

SPCP – Kenya

June 2008

Background

The Strengthening Protection Capacity Project in Kenya (SPCP-Kenya) continues to support strengthening government and community capacities in Kenya to protect refugees in a manner that also benefits hosting communities.

The initiative is implemented in partnership with the Government of Kenya, and with the involvement of international and national partners, refugees and hosting communities.

Implementation of the Refugees Act 2006

In late 2006 Kenya passed its first law to govern refugee affairs. The SPCP-K has supported efforts to gradually transfer the management of refugee affairs to the appropriate administrative sectors and the full exercise of the new responsibilities in a manner that conforms to international protection principles. Additional financial support from the Government of Switzerland, particularly in the training of judges and magistrates on international protection and refugee law and their application in Kenya has been an important boost to this effort as has been the additional support from the United Kingdom Home Office for the continuation of the joint UNHCR – Government of Kenya project for the refugee status verification in the refugee camps of Dadaab, aimed at identifying Kenyan citizens residing in the refugee camps.

Gaps revisited

Presently there are over 270,000 refugees in Kenya. Numbers are expected to rise in 2008/9 as a result of the deterioration of conditions in Somalia.

To better respond to current needs and to prepare for future developments, UNHCR in the first quarter of 2008 re-examined unmet needs of the refugee population. This has been a dynamic process of engaging refugees through participatory assessments as well as through in-depth consultation with partners to priorities gaps in protection including assistance and developing projects necessary to remedy those gaps.



Family planning sessions

Among the key gaps highlighted are in the areas of environmental protection, registration, legal representation, preventing and responding to gender based violence, education and self-reliance. To date a set of 15 projects have been developed in these areas, as described below, which are in need of funding support for their full implementation.

Verification of camp refugees

A verification of the number and profile of refugees in Dadaab camp, begun in March 2007, encountered serious challenges due to a number of factors including floods, the outbreak of diseases, and the influx of new arrivals from Somalia. Responding to these conditions has diverted and hampered capacity to complete the exercise; at present approximately three quarters of the camp population remain to be verified. Accurate information of the current numbers of refugees, disaggregated by age and gender is vital to the identification of specific protection risks, ensuring the needed response to those risks and the appropriate delivery of assistance. This



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activity, if financially supported, will include biometric information collection, including fingerprinting. .

Legal Representation

UNHCR has developed a training programme for legal practitioners to increase their knowledge of refugee rights as outlined in the *Refugees Act 2006*. Support for a pro bono lawyer's network to represent refugees and ensure their equal access to the court is also part of the programme, which has won support and partnership from the Law Society of Kenya. As a result of this programme, UNHCR will contribute as a resource organization to the training programme developed by the Law Society of Kenya. Moreover, UNHCR and partners are seeking financial support to continue efforts to train urban refugees to serve as paralegals in their communities. The project also contains a plan to train community paralegal teachers countrywide so that refugee protection issues are included in the existing paralegal curriculum. This will have the effect of increasing access to justice for refugees, and making awareness of refugee rights under the new *Refugee Act 2006* widespread

Security from Violence and Exploitation

To encourage and support women in reporting on threats to their security, enhancements are proposed to the main police station in Kakuma so as to ensure the confidentiality of the complaints procedure, and a safe room and facilities for women at risk and their children. These measures would complement existing activities to increase police awareness and appropriate responses to sexual and gender based violence in Kakuma.



Campaigning against harmful practices

Improved Health and Education

Important work has begun in Nairobi by UNHCR partner agency GTZ and the local City Council for ensuring refugee access to health services. Similar outreach activities were started to ensure refugee children have access to public schools. With support from SPCP-K, over 15,000 refugee children were enrolled in public schools. UNHCR seeks to further support these initiatives by extending their reach and by providing awareness raising, training and expanded services to increase the capacity of public sectors to respond to refugee education and health care needs while also providing needed benefits to hosting communities.

In Dadaab and Kakuma, projects have been developed to improve teacher training; provide opportunities for distance learning; and expand vocational training to youth so that they have greater opportunities to become self-reliant.

Community Participation and Self-Management

For several years UNHCR and partners have sought greater investment in vocational and livelihood opportunities to help address some of the persistent protection problems in the camps including food insecurity, survival sex, and violence and abuse which are so often consequent on prolonged confinement. Projects awaiting funding in this area include vocational training; environmental protection work; energy efficient rocket stove production;

support to small business enterprises for women and the development of cottage industries. Efforts to improve livelihoods will be informed by technical assessments to ensure that livelihoods strategies adopted most efficiently benefit the refugee and host communities they target.

More information on the SPCP-K is available on the SPCP website www.unhcr.org/spcp.