

Guidance Note 4

Capacity-building

1. A definition

Too often, capacity-building tends to be equated with training. Certainly, training is a means to this end; but capacity-building is much more. It entails:

The creation of an enabling environment, with appropriate policy and legal frameworks, institutional development, including community participation (of women in particular), human-resources development and strengthening of managerial systems.

Specifically, this requires efforts in three main areas:

- **equipping individuals and communities** with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively.
- developing effective **management structures, processes and procedures** within organizations and for managing relationships among different organizations and partners.
- putting in place **institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks** to enable organizations, institutions and agencies at all levels and in all sectors (public, private, and community) to enhance their capacities.

Capacity-building therefore is not a single activity or an end in itself. It is a long-term, continual process aimed at reinforcing human, institutional and community performance, skills, knowledge and attitudes **on a sustainable basis**.²

2. Why capacity-building is important for the protection of IDPs

Protection of internally displaced persons and all other persons within their own countries is a *national responsibility*. In many humanitarian crises, however, the authorities lack adequate capacity or even readiness to adequately fulfill their duty to protect. Building or rebuilding national and local authorities' protection capacity is essential, both for an effective response to and recovery from existing humanitarian crises and for preventing future crises.

Capacity-building must be a core element of any protection strategy, including in situations of internal displacement.

Capacity-building must extend beyond the government. Supporting the development of a **vibrant civil society**, including local human rights and humanitarian NGOs, community-based organizations and an independent media, is just as important. Indeed, this will complement and reinforce efforts to enhance the protection capacity of the authorities.


Supporting the **capacities of IDPs and other affected persons** is absolutely critical. It is an integral element of enabling IDPs and other affected populations to exercise and claim their

"...simply strengthening the skills of the government does not necessarily create an accountable government. In partnering with government agencies, it is essential that humanitarian agencies do not ignore partnership opportunities with national organizations. A strong civil society provides an important check on government power."

Brooke Allen, *Time to Reassess Capacity Building Partnerships*, FMR, No. 28, 2007, p. 4.

¹ This definition for *capacity building* has been taken on board by a broad range of humanitarian and development actors. It was adopted at the UNDP Symposium *A Strategy for Water Sector Capacity Building*, Delft, 3-5 June, 1991, IHE/UNDP, Delft/New York.


² *Practical Guide to Capacity-building as a Feature of UNHCR's Humanitarian Programmes*, UNHCR, 1999.



rights; it contributes to operationalize a rights- and community-based approach, which is fundamental to effective protection (see Part I.1 and Part IV.10). 

3. Building and strengthening national capacity to address internal displacement

In general, capacity-building activities in situations of internal displacement should aim to promote and support an effective national protection response to internal displacement. At a minimum, this means a response that conforms to international standards and addresses the protection risks faced by IDPs. The specific activities should target the three main levels highlighted at the beginning of this note, namely, the individual, managerial and institutional levels.





3.1 The capacity of national authorities

The *Framework for National Responsibility*³ identifies 12 steps that governments can take to address material displacement (see also Part I.1).  Using this *Framework* as a guide, the matrix below provides some ideas for **activities to build and strengthen the protection capacities of the government and public institutions** in the 12 areas.



The 12 steps	Suggested capacity-building activities
<p>1. Prevention of arbitrary displacement (see Part V.1)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in a constructive dialogue with government officials, including security forces, and other relevant actors, as appropriate, in order to raise awareness on and prevent conditions and activities that may lead to arbitrary displacement. Ensure governments and other authorities are aware of the basic guarantees and conditions to be met in situations of displacement, including by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disseminating information on the application of international human rights and international humanitarian law standards; Providing training on applicable standards and measures for mitigating the adverse effects of displacement, including the importance of maintaining family unity in emergency situations; and Providing advice on contingency planning and on the procurement, storage and delivery of emergency assistance. Support the development or strengthening of early-warning mechanisms (often put in place by local NGOs and community networks) that alert populations under threat to imminent risk, and establish effective channels for communicating this information so early protective responses can be initiated.
<p>2. Raise national awareness of the problem (see Part IV.10)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate dissemination of information about the protection concerns of IDPs and other affected communities, particularly among all relevant branches of government. Support the efforts of IDP representatives, including women, minorities, and youth, and other affected populations to advocate for their rights, while taking into account any security risks that may arise. Support community-mobilization activities aimed at building awareness and momentum among national stakeholders, encouraging all actors to help achieve commonly agreed objectives to enhance the protection of IDPs and other affected populations.

³ *Addressing Internal Displacement: A Framework for National Responsibility*, The Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement, May 2005.

The 12 steps Suggested capacity-building activities (cont.)

3. Data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider including government officials in inter-agency participatory assessments to raise awareness of the protection risks and capacities of IDPs and other affected populations (see <i>Part III.1</i>).  • Provide technical support for efforts to gain an understanding of trends and protection concerns, such as through IDP profiling, in camps and in non-camp and urban settings, where displacement often is less visible (see <i>Part IV.8</i>).  • Raise awareness of the need to disaggregate data by age, sex and other indicators essential for addressing the specific needs of different groups of IDPs. • Insist upon and, as necessary, offer technical support on data management and protection to ensure privacy, confidentiality and safety of individuals and communities during and following data collection. • Monitor to ensure that data collected is not used in a discriminatory manner or for unlawful purposes.
4. Training on the rights of IDPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support training on the rights of IDPs, as summarized in the <i>Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement</i>. • Promote “training of trainers” events to maximize a “multiplier effect.” • Provide training for government officials, at the national, regional and local levels, including the military, police and camp administrators, other relevant authorities, such as non-State actors who also have protection responsibilities under international law, and staff of national human rights institutions, parliamentarians, civil society and IDP communities. • Consider bringing diverse actors together for a joint training session, which can help foster cooperation among them. • Tailor training to address identified gaps in knowledge or skills, such as to provide more in-depth discussion of particular protection issues, and consider discussing possible response strategies. • Facilitate the translation, into local languages, and dissemination of training materials on IDP protection, including the <i>Guiding Principles</i>. • Promote contact among government officials, civil society, and IDP representatives from other countries to exchange knowledge on best practices and lessons learned.
5. A national legal framework for upholding the rights of IDPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and support efforts by the government and civil society, such as lawyers’ associations, to review the compatibility of national legislation with the <i>Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement</i> and with international human rights and international humanitarian law, offering technical assistance as required. • Support the assessment of IDPs’ ability to access their rights and subsequent efforts to promote the adoption of legal and procedural safeguards or amendments to overcome any legal barriers. Bring this information to the attention of the Government (see <i>Part V.10</i>).  • Support clinics that provide legal assistance and information on the rights of IDPs and ensure their sustainability (see <i>Part IV.5</i>). 
6. A national policy or plan of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate open and constructive consultations between affected communities and the authorities to define the actions that need to be taken through a national policy or plan of action. • Share the results of participatory assessments and protection-risk analysis with the authorities to help inform national policy and programmes. • Support government efforts to develop a national policy to address internal displacement. • Advocate for international support for the implementation of a national policy and plans of action that would enhance the protection of IDPs.




<p>7. Institutional focal point on IDPs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for the designation of an institutional focal point responsible for coordinating the national response to internal displacement. • Cooperate with the IDP institutional focal point and support its efforts through technical and material assistance, as appropriate. • Encourage meaningful dialogue and partnership between this office and IDPs and with civil society working with the displaced.
<p>8. A role for national human rights institutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage national human rights institutions to integrate protection issues relating to internal displacement into their work. • Raise awareness among the staff of national human rights institutions of the particular protection concerns that can arise during displacement. • Provide technical and material support, as appropriate, to these institutions to monitor, report and follow-up on rights violations.
<p>9. Participation of IDPs in decision-making (see Part VI.10)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and support the formation of IDP associations, including IDP women's associations, to strengthen IDPs' own efforts to address their concerns and advocate for their rights. • Where feasible, include national and local authorities in the discussion with IDPs and other affected communities about the results of participatory assessment exercises, so that all can jointly decide on the best activities to address protection gaps. • Foster humanitarian space for dialogue among the authorities, IDPs and civil society organizations.
<p>10. Support durable solutions (see Part VI.)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness among State institutions of the need to promote the self-reliance of IDPs and other affected populations as early as possible. • Avoid creating parallel assistance or support structures. Ensure, instead, that humanitarian efforts are, or subsequently can be, integrated into national assistance programmes. • Assess the socio-economic integration of IDPs and possible discrimination, advocating for and supporting efforts by the authorities to address any such concerns. • Undertake protection assessments in areas of return or resettlement to identify risks and assist the national authorities in establishing protection mechanisms, particularly related to the rule of law, and ensuring that return or resettlement is voluntary and is done in safety and with dignity. • Advocate and offer technical assistance, as needed, for the establishment of mechanisms for property restitution, compensation or other forms of reparation. • Promote sharing of best practices with other countries in post-conflict situations. • Coordinate with national and local authorities, other humanitarian actors, both local and international, and donors in formulating a strategy for disengagement of humanitarian actors and a smooth and timely transition from humanitarian to development assistance.
<p>11. Resource mobilization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for and support government efforts to allocate adequate national resources to address internal displacement. • Share inter-agency assessments and planning documents, to the extent possible, to assist with national planning and budgeting. • Support governments that demonstrate efforts to protect IDPs in mobilizing resources, through donor relations and fundraising. • Make use of staff secondment schemes to deploy specialized humanitarian and development expertise to government institutions.



**12.
International
cooperation
when national
capacity is
insufficient**

- Assist the authorities in assessing national capacity to protect internally displaced persons through sharing of baseline data, identified trends and other relevant information.
- Offer support to the authorities to address gaps in the response. Such support can come in the form of technical assistance (such as deployment of staff with required expertise), material support (such as information technology, or vehicles to reach and assist IDPs in remote areas) or financial grants.
- Some general guidelines:
 - Such support should be granted within the framework of a broader protection strategy to fill identified gaps and address priorities.
 - The simultaneous provision of training activities or technical support can help strengthen the effectiveness of this assistance.
 - Care must be taken to ensure that the actors and institutions whose capacities are being reinforced are committed to using these capacities to enhance the protection of rights. It is essential to develop a monitoring system to assess the effectiveness and protection impact of these efforts.
 - Support should be provided in the context of more comprehensive, community-wide efforts, so as to avoid discriminating against other affected communities and thereby creating inequalities and tensions.

3.2 The protection capacities of IDPs and affected communities

From the outset and throughout all of the stages of a displacement crisis, humanitarian efforts need to build upon and reinforce the existing capacities of IDPs and other affected communities (see Part IV.10). 

Even where humanitarian agencies have no alternative but to implement an activity directly, it is essential to empower the community as well. This is not only the most effective way of ensuring the long-term sustainability of such activities; it is also fundamental to community-based and rights-based approaches to protection.

Some tips for capacity-building activities with IDPs and affected communities

- Train community members in the use of participatory methods and ensure age, gender and diversity balance among participants.
- Work with the community to identify the different capacities and skills of the members and agree on the areas on which training and other capacity building opportunities are needed.
- Listen to and build on the creative ideas of different age groups on how to disseminate information on key protection concerns and foster their leadership skills.
- Build bridges between formal civil society groups and members of displaced and other affected communities to support advocacy campaigns on key protection concerns.
- Ensure that all segments of the affected population benefit from training and capacity building opportunities. If a particular group is found to be excluded, determine why and work with communities to address the issue.
- Assist community leaders in informing all members about their responsibilities as duty bearers and rights holders. Raise awareness of values, such as inclusiveness and respect for all, gender and diversity awareness, and the rights of children and older persons.
- Identify appropriately skilled partners to deliver training and ensure that they transmit values according to rights and community based approaches.
- Follow up on how training participants are applying the skills acquired and whether they are training others.
- Discuss with persons in charge of managing community projects whether they require particular support or training. Promote transparent accounting mechanisms.

3.3. The protection capacities of civil society, including national NGOs

While IDPs and other affected populations are part of civil society, it is beneficial for IDPs to work with organized civil society groups. Partnerships with local NGOs or institutions devoted to the promotion and defense of human rights are particularly valuable. These groups, especially those that have been operational for some time, tend to have detailed knowledge of the protection situation and of the dynamics of the conflict and its root causes. They can also often identify potential entry points and opportunities for protection advocacy with national institutions and authorities.

Local NGOs, especially those engaged in humanitarian action, tend to have much greater and more regular access and contact with IDP communities and other affected populations than do international agencies. This generally gives them a better sense of the communities' concerns.

Beyond human rights and humanitarian NGOs, there are often many other civil society bodies that can help promote protection and respect for the rights of the IDPs and other affected populations. Such groups might include, for instance, journalists, trade unions, groups of researchers, student unions, professional associations, such as bar associations and other lawyers' groups, medical associations, social workers, and ethnic or faith-based associations. These actors often have a significant presence and constituencies throughout the country and can be instrumental in raising awareness and influencing public policies.

The aim should be to engage with as **broad and diverse a spectrum of civil society groups as possible**. Having the benefit of a range of views and perspectives helps to deepen our knowledge of the situation, ensure that information is shared, thus improving its reliability, and help safeguard against bias in our assessments or in the perception of our work.

Some tips for capacity-building activities with civil society groups and national NGOs

- Undertake a thorough assessment of existing civil society groups and NGOs to focus on partnerships with those whose activities can have an impact on the protection of IDPs and affected populations. Focus on their capacities and analyze the impact of their past activities.
- Provide material and financial resources to civil society groups advocating for IDP protection to support specific protection activities as well as their own institutional capacity. Promote the sustainability of their efforts and enhance coordination among different groups.
- Identify key resource persons at the local, national and international levels who can provide specialized training to civil society groups in thematic areas. Any training activity should be defined jointly with civil society groups to ensure that it builds on their existing knowledge and capacities and addresses gaps and priority concerns. Such training might include programmes to:
 - address particular protection concerns, such as sexual and gender based violence, child recruitment, property rights;
 - develop skills for specific protection activities, such as human rights monitoring and reporting, advocacy, ensuring that national legislation and policies conform with international standards; or
 - enhance skills essential to the organization's work, such as mobilizing volunteers, fundraising, and managing budgets.
- Support networks of civil society groups within the country, in the region, and with international human rights institutions and NGOs.
- Promote constructive dialogue and a sense of partnership between civil society groups and government institutions, particularly with the government focal point on IDPs, the police, lawmakers and national human rights institutions.
- Promote an understanding of the humanitarian character of NGOs' work with the aim of enhancing their safety when undertaking humanitarian and human rights work. Monitor whether human rights defenders and civil society groups can exercise the right to freedom of expression and association, and can undertake their work without risk. Follow up with the authorities in the case of any violations.



Resources

- *Addressing Internal Displacement: A Framework for National Responsibility*, The Brookings Institution-University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement, 2005: http://www.brookings.edu/fp/projects/idp/20050401_nrframework.htm
- *Enhancing Southern Capacity: Rhetoric and Reality*, Forced Migration Review, No. 28: www.fmreview.org
- *Evaluation of UNHCR's Role in Strengthening National NGOs*, UNHCR, EPAU/2001/01, 2001.
- *National Human Rights Institutions and Internally Displaced Persons: Illustrated by the Sri Lankan Experience*, The Brookings Institution-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement, 2002: www.brookings.edu/fp/projects/idp/idp.htm

Training resources

- **IDP Training** materials developed by the Norwegian Refugee Council's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre and OHCHR: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/>
- **Annual Course on the Law of Internal Displacement**, organized by the office of the UN Secretary-General's Representative on the human rights of IDPs, at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law, San Remo, Italy (target groups include civilian and military national authorities): <http://www.iihl.org>
- **Essentials of Migration Management for Policy Makers and Practitioners: Course Manual**, International Organization for Migration, 2004 (includes a module on internal displacement).
- **Compendium of Course Curricula on Internal Displacement**, compiled by The Brookings Project on Internal Displacement, 2002: <http://www.brookings.edu/fp/projects/idp/resources/syllabi.htm>