



GLOBAL PROTECTION FORUM 2022

Thematic Segment – Access that Protects

Concept Note

Access to Protection: The Role of Community Protection Actors

– Case Studies, Challenges, and Opportunities

Thursday 27th October 15:30 – 17:00 CEST

Humanitarian access is a two-pronged concept, comprising both humanitarian actors' ability to reach populations in need and the affected populations' access to assistance and services.¹ This concept focuses primarily on the latter, while making substantive links to the former, with the intention of complementing and cross-referencing other sessions in the GPF. The humanitarian community currently tends to focus primarily on access of humanitarian actors to populations in need of protection, versus communities and affected persons' ability to access services and protection, placing humanitarians, primarily international, at the centre of the discussion. This session seeks to put a spotlight on the second part of access, expanding the understanding of access that is about crisis-affected communities' access to protection services and support, to raise awareness of the role of community-based actors including national and local organisations, civil society, and community protection structures and leaders in this element of 'access'. For these community protection actors, many of whom work within the communities where they live, concepts of 'access' are indeed quite different. They support communities and individuals in addressing "every day" access challenges, such as supporting a woman and her children to pay safely through a checkpoint or speaking to a police unit about their conduct in the market making it a safe place to buy and sell goods. Community actors negotiate for and enable access by external protection actors such as INGOs; support and enable access to protection services for members of their communities and carry out a myriad of advocacy, negotiation and influencing actions with duty bearers to better protect their community and address safety concerns.

[Access that Protects](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the fragility of access when conceptualised as purely a one way international-to-local process and the vital role of national and local protection actors whose work is little recognised and inadequately supported within current patriarchal and colonial humanitarian system.

The session intends to use 3 short case study presentations by community protection actors to give concrete examples of how protection actors work with communities to support community self-protection capacities, and their efforts to address and mitigate access constraints, and what this work means in

¹ Ref. UNGA resolution 46/182 cited in <https://www.unocha.org/es/themes/humanitarian-access>

practice within an inclusive humanitarian system in which all protection actors are recognised, valued, and supported.

It will also draw on recent research led by Oxfam (with ECHO support) on how national and community actors influence, negotiate and advocate on protection to highlight the shifts needed in the culture of the humanitarian system and the practices of the most influential players (UN agencies, INGOs, donors, GPC/Clusters) within that system to better support community protection actors. The research is currently underway and will be completed with report available by the GPF.

It will conclude by looking at how the international humanitarian system can support and better engage with such work from the perspective of an INGO, a donor, and the GPC.

The session aims to both (1) raise awareness and influence a more nuanced understanding among protection actors of the critical role of communities in negotiating and advocating for their own access to protection and also (2) propose some tangible actions that power-holders within the current humanitarian system can take to as a minimum not undermine community protection action, including community-led negotiations, and to – ideally – better support and enable such action.

Speakers, Moderation and Guests

Main session organisers: Oxfam and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

Event moderation: Illiassou Adamou, Deputy Executive Secretary, Action pour le Développement des Initiatives Locales (ADLI), Niger.

Opening remarks: Joanna Darmanin, Head of Unit Humanitarian Aid Thematic Policies, DG ECHO.

Speakers: Members from Association pour la Gestion de l'Environnement et le Développement (AGED), Burkina Faso; Fundación Solidaria Archidiosesana, Colombia; Field Medical Foundation (FMF), Yemen; NRC and Oxfam.

Closing remarks: SIDA and the GPC.