

SPCP – YEMEN

June 2008



New arrivals' site in Kharaz Refugee Camp

Background

In 2008, UNHCR introduced the Strengthening Protection Capacity Project (SPCP) in Yemen. It is part of the overall protection strategy for Yemen aimed at comprehensively strengthening State and community capacities to protect refugees and improve migration management.

In 2007/8, with an overall financial contribution of € 1,454,902 from the European Commission, SPCP-Y interventions focus on improving protection in the areas of reception, registration risk profiling and gender based violence prevention and response. As well, improved living conditions for refugees and host communities and enhanced self-reliance opportunities are also key initiatives receiving initial funding support.

Activities

The Project Coordinator arrived in Aden early April 2008.

Analysis of Gaps and Presentation of Unmet Needs

The SPCP begins with an analysis of gaps in protection capacity, drawing on results from participatory assessments, dialogue with partners, annual reports and statistical data. On the basis of such an analysis in Yemen, a summary of present gaps in protection has been prepared, and through work with the Government of Yemen (GoY), partners and refugees projects and total budgetary requirements needed to remedy the gaps identified have been prepared. These will be

presented to UNHCR's Standing Committee in June 2008.

A gaps analysis report is forthcoming. This will form the basis for further collaborative work with the Government, partners and refugee community to address gaps in the immediate and longer term.

Improved reception for new arrivals

In the first five months of 2008, the number of new arrivals reaching the coast of Yemen (20,000) has more than doubled compared to the same period in 2007.

Practical understanding of key principles of refugee protection among the Coastal Guards, the Police, the Army and the Immigration Officers, is essential to ensure that new arrivals have safe access to asylum and are not arbitrarily detained.

SPCP-Yemen is currently developing a comprehensive training program for Government Officials who deal with refugees as part of their official duties. It will include the organization of general protection workshops (2 days each) targeting about 150 people, sponsoring Government Officials to attend the course on Refugee Protection and Human Rights in San Remo, and the creation of a video for ongoing awareness-raising activities about refugees. The training sessions will also strive to integrate the law faculties at the Universities of Sana'a and Aden.

In May 2008, UNHCR also organized a Regional Conference on Protection and International Migration in the Gulf of Aden to establish a comprehensive regional, rights-based and protection sensitive strategy responding to the challenges of mixed migratory movement across the Gulf of Aden. The SPCP-Y supported this initiative and financed the participation of Government officials from southern provinces of Yemen. Means to strengthen and ensure protection sensitive migration management discussed at the Conference will form part of the overall comprehensive protection strategy being pursued by UNHCR and the GoY.



UNHCR acknowledges the generous support of the European Union for this project. The contents of this update do not reflect the views of the European Union.



Registration Centre in Sana'a (Photo: T. Naito)

Enhanced Continuous Registration

A critical gap in refugee protection in Yemen is the absence of continuous registration procedures and issuance of ID cards by the government. SPCP-Y is currently supporting the Government in the opening of six permanent registration centres in the country. A Registration Officer recruited through SPCP arrived in early April in Yemen and is working closely with the National Sub Committee for Refugee Affairs (NSCRA) on the modalities for implementation. The registration exercise includes the introduction of the registration system software "ProGres" coupled with biometrics. The SPCP-Y is also providing the necessary equipment and has already trained 14 civil servants on the new software, thereby significantly improving the capacity of the Government. The NACRA is currently reviewing the standard operating procedures as well as the sub-agreement and it is anticipated that the registration centre in Sana'a will open early July. The construction of a registration centre in Kharaz camp should also start soon.

Improving living conditions in Basateen

Following a joint participatory assessment conducted in March with governmental, international and national partners as well as refugees and the host community, UNHCR Yemen elaborated a long term strategy for the improvement of living conditions in the urban area of Basateen. Activities proposed in the short term are aiming to address the most immediate needs of refugees and host community. It includes the rehabilitation of the primary school, enhanced access to water, improved sanitation and sewage system as well as the development of a

waste-management system, support to health facilities and the construction of a community centre. UNHCR Yemen is currently working closely with the local administration and partners to design and implement the projects.

Expanding opportunities for self-reliance

Yemen suffers great economic problems and is one of the least developed countries in the world. Refugees in Yemen live in very precarious conditions and with little assistance. The lack of employment opportunities



within the camp and the urban area has contributed to serious protection problems including poor health, abuse and rising crime.

Initial SPCP-Y funding has enabled the recruitment of an International Labour Organization (ILO) consultant who, with support from UNHCR's Operational Solutions and Transition Section (OSTS), is currently working on a report summarizing the current shortcomings and opportunities for livelihoods and self-reliance. In addition the SPCP-Y is also supporting a comprehensive survey of the skills and coping mechanisms of refugees and host community in Kharaz Camp and Basateen. The results of the survey will assist the ILO consultant to develop a comprehensive strategy aimed at enhancing the access of refugees to vocational training and income generation activities. The ILO consultant has also established a steering committee comprised of other key stakeholders to help ensure a collaborative implementation of the strategy developed.

Risk Assessment of Refugees in Kharaz Camp and Basateen

The lack of accurate and up-to-date information on the profiles and vulnerabilities

of refugees living in Yemen was highlighted as a major protection concern, which is hampering the identification and search for durable solutions to their protection needs. To remedy to this gap, the SPCP-Y signed a sub-agreement in April with the NGO INTERSOS. They are currently engaged in a large scale risk assessment of the refugee population in Kharaz Camp and will then proceed to the urban area of Basateen. Their focus is on improving prevention and response mechanisms for those who have survived or are at risk of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV).

They have also opened two drop-in centres, one in Kharaz and one in Basateen, where vulnerable cases are referred and receive medical, legal and/or social assistance.

Security from violence and exploitation

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) have been adopted jointly by UNHCR and its partners in Aden on 30 April 2008. Regular training sessions are scheduled to take place to promote the procedures and strengthen case management by local stakeholders.



Weaving in Kharaz Camp (Photo: M. Aertker)

More information on the Strengthening Protection Capacity Project, including the SPCP-Yemen initiative, can be found at www.unhcr.org/spcp