

SPCP- Zambia

Update

June 2007

Objectives and methodology

In 2007 UNHCR introduced the Strengthening Protection Capacity Project (SPCP) in Zambia. The SPCP is being supported with a USD 3.2 million financial contribution from the government of Denmark. The project is being implemented with the full support and cooperation from the Government of Zambia, which has for decades been engaged in efforts to protect and assist refugees. The key objective of SPCP is to identify gaps in refugee protection capacity, and to facilitate the development, funding, and implementation of projects to fill those gaps. The SPCP relies on a consultative methodology, involving a range of stakeholders at each stage of the process.

Context

The timing of the introduction of the SPCP to Zambia is very good, as the Government is interested in repealing their current Refugees Control Act and replacing it with new legislation and accompanying administrative procedures. The SPCP will be able to collaborate with the Government, NGO partners, donors, and refugees to ensure that the new legislation fills the gaps in protection identified by the gaps analysis. SPCP will also build on UNHCR's already-strong links with the Government of Zambia to expedite capacity building efforts in Zambia.



Identifying protection gaps

The SPCP process will also be benefiting from the Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming (AGDM) exercise, particularly in the context of analysing gaps in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). UNHCR Lusaka Branch Office's Community Services team, in close consultation with UNHCR offices in the field, has prepared an action plan for the implementation of capacity building activities to strengthen SGBV structures. One of the planned projects is to build on the ongoing participatory assessment exercises in the context of AGDM at refugee settlements in 2007. In connection, a new multi-functional AGDM team has recently been established and a SGBV training already undertaken at the Meheba refugee camp in March 2007.



Some of the major protection gaps which have been identified include: restrictions on freedom of movement; children performing manual work instead of attending school;

insufficient funds to combat preventable diseases; no right to secondary or higher education; and difficulty in getting permits to work or be self-employed has led to refugees unable to become self-reliant in Zambia.

A draft Protection Gaps Analysis document has been shared with the Government of Zambia for their review and feedback.

Development of projects

The SPCP has undertaken a range of discussions with government partners, refugee communities, and community-based organizations; in camp and urban locations across Zambia. The purpose of these discussions is to develop projects which will respond to the identified protection gaps.

On the basis of these ongoing consultations, SPCP will compile a package of projects for strengthening refugee protection in Zambia.



SPCP Technical Support

As the first step towards implementation of the SPCP, an international consultant (SPCP Project Coordinator) has been hired. The Terms of Reference were prepared, and a qualified candidate identified, who began work in the middle of June. This consultant will coordinate the National Stakeholder Consultations planned for mid-2007 and the formulation of a multi-year action plan.



Commissioner of Refugees.

Similarly, UNHCR is currently considering two other consultancies: 1) for the review of the national asylum and immigration framework, and 2) for the livelihood survey of urban refugees. The Terms of Reference for the consultant to review asylum and immigration framework and to assist the Zambian government with administrative aspects related to the implementation of asylum procedures has been agreed upon by UNHCR and the Zambian

As a vehicle to facilitate coordination of the SPCP-Zambia, an informal Task-Force has been established by UNHCR and the Zambian Commissioner for Refugees. This platform is also open to other stakeholder participation, including the donor embassies. During May, the Task-Force met with the Danish Embassy to discuss the status of the project and the future direction of SPCP-Zambia. The SPCP Project Coordinator will chair the meetings of the Task-Force beginning in June 2007.

Identification of Implementing Partners

Discussions have been initiated by UNHCR Zambia with a national NGO, Legal Resources Foundation (LRF), to explore concrete areas of strengthened cooperation and in support of building national capacity for the protection of refugees. The areas of focus, in particular, are detention monitoring, participation in Mobile Court sessions at refugee settlements, and legal counselling and assistance for the purpose of the asylum procedure. UNHCR and LRF met in April 2007 to discuss these issues and the training of LRF lawyers in refugee law. During this meeting, it was agreed that further discussions would be held. The aim is to conclude a UNHCR sub-agreement with the LRF, supported under SPCP.

Improved Registration

In March 2007, an assessment mission was undertaken by Senior Regional Registration Officer, UNHCR Pretoria, to prepare for a comprehensive registration and profiling exercise of refugees in Zambia. This exercise will include the introduction of the new registration system software "ProGres". A project document was drafted, which details objectives of the exercise, the modalities for implementation, and the costs of the project. This exercise is scheduled to be implemented as of June 2007, starting with refugee settlements of Mayukwayukwa and Meheba, accommodating the majority of Angolan refugees. The registration exercise will also cover spontaneously-settled and urban refugees; therefore it will provide a comprehensive picture of the number and profiles of refugees in Zambia. This information will serve as an invaluable tool when promoting durable solutions for refugees.



Sensitisation Campaigns

A draft refugee bill has been created by the Zambian Commissioner for Refugees (COR) in consultation with UNHCR. In preparation for the adoption of the refugee bill by parliament, a workshop for parliamentarians is tentatively scheduled to take place in August 2007. The workshop will focus on international standards of refugee protection and the extent to which the refugee bill is compatible with such standards. However, the workshop will also represent an opportunity to explore with parliamentarians the prospects of local integration for refugees in Zambia. It is envisaged that the timing of the workshop will coincide with the visit of the Excom Chairman to Zambia. Given that the Excom Chairman is a Zambian national, his participation in the workshop is expected to have a positive impact on the success of the workshop, as well as furthering the overall objective of finding durable solutions for refugees.

