

**ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOs
17 – 19 JUNE 2014 - International Conference Center Geneva**

THEMATIC SESSION

BACKGROUND PAPER

Understanding community-based protection

Thursday 19 June 2014, 09h00 – 10h45 - Room 3

How do communities ‘meaningfully’ and ‘substantially’ engage in their own protection? How does UNHCR and other humanitarian actors understand, compliment and strengthen the self-protection strategies and capacities of conflict and disaster affected communities? These are some of the key questions that will be discussed at UNHCR’s Annual Consultations with NGOs in June 2014 during the session on **Community-Based Protection (CBP)**.

The session comes at an opportune moment as UNHCR moves to further reinforce CBP with policy papersⁱ, practical guidanceⁱⁱ and workforce adjustmentsⁱⁱⁱ. UNHCR’s Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) Policy reflects a strong commitment and continued investment in ensuring an equal enjoyment of rights by all persons of concern. The fundamental tenet of AGD work is to adopt a community-based approach, effectively putting people of concern at the centre of all decisions that affect their lives, as well as those of their family members and communities. Community-based protection (CBP) applies this approach in protection work by drawing on the knowledge, skills and experience of affected persons to identify and address key protection issues.

Effective CBP is not a one-off project but rather a methodology for sustained protection work that requires prioritization and focused investment in building partnerships of trust with communities. National as well as international NGOs are often at the forefront of applying the CBP concepts on the ground. UNHCR and a network of NGO and academics have recently joined efforts to identify promising CBP practices and analyze what makes these effective, and how they may be adapted and applied more widely by humanitarian actors. As part of this initiative, the group administered a field-based survey and carried out a number of individual case studies to get an overview of practice and partnerships across different contexts, modes of operation, and types of protection work. A paper which sets out some of the observations drawn from this work will be circulated to help inform and guide the discussion during the session that will follow three short presentations by CBP practitioners.

ⁱ UNHCR Protection Policy Paper “Understanding Community-Based Protection

ⁱⁱ Including , Need to know guidance “Working with Persons with Disabilities in Forced Displacement”, “Working with Older Persons in Forced Displacement”, “Working with Minorities and Indigenous Peoples in Forced Displacement”, “Working with LGBTI Persons in Forced Displacement” and “Working with Men and Boy Survivors of Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Forced Displacement”

ⁱⁱⁱ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Community-based protection, 4 June 2013, EC/64/SC/CRP.14, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5209f0344.html> [accessed 21 May 2014]