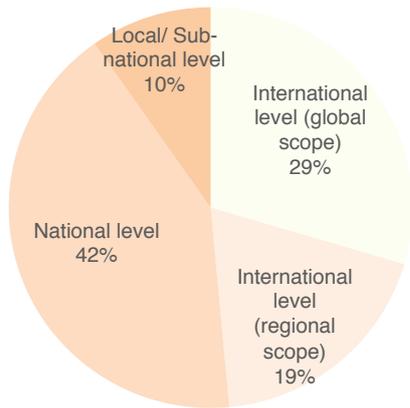
Type of organization (n=1323)



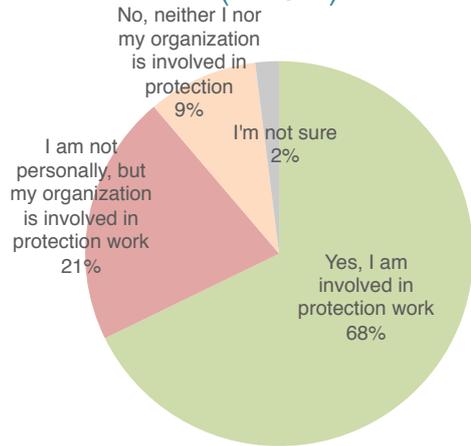
Crescent Movement, and government agencies took part in the survey. A notable exception is military actors, with only 16 respondents.

The respondents were divided more or less equally between those who worked primarily at the national or subnational level and those with a regional or global professional scope. Only 10% responded that they worked at the subnational level. However, as the distinction between the national and subnational level is diffuse, they are analytically treated as a single category in this report.

Professional geographical scope (n=1323)



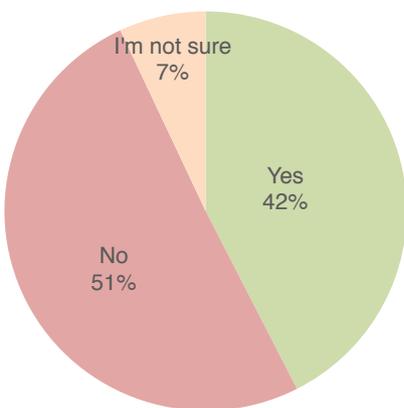
Are you or your organization involved in protection work (directly or indirectly)? (n=1011)



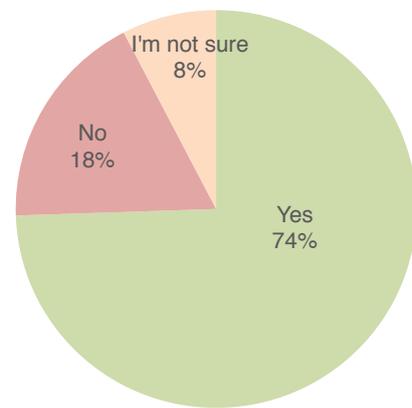
Almost 70% of the respondents answered that they were directly involved in protection work. Another 21% were not directly involved themselves, but their organizations were. Unsurprisingly, of the 9% not involved in protection work either individually or as an organization, a disproportionately large part were from academic institutions, other research organizations, and the private sector. The answers from respondents in this category are taken into account where relevant, as it is assumed that they have experience of protection in some way, stemming from the fact that they chose to complete the survey.

A large majority (74%) of the respondents have current experience of working in or with contexts with an active protection cluster. Only 42% were working in or with contexts with active UN peacekeeping missions.

Is there a UN peacekeeping mission alongside your current operation (or in one or more of the contexts that you are currently working on)? (n=760)



Is there a protection cluster in your current operational context (or in one or more of the contexts that you are currently working on)? (n=760)



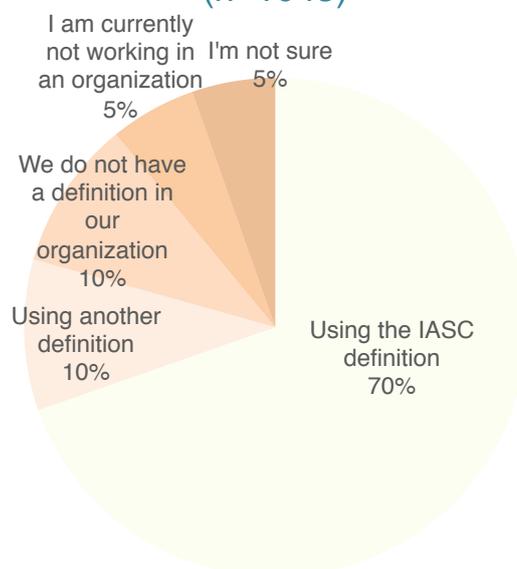
Defining humanitarian protection

Respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the definition of protection, focusing on the IASC definition, according to which protection in humanitarian crises encompasses:

“all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law).”

The majority (70%) of the respondents stated that they are using the IASC definition in their organizations. Only 10% were using another definition. It should be noted that respondents from all types of organizations responded similarly except for those from the RCRC Movement, of which more than 25% responded that they used another definition.

Protection definition used by organization (n=1043)



A large majority (73%) found the IASC definition helpful. Only a small number (6%) did not find it helpful, while almost a fifth (17%) responded neither found it helpful or a hindrance. It can be noted that almost all (90%) of the respondents from national and local NGOs found the definition helpful. While this indicates an overall support for the IASC definition, the participant comments indicate that there are still issues with the clarity of the definition, which may have concrete impact on protection work, as summed up by the following comments:

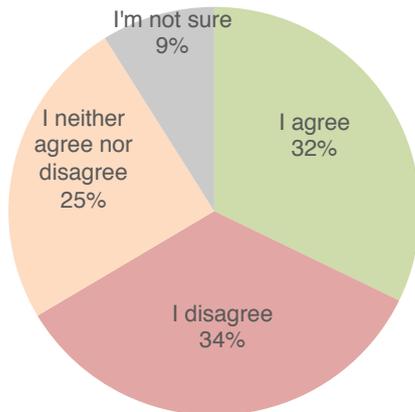
There are far too many competing and vague concepts of the term protection. International organizations, governments and NGOs have completely different conceptual understandings. This fuzziness actually contributes to failures to protect.

Coordinator, Other intergovernmental agency (Switzerland)

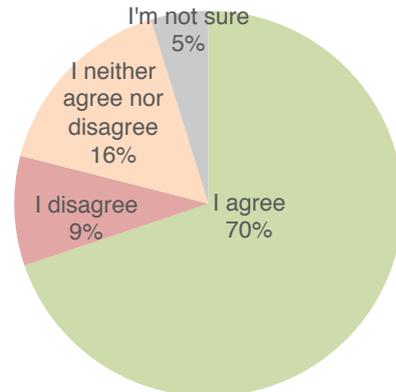
Most colleagues in the field do not understand what it actually means for their operation from a practical point of view. They do not feel ownership of the issues as it is assumed this is a responsibility of the protection cluster, that it needs to be dealt by specialised team and does not involve the totality of the operation.

Director, UN agency (Switzerland)

The definition is so wide that it risks losing practical relevance (n=1043)



The definition is wide enough to sufficiently cover the range of contexts and activities needed for effective protection work (n=1043)



The main disagreement seems to concern the “width” of the IASC definition of protection. About two thirds (70%) agreed that the *definition is sufficiently wide*. However, only half of these (34%) disagreed with the statement that the *definition is too wide*, so that it may lose practical relevance. Again, the national and local NGOs were more supportive of the IASC definition, with almost half of them (48%) disagreeing with the statement that the definition is too wide. However, among those who chose to leave optional comments, most believe that the definition is too wide:

The definition is indeed very broad (e.g. health interventions - right to health under HRL and IHL - may also fall into that definition, so basically protection could encompass everything... There is a need to refine the focus to ensure greater clarity and accountability of the sector. I would suggest a focus on advocacy around HRL/IHL, protection monitoring and specific preventive and remedial interventions that address specific protection vulnerabilities

Senior specialist, UN agency (Jordan)

The comments focused on two reasons why the IASC definition was too wide. First, many found it lacking in focus to an extent where it was of **no help for how to operationalize protection**:

It is so broad, it's difficult to operationalize

Officer, UN agency (Jordan)

While inclusive, it is hard to operationalize

Senior Director, Other non-profit research, policy, or advocacy organization (United States)

Second, several respondents highlighted that because of this very wide definition, **protection risks becoming a cover-all category** of activities:

Everything under the sun is 'protection' these days. It is a serious risk as we may be getting out of the core of the issue.

Advisor, UN agency (Egypt)

It gives enough scope to focus on issues of particular relevance to the context, however also means protection actors can easily fall into the 'everything and nothing' category and become a dumping ground for activities that other clusters can or do not want to undertake.

Officer, UN agency (South Sudan)

If one assumes that humanitarian 'protection' encompasses ALL rights, then every action in humanitarian contexts is the responsibility of the protection folks.

Specialist, UN agency (Colombia)

On the other hand, several commenters agreed that the definition was wide, but found **the width of the definition positive**, as it was inclusive of the different approaches and operational definitions needed for protection work:

It's the organisation's responsibility to define what protection is for itself. The broadness of this definition allows that.

Protection Advisor, International NGO (Denmark)

With the understanding that all activities undertaken to ensure that the human rights of individuals are ensured, then the definition is not too wide. The definition brings together actors who have defined roles and mandates under one umbrella of protection with a specific objective; protection as the basis of their work.

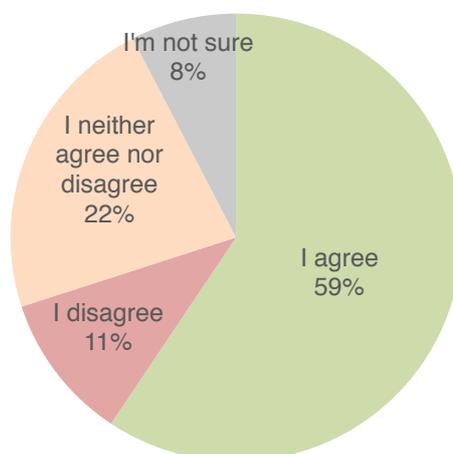
Expert, International NGO (Uganda)

Several respondents, however, also found **the definition too narrow**, primarily as it focused too much on legal frameworks and human rights, which did not sufficiently cover what protection fundamentally was about in their view:

Too focused on law / violations. Should rather focus on the experience of the people, the harm and suffering caused to them.

Head of unit, Red Cross and Red Crescent movement

The definition is useful for the specific context(s) that I am working in or on (n=1043)



It is so rights-focused that it causes to lose sight of more durable solutions and issues like social cohesion.

Protection Advisor (Mali)

There are not sufficient bodies of law to fully encompass the full range of human rights needs in emergency settings, particularly in terms of protection.

Project Development Officer, Other intergovernmental agency (South Africa)

A majority (59%) found the definition helpful for their specific contexts, somewhat lower than the proportion that found the definition helpful in general. Most of those who commented thought the IASC definition itself was fine – but it was **both too broad and unspecific**. It needed to be elaborated to be useful for more purposes and contexts, either through a reformulation of the definition itself or through separate material to provide further guidance.

Ultimately what is required is some sort of practical framework for protection to help guide what actors not he ground should be doing.

Officer, UN agency (Switzerland)

It's a good starting point but I always have to go further to explain why it is then relevant to actors in the room who are not mandated with legal aspects of protection

Specialist, International NGO (United Kingdom)

The definition itself doesn't give enough details to support the specific areas of intervention

Advisor, International NGO (Somalia)

Elle a simplement besoin d'être ajustée et adaptée aux différents contextes.

Coordinatrice, International NGO (France)

It needs to be more practical, operational.

Director, UN agency (Switzerland)

It is useful but it needs to be elaborated on more. There are people in the sector/cluster system that still does not understand what protection is, even when using the IASC definition. Therefore more official guidance is needed for practical relevance.

Officer, UN agency (Myanmar)

We need greater specificity for it to be helpful

Director, International NGO (Austria)

So broad that can be easily adapted. So broad that can easily lose focus.

Coordinator, International NGO (Iraq)

Personally I think that a more concrete definition would be useful

Officer, UN agency (Switzerland)

There was some concern among a couple of respondents regarding the risk of confusion with **humanitarian protection not sufficiently distinct** from protection in other sectors:

However, a longstanding and remaining challenge: what is distinction between humanitarian definition of protection and the separate but sometimes overlapping concept of 'protection of civilians' as utilized by the UN mission

UN agency (South Sudan)

The definition is relevant for humanitarian, human rights, security & development actors - so there is a lack of understanding or distinction with humanitarian protection

Adviser, UN agency (Kenya)

Regarding the **rights-based aspect of the definition**, some respondents highlighted its usefulness for the contexts where they work:

Rights-focused protection is a key part of protection as a whole, and in that sense the definition is useful as it underlines this rights-based approach.

Protection of Civilians Advisor (Mali)

I work on inclusion of specific groups, and the broad definition which is rights based and can be interpreted to relate to access, is relevant here

Programme Officer, International NGO (United Kingdom)

Afghanistan is fraught with gender discriminatory belief systems and customs. It is often only challengeable using a human rights framework

Advisor, UN agency (Afghanistan)

Others, however, note that the strong **focus on human rights and a rights-based approach was problematic in their contexts**:

Human rights focus can lead to acceptance issues

Coordinator, Red Cross and Red Crescent movement

I feel like most contexts I work in do not really view IHL as useful to them and run contrary to their beliefs and culture, at the detriment of human rights.

Coordinator, International NGO (Spain)

A few respondents argued that the definition is **too focused on individual rights**, suggesting both that the rights and obligations of communities be included and that it should also mention preventing or addressing violations of the law:

Needs to have community focus not only individual rights

Coordinator, (Switzerland)

The right to self-determination in an occupation context goes beyond individual rights and is not included in the definition. We may have to look not just at individual rights alone.

Head of office, UN agency

It was also noted that while the mention of international humanitarian law is very important – the definition could be **better adapted to armed conflict situations**.

Helpful to have international law as a reference in conflict situations

Head of Middle East region, International NGO (United Kingdom)

Not enough and not adapted to remote monitoring in heavy armed conflict

Coordinator, International NGO (Lebanon)

It is too broad. Especially when the risk to physical safety is so high and needs priority attention.

Advisor, International NGO (Belgium)

It should also be noted that several respondents from the **child protection community did not find the definition useful**:

For child protection community, the definition loses some practical relevance.

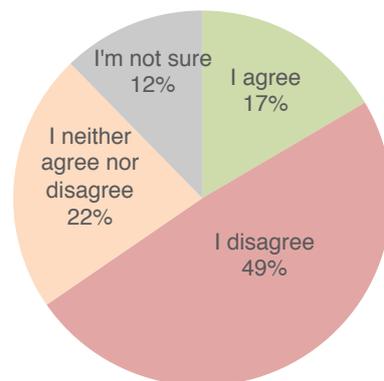
Independent consultant (United States)

Child protection is most relevant to my work – and there are more useful/ targeted definitions that I would use

Manager, International NGO (United Kingdom)

The definition is rooted in a specific cultural and historical context and is therefore problematic (n=1043)

Most respondents did not agree that the IASC definition was problematic due to its being rooted in a specific cultural and historical context. While less than half (49%) disagreed, the comments indicate that many of those who responded that they were not sure or neither agreed nor disagreed were in accordance with half of the statement. The definition was seen as **rooted in a specific context, which is however not a problem per se**:



The answer is probably 'yes', but any definition will have a cultural and intellectual heritage.

Deputy Director, International NGO (United Kingdom)

Always the case that any definition arises from a specific context, issue is whether it is problematic...

Independent consultant (Ireland)

Several of the respondents were adamant that while it may be historically rooted in a context, the **universality of human rights** trumps this:

The legal basis of the definition can be problematic in certain countries as parts of those laws are not formally recognized. On the other hand, this argument can be made about all human rights, yet this doesn't necessarily mean we should give up on the universal value of those.

Coordinator, International NGO (Lebanon)

I strongly disagree. The definition confirms the universality of human rights and requires duty-bearers to govern their interventions accordingly.

Officer, UN agency (Hungary)

We must never let go of the universality of international and humanitarian law.

Recent retiree, UN agency (Hungary)

Question is somewhat patronizing, all countries are signatories to most Human Rights agreements

Programme Manager, Government agency (non-military) (United Kingdom)

On the other hand, other respondents acknowledged the potential problems using this definition in **countries where human rights law is seen more as a Western idea**. These commenters did in general not call for a change of the definition:

In some non-western societies other different types of law applies and therefore it may cause problems of acceptance.

Officer, UN agency (Somalia)

I agree that this may be problematic in areas where fundamental human rights are seen as 'Western' and not applicable.

Officer, Other intergovernmental agency (South Africa)

It's problematic for some countries/cultures who hold different perspectives on human rights.

Coordinator, UN agency (Switzerland)

In the discussions in the Middle East this is a criticism but that does not mean the criticism is valid just that we are able to challenge it.

Head of Middle East region, International NGO (United Kingdom)

Whether or not seen as a Western idea, others saw the **focus on rights as problematic in countries where international law is not respected:**

This definition is useful in contexts where the rule of law and international law is respected. However we work in countries that have not signed some of these bodies of law and therefore creates a void as per this definition.

Specialist, International NGO (Jordan)

It might seem foreign and not possible to reach for many poor countries, at least not in the foreseeable future

Officer, Other intergovernmental agency (Congo,
The Democratic Republic of the)

Throughout this section, there were several respondents who saw the **focus on the individual as a potential problem**, as it did not sufficiently include cultures where the community rights and obligations are seen as more important:

Yes, overly focused on the 'individual'.

Coordinator, UN agency (Iraq)

If it had a more local focus it would include collective rights too and community considerations not only individual rights in the narrow sense.

Coordinator (Switzerland)

The focus on the individual is more particularly geared toward the context of the modern west. It can be problematic in that other cultures value community and ensure individual rights through identification with the community. While this can be just as problematic, it can also be more affirming and protective.

Counsel, Military (United States)

There were also calls for widening the definition to **include national law and norms:**

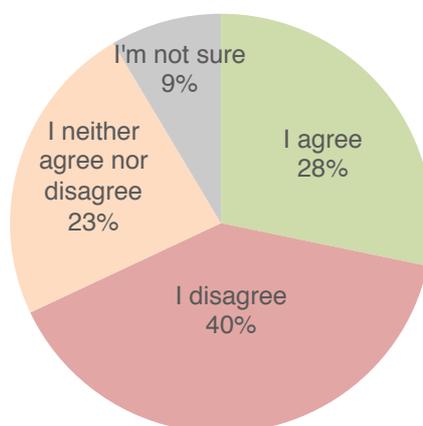
Quite often, there are comments by both humanitarian actors and government officials that 'bodies of all' does not include national legal framework and it should.

Officer, UN agency (Colombia)

It should include a clause addressing the relationship between international law and local cultural norms.

Officer, International NGO (Iraq)

The definition does not take into account local protection strategies and is therefore problematic (n=1043)

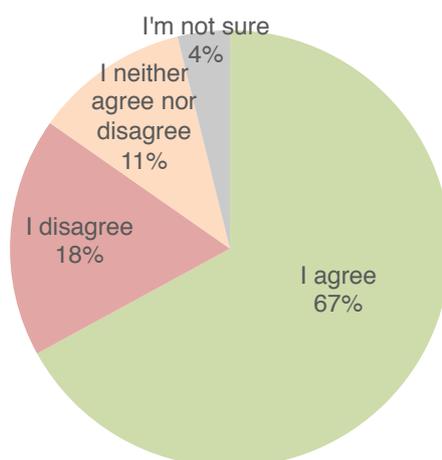


Compared to the question on the historical and cultural specificity of the definition, **a larger proportion (28%) thought that the definition does not sufficiently take into account local protection strategies.** However, almost all commenters pointed out that this is not a fault of the definition, as the **local protection strategies should stem from the global definition, not the other way around:**

'Local protection strategies' - context-specific operational strategy to achieve the fulfillment of protective norms, not definitional.

Protection director, Other non-profit research, policy, or advocacy organization (United States)

Protection should be considered a “life-saving” activity (n=1043)



Two thirds (67%) of the respondents agreed that the protection should be considered “life-saving.” Based on the comments, it seems that both many of those agreeing to this statement and disagreeing to it are of the view that **while protection includes life-saving activities, it is much more than that:**

Although it does encompass life-saving activities as well, but should not be limited to it.

Officer, UN agency (Mozambique)

It should be more than life saving. Lifesaving is fundamental but protection is also related to the physical wellbeing, addressing social esteem or dignity needs. Protection is a right and requires a process and is not just a lifesaving activity.

Associate Director, International NGO

Many commenters also specified that whether it is life-saving or not **depends on the activity/situation**:

No sector should be considered a life-saving activity per se. Protection should be considered a life-saving activity when the related activities are live-saving. Medical assistance can be life-saving or not, depending on the situation.

Coordinator, Other intergovernmental agency (Ethiopia)

There are aspects that are lifesaving and there are aspects that are not. One cannot say that all protection activities or interventions are life-saving

Coordinator, UN agency (Yemen)

A few commenters took a strong stance against calling protection life-saving across the board, criticizing this as something **driven by funding**:

Protection zealots would consider that protection should be life-saving (because it may give better opportunities for CERF funding etc.) Protection itself is not a lifesaving activity.

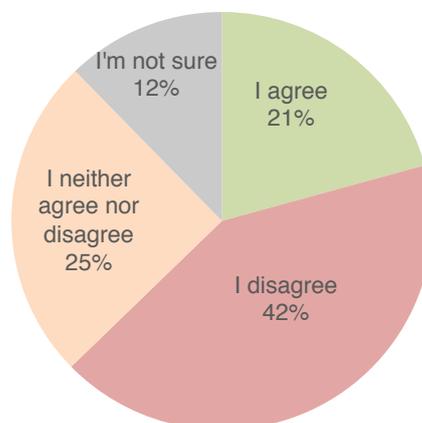
Officer, UN agency (Australia)

Working in early recovery, I get tired of this 'lifesaving' argument. I would also be happy with 'life sustaining' or something like that - we waste so much time trying to squeeze everything into lifesaving when we should instead broaden our definitions.

Advisor, UN agency (Switzerland)

Given the overall support for the definition in the other questions, it is not surprising that **more respondents want to keep the current wording of the definition rather than changing it** (42% vs. 21%). However, having more than a fifth of respondents wanting to open up a definitional discussion about the definition of what for many of the respondents is their primary area of work is noteworthy. The tendency to call for changing the wording **varies greatly between respondents with a global professional scope and the rest**. 29% of those with a global professional scope would like to change the wording, while those at the regional, national, and subnational levels range between 17% and 18% in support of changing the wording.

The wording of the definition is problematic and should be changed (n=1043)



The comments to this question included a wide range of suggestions for how to improve the definition. Most comments suggested in one way or another that the **clarity of the definition should be improved**:

The wording needs to be changed to become easy to understand by anyone who reads it, regardless of their specialty.

Manager, International NGO (Iraq)

It could be simplified, explained so that a new comer is able to work and mainstream protection in all the humanitarian work

Advisor, UN agency (Lebanon)

It could be expanded to provide greater clarity as to what this means in practice

Advisor, UN agency (Italy)

It's not just about 'wording', it's about specificity and clearly communicating a concept that can be implemented

Director (Australia)

The wording is very general and does not serve the purpose of bringing clarity to the concept

Coordinator, UN agency (Yemen)

It could be written in more clear language that would be understandable to the 'layman' and usable in advocating for the importance - centrality - of protection.

Head of Unit, UN agency (Thailand)

On a related note, many respondents suggested that the definition be made **simpler and more generic**:

It could be made simple, all-encompassing while footnoting the references HR, IHL.

Officer, UN agency (Pakistan)

Yes, now I have answered questions 1-5 makes me think that we need a more general definition of protection. There are more generic definitions of Protection, which I think would be more useful in this context. I think UNHCR has one that would be more acceptable.

Officer, UN agency (Australia)

To be able to respond to this question, the end needs to be clear. Would such changes be in efforts to broaden the concept of protection as it is understood to apply to humanitarian action? Yes, as I say, this notion is largely legal positivist. Protection action is far broader than that. If the changes are aimed at making it more operational, then I'd say no. We need to be clear about the concept. Operationalizing this is something else.

PhD Candidate (United Kingdom)

Some of the respondents went further and suggested that **explicit mentions to bodies of law should be kept out of the definition**:

Specific mention of '...human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law' creates doubts as to whether other situations, including emerging legitimate 'legal regimes', would be included.

Officer, UN agency (South Sudan)

Reference to bodies of law seems somewhat vague and makes it less clear.

Coordinator, International NGO (Somalia)

It is true that references to IHL and human rights can be tricky in countries which are obstructive to the humanitarian community, and protection in particular. Referring to vulnerabilities, special protection needs may be more helpful in these contexts.

Coordinator, UN agency (Sudan)

Others found the IASC definition too broad and saw it as necessary to **narrow it down**:

It's not necessarily problematic, but it is definitely too broad.

Representative, International NGO (Jordan)

It should be more specific.

Manager, Other non-profit research, policy, or advocacy organization (Colombia)

Human rights should be removed as this is far too ambitious for humanitarian actors. Only specific issues related to HR in disasters should be included.

Coordinator, Other intergovernmental agency (Ethiopia)

Somewhat separate from the calls to simplify and clarify, several respondents also saw the need to change the definition to **disambiguate from other kinds of protection**:

As earlier noted, needs greater specificity re relationship to 'protection of civilians' concept

UN agency (South Sudan)

It should be expanded as suggested above to differentiate between standalone protection and protection mainstreaming and give concrete examples. We should also agree on how to describe it in non-technical terms for those not in the humanitarian community and for advocacy purposes.

Advisor, International NGO (Lebanon)

There is a need for definition specific to the protection sector. Can be useful in countries where authorities are not favorable to protection activities.

Coordinator, UN agency (Sudan)

This is not only applicable to protection but rest of sectors as well, thus need to specify it a bit

Protection Cluster Co-Lead, International NGO

Respondents also suggested **additions to the definition**, including references to the AoRs, accountability, overarching protection principles, and risk.Several respondents who disagreed about the need for changing the definition, called for **additional guidance on its meaning and operationalization**.

I disagree. But there should be operational guidance developed.

Senior Director, Other non-profit research, policy,
or advocacy organization (United States)

Not changed but more elaborated and adapted to new realities.

Human Rights Officer, (Mali)

An explanatory note seems to be a better option rather than having a new definition

Policy Officer, Other intergovernmental agency (Switzerland)

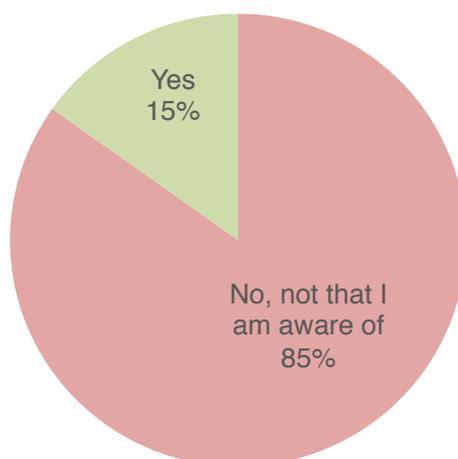
It is not the definition per se, but the lack of practical and concrete examples of what it means

Advisor, UN agency (Ukraine)

Time and resources are always valued and expensive. I think effort could be placed in other avenues within the GPC than re-wording the definition. Example, defining specific GPC/Protection activities (that are not already done by one of the sub-clusters/AoRs).

Officer, International NGO (Switzerland)

Is there a better alternative to the IASC definition of humanitarian “protection” that applies in the context you are working on? (n=1043)

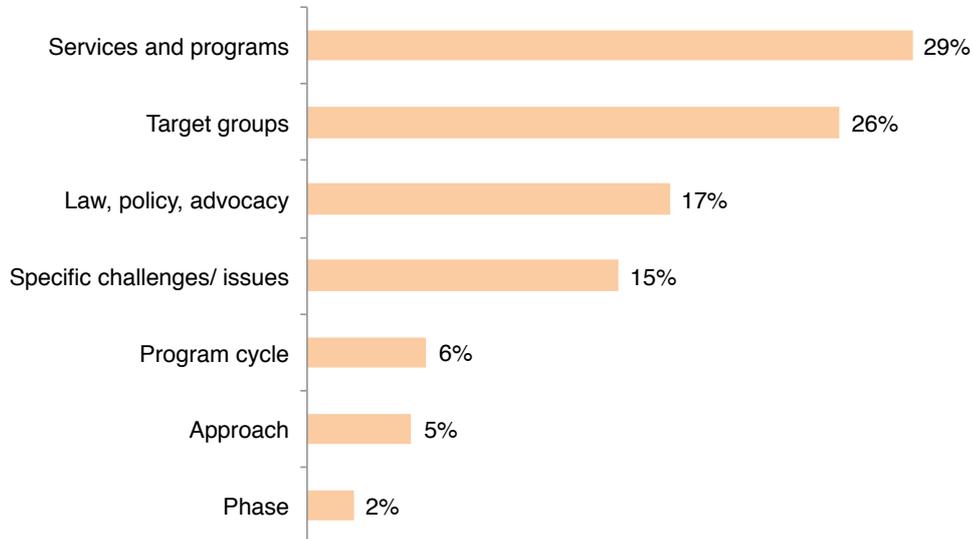


Finally, respondents were asked whether they knew of a **better alternative to the IASC definition**. Only 15% answered “Yes” to this question. From the comments, it was also clear that several of those answering positively did not have a specific definition in mind, but rather general criteria for a better definition.

Most respondents proposed their own organization’s definition. The most common suggestion for an alternative was that of the ICRC. A couple of respondents referenced the definition in the ICRC Professional standards for protection work (which includes the IASC definition rather than ICRC’s internal definition). The other main definitions were that used for Child Protection, as well as that of Oxfam.

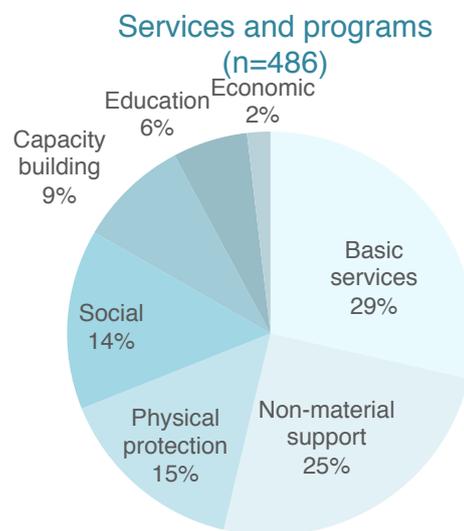
Operationalizing humanitarian protection

Protection priorities (n=1912)



When asked about what the priorities were in their organization’s protection work, respondents answered with priorities along different dimensions. Almost a third (29%) answered with specific services and programs and almost as many (26%) with the groups that they were prioritizing/ targeting in their work. Many of the answers concerned more general protection work related to law, policy, and advocacy (17%) and specific challenges or issues that they focused on (15%). A smaller number answered that they were focusing on specific aspects of the program cycle (6%), were prioritizing a certain approach to their work (5%), or a specific phase of disaster response (2%).

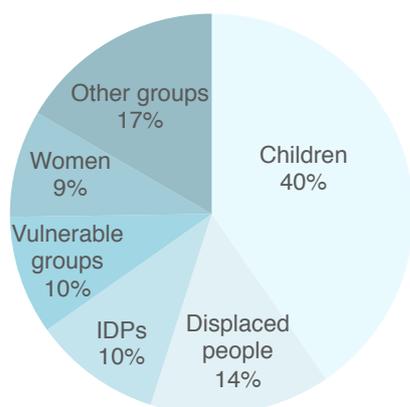
Among the responses on services and programs, it is noteworthy that almost a third (29%) concerned **basic services**, such as health, food, and shelter. Almost as many (25%) answered that they prioritized **non-material support**, which was almost exclusively focused on registration of refugees and IDPs, information and referral services, reintegration of returnees, and family reunification. A smaller but substantial number of responses (15%) concerned **physical protection and safety**. “Social” programs, to a large extent made up of psychosocial support, had about the same number of responses (14%). Note that only 9% of responses concerned capacity building, including both at the state and local levels.



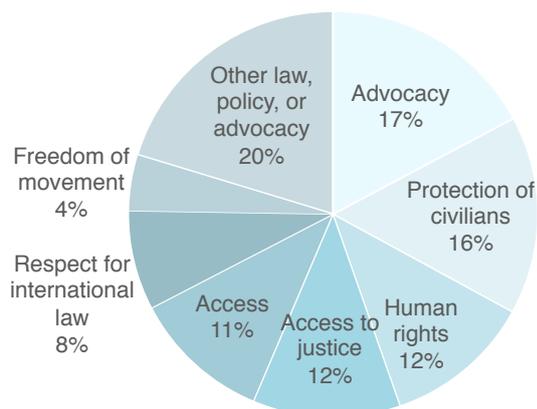
The responses regarding target groups were **dominated by those prioritizing children and child protection** (40%). All displaced people (including IDPs) taken together made up another quarter (24%) of the responses. Only 10% specified that they prioritized vulnerable groups (without specifying exactly who they were). While the number is low for those prioritizing women (9%), a large number of responses concerned gender-based violence.

Advocacy was the most common priority concerning law and policy (17%). This category could also arguably be combined with the responses focusing on human rights (12%) and improving the respect for international law (8%). While the number of responses prioritizing “protection of civilians” may seem low with 46 responses

Target groups
(n=428)



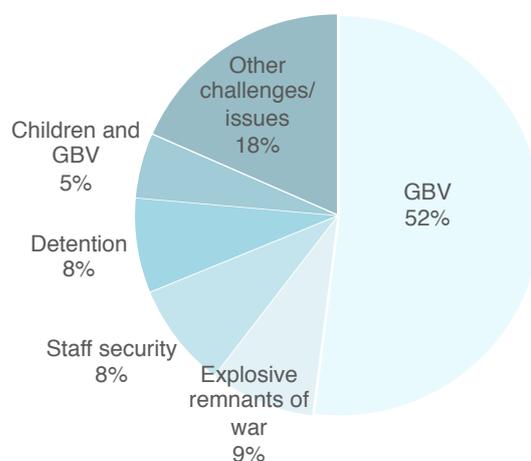
Law, policy, advocacy
(n=291)



(16% of the law, policy, advocacy category), many of the more specific responses could arguably also be placed in this category.

For those responding with specific challenges or issues, gender-based violence made up a majority of the responses (52% to which could be added the category of “Children and GBV” with 5%). Other prominent issues that were prioritized included explosive remnants of war (9%), staff security (8%), and detention (8%).

Specific challenges/ issues
(n=250)



Moving to the next question, **almost half (47%) of the respondents found the current focus on displaced persons more or less correct.** Around a fifth each thought that there was too much focus on displaced persons compared to others or that there was insufficient focus on displaced persons (23% and 20%, respectively). The question did not clarify the reason for being asked, which might have given respondents the wrong impression.

Many of the comments pointed out the general tendency of humanitarian protection to **exclude those not displaced**, in particular communities in the host state:

It is good to focus on the displaced but there is also need to support host populations' vulnerable groups.

Coordinator, Red Cross and Red Crescent movement (Switzerland)

Sometimes we forget the host communities.

Manager, International NGO (Somalia)

I would not say there is 'too much' focus on displacement, but there is definitely inadequate focus on others in need.

Independent Consultant (United States)

In the Afghan context, there is a large IDP population but others not recognized as IDP living in the same informal settlements under same conditions are facing the same protection need but are less likely to have access to support.

Program Manager, National or local NGO (Afghanistan)

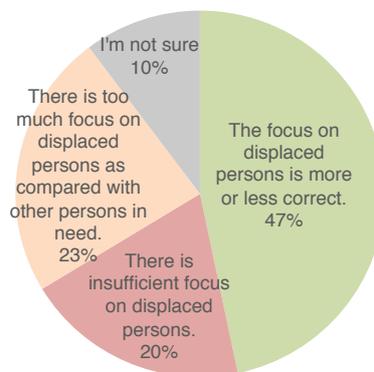
In Iraq many groups regarded as vulnerable even within the host communities, so work on protection should be evenly provided for community members in need.

Officer, UN agency (Iraq)

In Colombia, IDP are the major victims of armed conflict, but still there are other victims and people in risk.

Coordinator, Other non-profit research, policy, or advocacy organization (Colombia)

Is the focus on displaced persons appropriate in your operation or current area of work?
(n=760)



Some of the respondents pointed out specifically the **risk of this leading to tensions**:

There is too much focus on displaced persons than host communities. Some it results to rivalry and dispute over available resources.

Manager, Other intergovernmental agency (Sierra Leone)

In terms of Syrian refugee response in the southern region of Turkey, the host communities are complaining about it. This situation creates high volume tensions in the community against the displaced persons and all stakeholders, including the government.

Adviser, National or local NGO (Turkey)

Many highlighted that humanitarian assistance **has to be needs based**, and not concerned too much with the status of affected people:

However, there should be more focus on affected populations based on need, not status.

Advisor, Government agency (non-military) (United States)

Humanitarian emergencies affect a broad range of groups, not just the displaced. The humanitarian community would have a stronger protection response if it were to adopt a whole of caseload approach, particularly in the analysis side of the work - it would lead to a greater understanding of underlying drivers of the crisis, tensions between groups etc.

Officer, UN agency (Switzerland)

Displacement does not necessarily mean a person is in need of material assistance. There should be a greater focus on needs assessment, rather than providing assistance automatically to all displaced individuals.

Officer, Government agency (non-military) (United States)

The respondents who currently had a protection cluster active in the context that they were working in identified **three challenges that stood out** from the others, each selected by more than 40% of the respondents:

1. Not enough focus on operational protection
2. Insufficient funding of the cluster
3. Not enough focus on advocacy

It is interesting to note that one of these concerns the **capacity of the cluster**, while two concern **the focus of the cluster being wrong**. Depending on the understanding of “operational protection” and “advocacy” they may also be partly contradictory.

In the next level of prioritization among respondents, with around 30% of the respondents per option, we find four further challenges:

4. Lack of information management
5. Poor analysis of the situation
6. Insufficient capacity of the cluster
7. Lack of participatory assessments

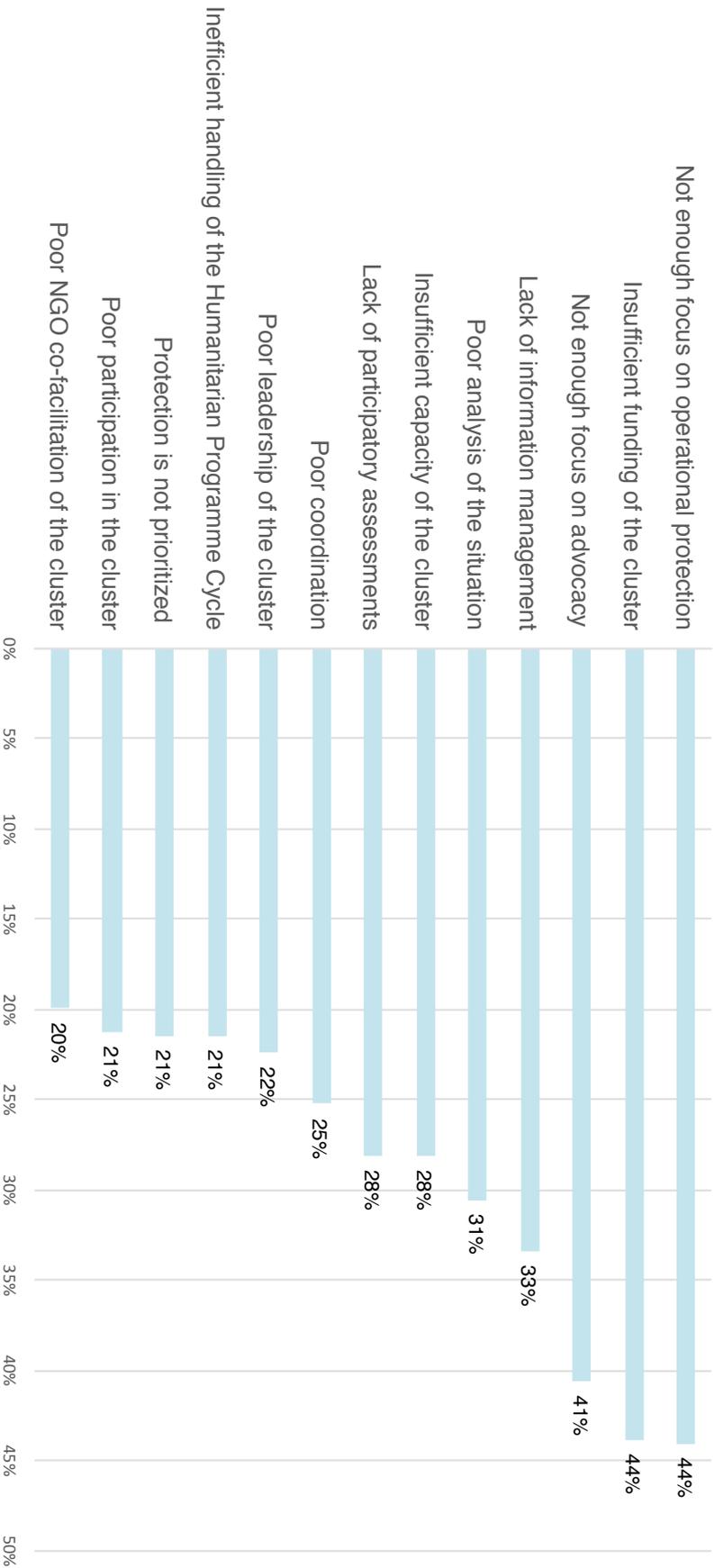
Here we find two further challenges regarding the **capacity of the cluster**, and two that are about the **analysis and assessments** carried out by the cluster.

At the bottom, with between 20% and 25% of the respondents per option, we find the following challenges:

8. Poor coordination
9. Poor leadership of the cluster
10. Inefficient handling of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle
11. Protection is not prioritized
12. Poor participation in the cluster
13. Poor NGO co-facilitation of the cluster

It is interesting to note that while all of these have been selected by a substantial number of respondents, it seems that **coordination, leadership, and facilitation are seen as less pressing challenges**.

If there is a protection cluster, what do you see as its main challenges?



Among the other challenges specified by respondents, three areas stand out: excessive bureaucratization, engagement of local NGOs, and leadership.

The **excessive bureaucratization** was highlighted by a many respondents:

Not sufficiently operational, planning and reporting processes too complex.

Officer, UN agency (Jordan)

Lack of solution oriented meetings.

Coordinator, International NGO (United Kingdom)

Current coordination architecture is enormously demanding of protection and senior manager time.

Officer, UN agency (South Sudan)

Excessive burocratisation du processus de programmation humanitaire.

Officier, UN agency (Mali)

Inefficace, pas sens priorite, trop de individual case management vs. solution globale pour l'ensemble du caseload (le cluster protection peut passer 30 minutes sur le cas d'un petit groupe ENA, mais rien sur une strategie de playdoyer politique.

Desk officer (Belgium)

Although **poor leadership** was not one of the top challenges among the options, several respondents saw this as particularly challenging instead. This concerned on the one hand the **specific leader roles** in humanitarian contexts:

The main challenge is the humanitarian coordination architecture. The HC uses OCHA as its Deputy HC which basically means that OCHA also wants to coordinate the protection activities (in line with the political interests of the HC rather than impartially). In practice, the different actors of the humanitarian coordination architecture reduce 'protection' to specific humanitarian projects. As a result, apart from UNHCR, none of the actors has comprehensive protection strategies in place. While the Protection Cluster is meant to be the 'right hand' of the HC, when it comes to protection, in practice the HC does not care at all about the Protection Cluster.

Staff member, UN agency

The current coordinator is not a protection expert and lacks the skills to identify trends and make analysis of the situation. There is no NGO co-lead (no funding) so there is no counterbalance to this lack of experience. Participants are expected to give alerts at the meeting itself which does not allow for actual analysis, prioritization and action points. This situation has decreased the participation of NGOs that can give inputs to the cluster and only national NGOs that don't have access to information come to get a picture of what is going on. Theory not practice.

Manager, International NGO

On the other hand, there was also **criticism of the role of UNHCR**:

Lack of leadership in natural disasters, given UNHCR doesn't lead in natural disasters then is challenging to find the lead and delays the response.

Advisor, UN agency (Thailand)

Role of UNHCR as an agency and its role as coordinator of Protection Cluster seems at odds sometimes.

Advisor, UN agency (Turkey)

UNHCR doesn't take its role seriously.

Director, International NGO (United States)

Several respondents highlighted the **lack of access of local NGOs**:

Low number of national NGOs member of the Protection Cluster.

Officer, UN agency (Colombia)

Insufficient engagement of local actors (national NGOs).

Manager, International NGO (United Kingdom)

Limited access of other NGOs on the Cluster meetings.

Executive Director, National or local NGO (Congo, The Democratic Republic of the)

Poor involvement of local NGOs.

Head, International NGO (United Kingdom)

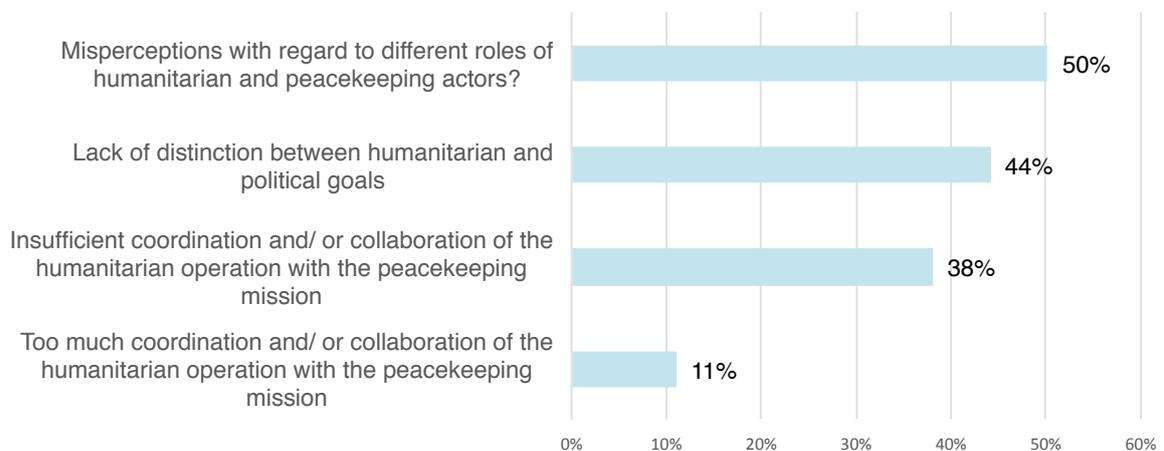
Among the respondents who had a peacekeeping operation active in their context, the two challenges concerning **confusion regarding roles and goals** were chosen the most times by respondents:

1. Misperceptions with regard to different roles of humanitarian and peacekeeping actors
2. Lack of distinction between humanitarian and political goals

Although selected by many of the respondents, the **lack of coordination and/ or collaboration** was somewhat less prioritized by respondents.

It is noteworthy that although it is clearly at the bottom of the list, there are a substantial number of respondents who think that there is too much coordination and/ or collaboration with peacekeeping operations.

Factors causing peacekeeping to negatively impact humanitarian operations



Support relating to humanitarian protection

When ordered according to how many responded that “much more support is needed” for that category, a hierarchy can be gleaned from the results. The top three categories all concern **strengthening resources and direct capacity** of organizations and their partners:

1. More timely funding
2. More funding
3. Training and capacity-building of partners

This is followed by several categories concerning the more intangible areas of **advice, analysis, and information management**:

4. Situation analysis
5. Advice on preparedness and early warning
6. Advice on protection approaches
7. Advice on advocacy
8. Information management

These are then followed by a group of mixed categories that are somewhat less prioritized:

9. More or better personnel
10. Advice on civil-military co-operation
11. Assistance with the Humanitarian Programme Cycle
12. Advice on coordination
13. Advice on the use of cash
14. Advice on setting up or phasing out a cluster

If we instead add up the categories “much more support is needed” and “some additional support is needed”, the prioritization becomes less clear. However, what remains clear is that the following four categories are less prioritized:

- Advice on civil-military co-operation
- Assistance with the Humanitarian Programme Cycle
- Advice on the use of cash
- Advice on setting up or phasing out a cluster

A compound score can be created for each of the options, with the following conversion:

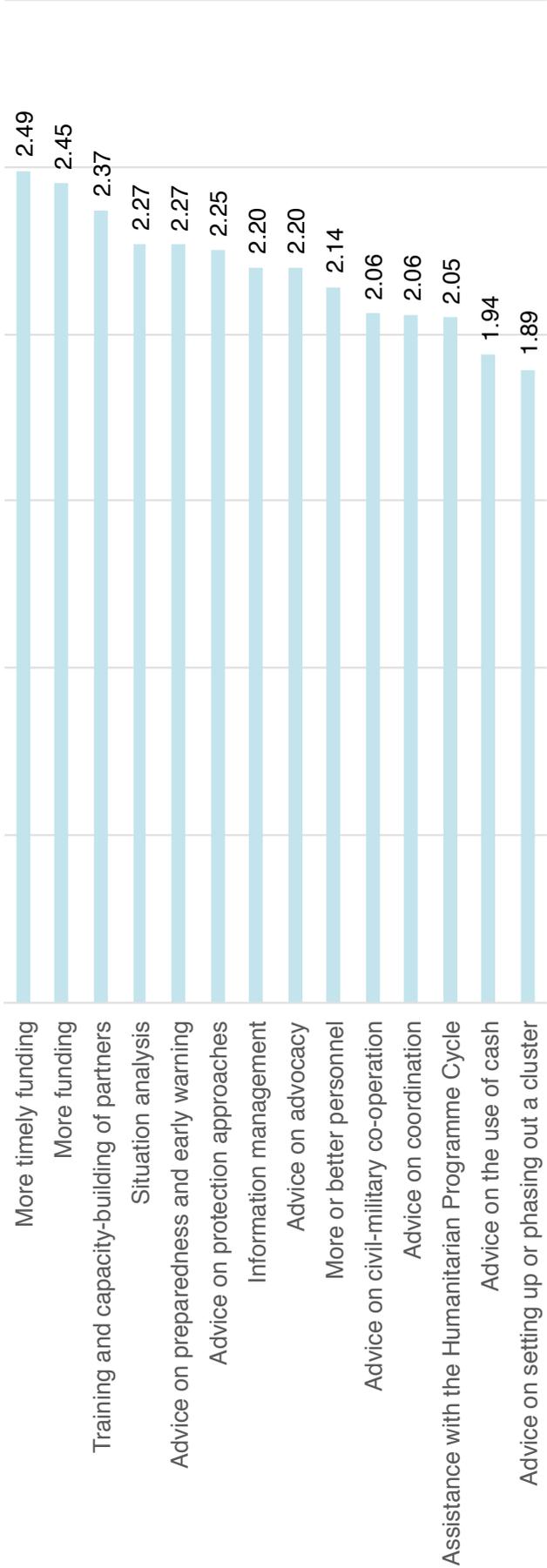
- 3 = Much more support is needed
- 2 = Some additional support is needed
- 1 = No additional support is needed
- Not sure is omitted

This shows that even when we take into account the respondents who think that no additional support is needed, the overall ranking is almost exactly the same as above. It is, however, notable that there is a greater difference between the lowest answer options and the rest using this method, indicating that advice on the use of cash and advice on setting up or phasing out a cluster is not recommended by respondents.

What support do you need in your operation to strengthen your protection work? (n=719)



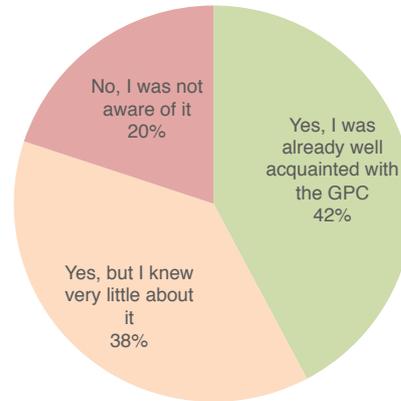
What support do you need? (compound score)



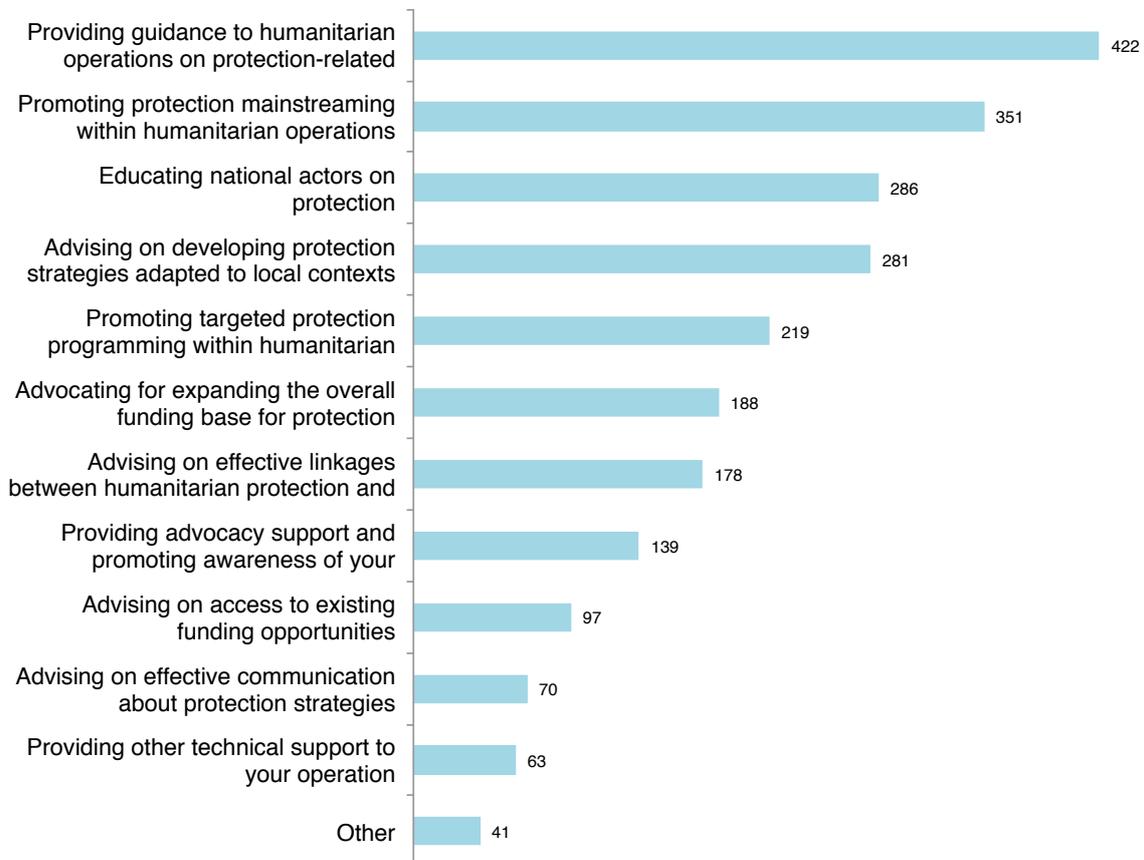
The role of the GPC

Only 42% of the respondents were well acquainted with the GPC prior to this survey, and 20% not aware of it at all, indicating that there is much **room for improvement in terms of ensuring that all relevant humanitarian actors are aware of the GPC and its activities**. It can also be noted that there are considerable **geographical and linguistic variations in this regard**. Around 55% of respondents in Europe and Oceania were well acquainted with the GPC, while between 34% and 41% respondents in the other regions were well acquainted. The lowest figures were found in Asia and South America (note however that there were very few responses from the latter region). There is also a clear divide in this regard between respondents in English and French, with 45% of the former well acquainted but only 24% of the latter group.

Before receiving this survey, were you aware of the GPC and its activities? (n=819)



What do you think should be the top priorities for the Global Protection Cluster?



The responses regarding the GPC’s priorities provided relatively clear recommendations both regarding what respondents thought should be prioritized, and what should not. The two top priorities in respondents’ view by a considerable margin are:

1. Providing guidance to humanitarian operations on protection-related policy
2. Promoting protection mainstreaming within humanitarian operations

At virtually a tie, with a relatively high level of support, we find two areas concerned more directly with the local context:

3. Educating national actors on protection
4. Advising on developing protection strategies adapted to local contexts

Four areas received medium support, ranging from 140 to 220 respondents:

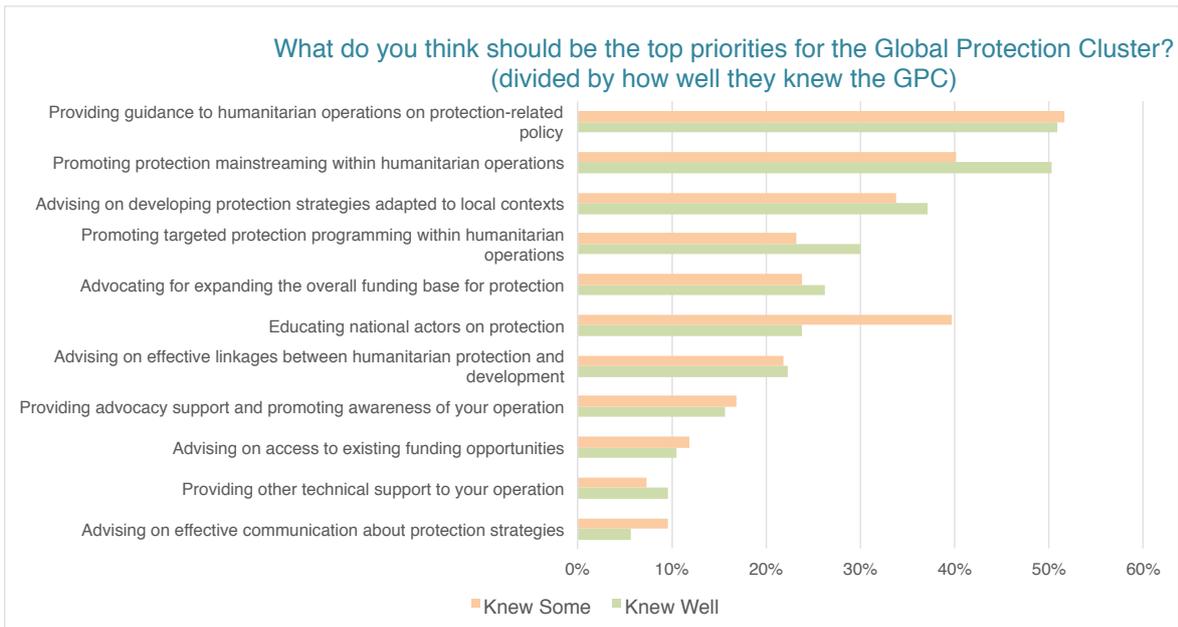
5. Promoting targeted protection programming within humanitarian operations
6. Advocating for expanding the overall funding base for protection
7. Advising on effective linkages between humanitarian protection and development
8. Providing advocacy support and promoting awareness of your operation

Finally, three areas were clearly not prioritized in the eyes of the respondents:

9. Advising on access to existing funding opportunities
10. Advising on effective communication about protection strategies
11. Providing other technical support to your operation

Dividing the answers on priorities between those who knew the GPC well before answering the survey and those who only knew some about the GPC, some interesting differences emerge. The overall ranking is more or less the same, but there are very large differences between some categories. **Those familiar with the GPC saw promoting mainstreaming as more important**, and also **promoting targeted protection programming**. On the other hand, **those who only knew some about the GPC were much more likely to support educating national actors on protection**.

One way to interpret these results is that those who are not as familiar with the GPC are also less likely to be familiar with protection in general. They would therefore be more interested in general training or capacity building rather than promoting protection within humanitarian action.



Among the “Other” priorities, a frequent suggestion was for the GPC to **provide practical operational tools** of various kinds:

Providing the possibility of using Infographics during a disaster with a standard template to produce a good dashboard picture.

Officer, UN agency (Australia)

Developing more user-friendly information management tools; developing training modules for use with national NGO partners for new humanitarian workers in the area of protection

Coordinator, UN agency (Iraq)

Developing concise tools for protection mainstreaming.

Officer, UN agency (South Sudan)

Outcome and results-oriented methods

Director, Other non-profit research, policy, or advocacy organization (United States)

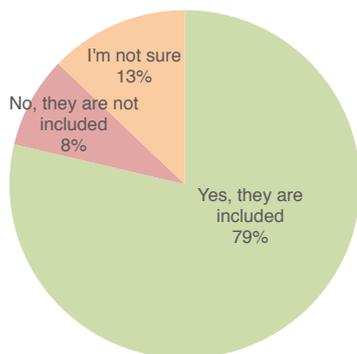
National and local partners

While many respondents (30%) were unsure whether guidance documents were translated into local languages, a large proportion (40%) answered “No” to this question. The situation is even more marked among African respondents, of which 58% answered “No”. This can be contrasted with respondents in MENA and Asia where 30% and 29% respectively answered “No.”

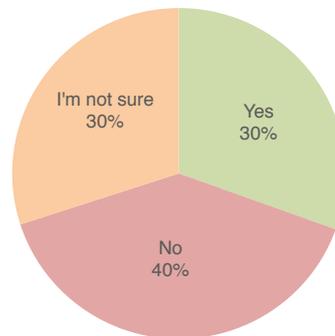
A majority (58%) of respondents answered that cluster and HCT meetings were not held in local languages.

It should be noted that both this and the previous questions should have included

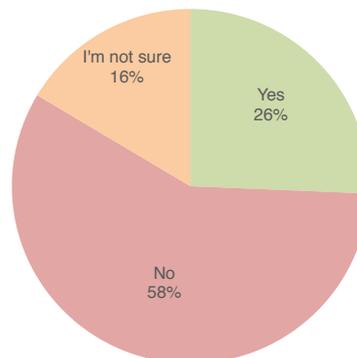
In your operation or the context(s) you are working on, are national and local agencies included in the protection cluster? (n=530)



Are technical guidance documents that are used in your operation or in the context(s) you are working on translated into local languages? (n=807)



In your operation, are cluster and HCT meetings held in local languages? (n=530)



additional answer options for when the primary local language is the same as the working language of the international response. It is therefore interesting to see that a much larger proportion (41%) than in either of the other two questions concerning language answered that all participants are able to understand and effectively participate in HCT and cluster meetings. This percentage is more or less the same for Africa, MENA and Asia.

A large majority (79%) answered that national and local organizations are included in the protection cluster. However, this should not be seen as an indication that they are sufficiently included – especially given the responses to the questions regarding languages and the comments to previous questions.

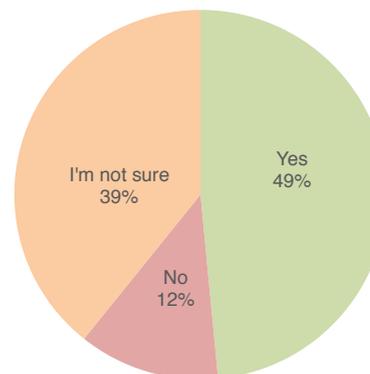
A considerably smaller percentage (49%) answered affirmatively to whether the cluster and HCT meetings were respectful local views and traditions. Note, however, that can be a more difficult question to answer, and a much larger percentage (39%) were not sure compared to the inclusion question.

Regarding the Principles of Partnership, almost half (49%) did not know whether the cluster participants were aware of them, indicating that these principles might not be adequately used.

Are all participants reliably able understand and effectively participate in HCT and cluster meetings in your operation? (n=530)



Is the dynamic in cluster and HCT meetings respectful of local views and traditions? (n=530)



Do the participants in your cluster know about the Principles of Partnership? (n=530)



This page left intentionally blank

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONALS
IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION (PHAP)

Rue de Montbrillant 87
1202 Geneva, Switzerland
www.phap.org