

Strengthening Protection Capacity Project – Southern Caucasus

Implementation Update - Georgia

December 2009

Strengthening Protection Capacity Project in the Southern Caucasus (SPCP-SC) aimed to help strengthen protection responses to forced displacement in the region. In Georgia, the project helped UNHCR support the Government capacity in addressing displacement challenges in line with international standards and seek durable solutions for both internally displaced persons and refugees.

The SPCP proceeds from an initial identification of gaps in protection to the design of specific interventions to remedy those gaps. A central feature is collaboration, as the gaps and the measures to address them are collectively agreed by concerned stakeholders including key government authorities, the EU, donor Governments, other UN agencies, international and local NGOs as well as displaced communities. In implementing the project, UNHCR closely collaborated with the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation, Danish Refugee Council and local NGOs.

17 refugees (9 families) received their Georgian citizenship

(Duisi, November 2009)

PHOTO: UNHCR



UNHCR modeled project interventions under SPCP-SC, which have been expanded under a follow-up EU project to further strengthen the Government capacity to afford fair asylum procedures and locally integrate refugees. In 2009, 17 refugees were naturalized and further applications are being processed.

National action plan

Needs of displaced populations were identified in consultative processes which led to national plans of action. National consultations on refugee protection were organised in March 2008, and on IDPs in June 2009. UNHCR co-drafted and coordinated inputs from the international community (including donors and international NGOs) to the updated National Action Plan through its capacity building support for the MRA and the national consultations. The IDP National Action Plan has become a living document and managed in a participatory process under the MRA-led Steering Committee, involving UN agencies, NGOs and donors.

(Refugee children in the newly rehabilitated school in Duisi, January 2009)

PHOTO: UNHCR



SPCP-SC helped increasing numbers of refugees become self-reliant in Pankisi Valley. The owner of a carpentry shop established with UNHCR funding repaid the grant for the purchase of new equipment for his shop under the project employed other refugees and repaid the grant by donating furniture to the Duisi school rehabilitated by UNHCR for both refugee and local children.

Quick Impact Project in Pankisi

As part of a strategy to expand the livelihoods of displaced persons, SPCP-SC has supported small-scale quick impact projects with six activities to generate employment opportunity for 40 refugees and member of the host community. Majority of these refugee enterprises have already proved sustainable. In 2008-09 SPCP-SC enabled refugees to start up and expand small enterprises including food production and processing, modern plastic window and door production, carpentry workshop, and a number of beekeeping businesses. Experiences in supporting refugee livelihoods have been useful in designing and implementing project interventions to enhance IDP livelihoods.

60% of the refugees in Georgia now see their future here; income generating projects promote self-reliance as a means to local integration



UNHCR Photo



Reception Centre

Under the project, the National Stakeholders' Consultations on refugee protection gaps identified a strong need for reception facilities to accommodate the growing number of asylum seekers in Georgia in 2008. A temporary reception facility for asylum-seekers was established, based on a rental contract to mitigate effects caused by a delay in identifying a suitable longer term reception facility. Construction of the Reception Centre facilities in Martkopi is completed by the end of the project. MRA staff have been trained to manage the centre.

UNHCR Photo



Regional protection roundtables

Azerbaijan and Georgia

A roundtable was organised on the protection of IDPs in Azerbaijan and Georgia in Tbilisi on 14 December. The Government of Azerbaijan was represented by the Cabinet of Ministers and the State Committee on Refugees and IDP Issues, and the Government of Georgia was represented by the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation. UNHCR partners Danish Refugee Council, Norwegian Refugee Council, Save the Children and World Vision International, who work in both countries, also participated in the roundtable. Following the discussions of the lessons learnt from their experiences, representatives of Azerbaijan and Georgia also commented that there was need for both countries to cooperate and share their experiences and best practices on behalf of their displaced populations.

Armenia and Georgia

A roundtable on the protection of asylum seekers and refugees in Armenia and Georgia was held in Tbilisi on 16 December. Participants included experts from the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia, Ministry of Territorial Administration of Armenia, UNHCR Armenia and Georgia offices and UNHCR's implementing partners from both countries – UN Association of Georgia (UNAG), Mission Armenia, Armenian Red Cross Society (ARCS), Chechen Refugee Council and Kakheti Regional Development Foundation (KRDF). Conclusions of the roundtable included several issues of joint interest and action, such as cooperation on asylum management and exchange of best practices in refugee local integration.