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VOICE, INCLUSION & COHESION IN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSES

A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR HELVETAS PRACTITIONERS

Zurich, 2022

HELVETAS

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

The elaboration of this resource guide has been a joint effort by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation's (HELVETAS) Voice, Inclusion, Cohesion (VIC) team, including in-depth feedback from a broad range of collaborators from head office and country programmes. It is based on emerging experiences and lessons learned from HELVETAS' humanitarian responses and those of other actors working in the humanitarian-development nexus. The authors have made every effort to ensure the original sources of content included in this resource guide are appropriately referenced and credited. Any errors or omissions are wholly unintentional

1.1. Purpose of the VIC resource guide

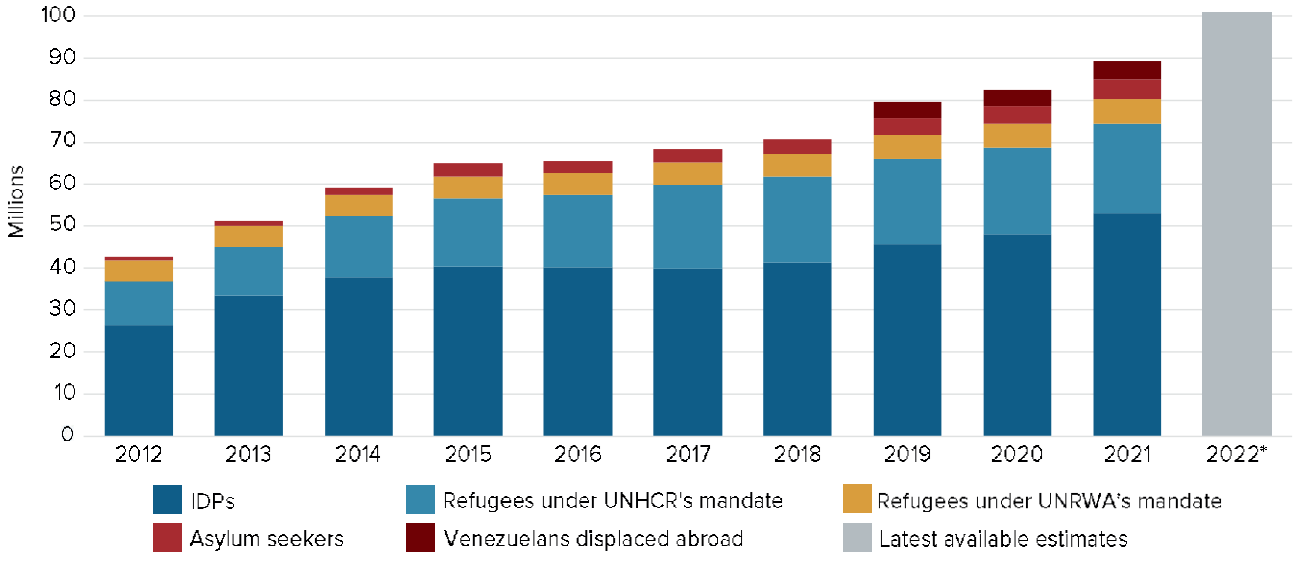
With HELVETAS' commitment to work in the humanitarian-development nexus, the voice, inclusion & cohesion resource guide provides hands-on guidance and online resources for:

- Positioning and identifying **entry points for the VIC** working area in the humanitarian-development nexus, for both immediate responses and protracted crises;
- Informing and enriching HELVETAS **acquisitions** for humanitarian responses;
- Identifying and mainstreaming context-specific **VIC tools and approaches** along the humanitarian response programming cycle;
- Understanding the response to the Rohingya refugee crisis in Cox's Bazar, and Covid-19 impact on vulnerable communities in Nepal, as examples, is a relevant testing ground for VIC interventions.

1.2. Context: fragility, forced displacement & protracted crises

A complex dynamic between poverty, environmental vulnerability and fragility continues to affect significant and increasing numbers of poor people across the world. Overall, **in 2022, 274 million people will need humanitarian assistance and protection.**[1] Most are living below the extreme poverty line. These numbers risk to further grow in the coming years as all projections indicate that there will be increased number of extreme events. The majority of natural disasters were caused by floods, storms or drought and trends show that the number of forced displacements will further increase as a consequence of climate change. This will further undermine development and increase the risk of conflicts and massive displacement of people within nations and across borders. Today, about **1.8 billion people live in fragile states,** and this figure might increase to 2.3 billion by 2030. Without action, more than 80% of the world's poorest will live in fragile contexts by 2030[2]. The last decade saw the highest-ever number of people internally displaced by conflict and violence, with many locked in a state of protracted dis-

Figure 1: People forced to flee 2012 – 2022, UNHCR Global Trends 2021



* 2022 figures are estimated using data available as of 16 May 2022.

1 The Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2021

2 OECD Highlights documents_web.pdf

placement. At the end of 2021, there were an estimated 53.2 million new and existing Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and the number of refugees has doubled to 27.1 million. With millions of Ukrainians displaced and further displacement elsewhere in 2022, total **Forcibly Displaced People now exceeds 100 million.**[3] About 40% of forcibly displaced people are children below 18 years of age and the majority of displaced people live in fragile countries.[4] Comprehensive sex-disaggregated data are missing but women constitute a significant proportion of FDPs, including about half of IDPs since 2010.

Conflicts, and especially protracted crises, are the main driver of humanitarian needs. UNHCR defines a **protracted refugee situation** as "one in which 25,000 or more refugees from the same nationality have been in exile for five consecutive years or more in a given asylum country." This can lead to protracted situations of FDPs staying many years in temporary hosting situations, such as camps. With a view to avoiding these protracted situations for FDPs and facilitating durable solutions in 2010, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) adopted the IASC framework on durable solutions for IDPs. It defines durable solutions as being achieved when "IDPs no longer have any specific assistance and protection needs that are linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement". Durable solutions include sustainable reintegration at the place of origin (voluntary return), local integration in areas where displaced persons take refuge (local integration) or in another part of the country based on their choice (relocation). Despite these efforts and some advances, few FDPs are benefitting today from a sustainable solution; instability and insecurity in their countries of origin impedes voluntary return, policy restrictions often limit local integration (in both the Global North and the Global South), and relocation is very expensive and limited. Most FDPs are therefore living in "protracted displacement" and lack long-term perspectives.[6]

Extreme poverty is on the rise for the first time since 1998. Between 88 million and 115 million people could fall back into extreme poverty due to COVID-19, with an additional increase of between 23 million and 35 million people in 2021, potentially bringing the total number of new people living in extreme poverty to between 110 million and 150 million. Women and girls are at increased risk of conflict-related sexual violence. COVID-19 has also shone a spotlight on the full extent of **gender inequality** and women's and girls' exposure to **gender-based violence** (GBV). Adolescent girls in conflict zones are 90 per cent more likely to be out of school, and 70 per cent of women in humanitarian settings are more likely to experience GBV compared with 35 per cent worldwide. Humanitarian crises disrupt family and social networks, change the roles played by different genders and break down protection structures.

In the face of a multiplicity of challenges, the Grand Bargain was launched during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. It is a unique agreement between some of the largest donors and humanitarian organisations who have committed to get more means into the hands of people in need and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action. The Grand Bargain now includes 63 signatories, which represent around 84% of all donor humanitarian contributions and 69% of aid received by agencies[7]. The signatories are working across eight workstreams to implement the following commitments:

- Greater **transparency**
- More support and **funding tools** to local and national responders (=localization of humanitarian aid)
- Increase the use and coordination of **cash-based programming**
- **Reduce duplication** and management costs with periodic functional reviews
- Improve joint and impartial **needs assessments**
- A **participation revolution:** include people receiving aid in making the decisions which affect their lives
- Increase collaborative humanitarian **multi-year planning and funding** & reduce the earmarking of donor contributions
- Harmonize and simplify **reporting** requirements

1.3. HELVETAS in the Nexus

To cope with increasing and protracted crises situations, HELVETAS has gradually increased its engagement in humanitarian responses, with a strong focus on the **nexus** approach, linking humanitarian relief

3 UNHCR Global Trends 2021

4 Developing countries hosted 85 per cent of the world's refugees and Venezuelans displaced abroad (Ibid).

5 Ibid.

6 See our recent article on the topic published on HELVETAS blog.

7 25 Member States, 11 UN Agencies, 5 inter-governmental organizations, Red Cross/Red Crescent Movements and 22 NGOs

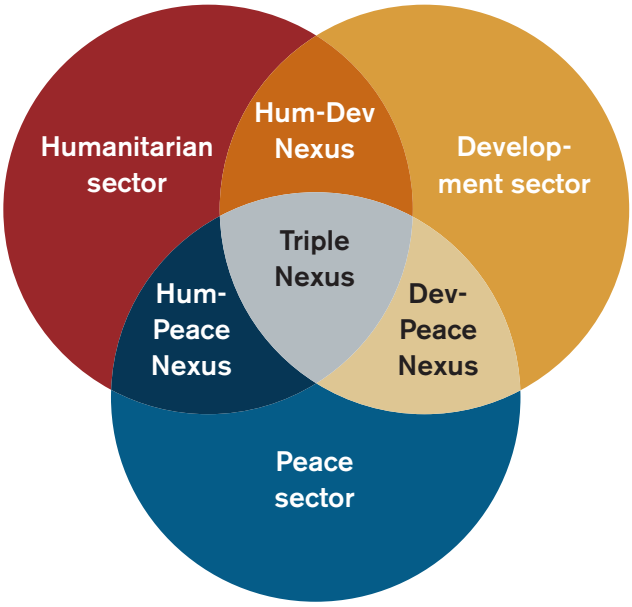
and rehabilitation work with longer term development perspectives. Armed conflict is a major driver of humanitarian emergencies and poverty and so HELVETAS work increasingly takes place in fragile and conflict-affected regions. This prompts the question of how to work in the **triple nexus.** The triple nexus refers to the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actors working together towards collective outcomes over several years. Linking humanitarian, development and peacebuilding interventions is highly relevant in most conflict contexts since **protracted crises** can last decades. The nature of protracted crises requires additional approaches to short-term humanitarian aid in order to contribute to broader development goals and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Whereas HELVETAS does not work on national- and international-level peace processes, our conflict sensitivity approach, following the Do-No-Harm Framework is at the centre of our efforts to increase capacity for conflict and context analysis, as well as translating this knowledge into action. The **HELVETAS working field 'Conflict Transformation'** recognises that the social, political, cultural, and economic make-up of a community is often a subject of contestation between different social groups and can lead to (violent) conflict. Consequently, a society's capacity to deal with change and conflict in a non-violent way is crucial for peace. In many fragile contexts, gender-based violence, impunity, resource scarcity, citizen dissatisfaction with public institutions and state repression are a reality. These factors combine with contested legitimacy and/or an inability of authorities to protect citizens from (armed) violence while upholding human rights. Many recent humanitarian crises have roots in resource conflicts, often exacerbated by the impact of climate change. It is therefore pivotal to enhance collaborative management of scarce resources to prevent conflicts and include this in our humanitarian engagements.

HELVETAS is strongly aligned with the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs. As part of this agenda, the concept of Leave No One Behind (LNOB) is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda. It represents the unequivocal commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole. The VIC working area is highly linked with this instrumental concept as they both pursue similar objectives by fostering inclusion and participation of all populations, including those left, or at risk of being left behind. The complexity of tackling Leave No One Behind calls for an integrated approach to addressing the dynamics of discrimination and the mechanisms of exclusion. In operational terms, the integrated approach brings together a range of actors – national and local authorities; specialists in humanitarian aid, development, human rights, and peace and security; civil society; and the private sector – who contribute to collective achievements.

In addition, the pledge of LNOB and its three underlying concepts – namely equality, non-discrimination and equity – are closed linked with the humanitarian principles which provide the fundamental foundations for humanitarian action (humanity, neutrality, impartiality, independence).

Figure 2: Triple Nexus Approach



2. VIC IN THE HUMANITARIAN-DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

HELVETAS' ambition is to offer thematic advisory services from its three working areas: Water, Food, Climate; Skills, Jobs Income; and Voice, Inclusion, Cohesion. VIC encompasses three interrelated working fields which all have relevance for working in the humanitarian-development nexus: (i) governance & civic space; (ii) conflict transformation; and (iii) migration.

Figure 3: VIC Working Fields

VIC offers **people-centred and human rights-based approaches** and multiple solutions for interventions, including for humanitarian responses and at the interface between development and humanitarian aid:

- **strengthen the capacity of affected populations, including migrant populations and forcibly displaced people, and local authorities to participate** in appropriate forums that coordinate and develop responses in alignment with national government priorities;
- consider **gender** dimensions and systematically include **marginalised communities;**
- adapt to the local context, ensuring **conflict sensitivity** in our interventions;
- support affected people, especially vulnerable groups, in claiming their entitlements and protecting their rights; and
- ensure **accountability to affected communities** and foster open internal and external communication.

The aim of the cluster approach is to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies and provide clear leadership and accountability in the main areas of humanitarian response. At country level, it aims to strengthen partnerships, and the predictability and accountability of international humanitarian action, by improving prioritization and clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of humanitarian organizations.

Although the transversal nature of Voice, Inclusion and Cohesion is relevant for all UN clusters, the interventions and approaches elaborated in the subsequent sections typically fall under the **Protection Cluster** which is led by UNHCR.

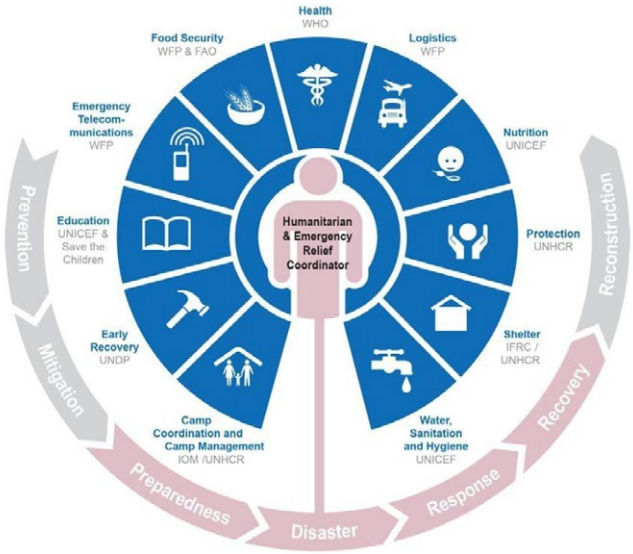


Figure 4: UN Cluster System

9 UN Sustainable Development Group : Leave No One Behind
10 SDC Guidance Leave No One Behind

2.1. VIC's thematic entry points

This section outlines how the overall thematic foci of Voice, Inclusion and Cohesion are relevant to humanitarian responses and can be considered as **VIC stand-alone thematic entry-points.** Section 2.2 then goes on to elaborate how specific **VIC approaches and tools** can be **mainstreamed** into the different stages of the **humanitarian response programming cycle**. The thematic foci, as well as related approaches and tools, are derived from the specific working fields: governance & civic space; migration and conflict transformation. Since the thematic entry points, as well as related approaches and tools are usually used within a more traditional development programming, these have to be slightly adapted to the **humanitarian-development nexus and possibly to specific emergency contexts.**

2.1.1. Voice & Inclusion

HELVETAS' emphasis on Voice & Inclusion in humanitarian responses is intrinsically linked to, not only the UN Protection Cluster, but also **Protection Principles** which support the rights set out in the Humanitarian Charter, namely the **right to life with dignity,** the **right to humanitarian assistance** and the **right to protection and security.** In a broad sense, protection encompasses all efforts pursued by humanitarian and human rights actors to ensure that the rights of affected persons **(rights holders)** and the obligations of **duty bearers** (national governments, local authorities & humanitarian actors) under international law are understood, respected, protected and fulfilled without discrimination. In other words, protection aims to prevent, reduce/mitigate and respond to the risks and consequences of violence, coercion, deliberate deprivation and abuse for vulnerable persons, groups and communities – in line with applicable international law.

Protection can help HELVETAS to meet its commitments in promoting and safeguarding the dignity and security of the women, men, youth and communities we work with. As highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, **social protection** is an indispensable part of any coordinated policy response to crisis, ensuring that people can effectively access care while supporting job and income security for those most affected. Social protection increases resilience, contributes to preventing poverty, unemployment and informality, acts as a powerful economic and social stabilizer while stimulating aggregate demand in times of crises and beyond. Social protection can act as an important bridge between our longer-term development and shorter-term humanitarian aid interventions.

Following HELVETAS' **human rights based and people-centred approach,** we believe meaningful participation implies putting the needs and interests of affected communities at the centre of humanitarian decision making. Meaningful **participation** and genuinely **inclusive** decision-making processes

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require continuous multi-stakeholder dialogues about the **analysis, design, implementation and evaluation** of development and humanitarian response programmes between affected people, humanitarian actors and (host) communities who are vulnerable or at risk, including those who often tend to be disproportionately disadvantaged. This dialogue should take place through channels and spaces that beneficiaries prefer and with which they feel **safe.** For that purpose, the humanitarian terminology refers to the concept of **Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP).**[11] "Accountability to affected people is a commitment by humanitarians to use power responsibly: to take account of, give account to, and be held to account by the people we seek to assist. In humanitarian action, this includes enabling affected people to meet their different needs, address their vulnerabilities, build on pre-existing capacities and drive programme adaptation through:

- Systematically sharing timely, relevant and actionable information with communities;
- Supporting the meaningful participation and leadership of affected people in decision-making, regardless of sex, age, disability status and other diversities;
- Ensuring community feedback systems are in place to enable affected people to assess and comment on the performance of humanitarian action, including on sensitive matters such as sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud, corruption and racism and discrimination".[12]

Humanitarian actors and governments are often over-reliant on superficial consultation processes as a tool for engaging populations of concern, which has led to **"consultation fatigue"** as well as a lack of confidence in the humanitarian system and the government to follow through on commitments and to protect rights. As opposed to inclusive and meaningful participation and empowerment processes, consultation is a passive process and can be counterproductive when the participation process stops there and there is no visible redistribution of power, especially to women and girls.

2.1.2. Cohesion

Social cohesion – or lack thereof – is steadily receiving more attention in the mixed migration discourse. There are multiple, but somewhat contested, definitions of the term social cohesion. Most scholars and practitioners however agree that there are two dimensions to social cohesion:

- the **absence of social conflict** (e.g. based on wealth, ethnicity, race, and gender); and
- the **presence of strong social bonds** (e.g. through civil society, responsive democracy, independent media and impartial law enforcement, cultural traditions, religion).

11 AAP entails accessible and clearly understandable information on interventions and actors, setting-up appropriate mechanisms through which the affected populations get information and give feedback on the adequacy of interventions, and effectively addressing their concerns and complaints including sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by humanitarian actors.

12 IASC, Strengthening Accountability to Affected People

One of the objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is **to empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion.** In order to reach this objective, the GCM calls for a commitment to "strengthen the welfare of all members of societies by minimizing disparities, avoiding polarization and increasing public confidence in policies and institutions related to migration, in line with the acknowledgment that fully integrated migrants are better positioned to contribute to prosperity." While the Global Compact on Refugees does not specifically refer to "social cohesion," it recognizes the importance of good relations and peaceful coexistence, and highlights this as an area in need of support.

A key element in coping with migration challenges and reducing the marginalisation of migrants – both abroad and after they return home – is **social cohesion.** The general aim of social cohesion action is to ensure that all people in a country, without discrimination and on an equal footing, have access to fundamental social and economic rights so that they can feel part of, and willingly contribute to, the community and society.

HELVETAS regards the thematic focus on social cohesion in humanitarian responses as cardinal since **forced displacements often change social relations and dynamics** which presents both socio-economic, political and cultural challenges but also offers a potential for social transformation and inclusive development. The arrival of displaced persons is often associated with social disruption, religious or ethnic tensions, and economic upheaval which can lead to grievances and resentment on the part of host communities, especially when they feel that IDPs and refugees receive preferential treatment from the government and humanitarian agencies. Such tensions are often fuelled by populist policies and local media outlets. As an example, Covid-19 has further fuelled tension between host communities and Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar.

Mixed migration refers to cross-border movements of people including refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, victims of trafficking and people seeking better lives and opportunities. Motivated to move by a multiplicity of factors, people in mixed flows have different legal statuses as well as a variety of vulnerabilities. Although entitled to protection under international human rights law, they are exposed to multiple rights violations along their journey.

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While economic integration, skills, job and income creation are more common humanitarian-development approaches towards strengthening social bonds, VIC focuses on fostering social cohesion through enhanced **trust, mutual respect and understanding** regardless of faith, ethnicity, age or gender. Whilst inclusive and participative decision-making processes, as described above, contributes to social cohesion, HELVETAS also recognises the potential to use **arts, cultural activities and social initiatives** to facilitate safe spaces for dialogue and joint action involving both refugees, IDPs, host communities and local authorities. Working with **independent media** is another important approach towards debunking fake news and infodemics that negatively portray refugees and IDPs, particularly on the basis of gender, ethnicity and religion. More generally, the actions on social cohesion should be tackled from a strategic perspective (e.g. by integrating host communities in responses) and with a focus on the root causes of tensions (e.g. competition for resources).

2.1.3. Ways forward and thematic entry-points for VIC

In a nutshell HELVETAS' interventions and approaches towards strengthening Voice, Inclusion & Cohesion in humanitarian responses aim to:

- position the communities and people, especially women and girls, affected by humanitarian crises at the centre of our decision-making by promoting and facilitating genuine participation processes to be certain that our humanitarian response is **inclusive, relevant, timely, effective and efficient;**
- promote **women's leadership** in humanitarian responses and to continuously take stock of progress made towards the protection and assistance of women and girls, examining some of the outstanding challenges to effective responses to their human rights and needs and identifying ways forward for addressing these issues;
- strengthen efforts to **change men's and boys' attitudes and practices** towards women's empowerment and prevent potential blowbacks from men and boys who perceive that women and girls receive disproportionate benefits and attention in humanitarian responses;
- work towards the achievement of **durable solutions** for forcibly displaced persons, including IDPs, by promoting **long-term solutions**;
- increase the **self-reliance** of affected populations by improving access to basic services, enhancing access to livelihoods, income and employment opportunities and fostering social cohesion and inclusive governance, through the promotion of meaningful participation, inclusive decision making and accountability of institutions;
- ensure AAP as a fundamental aspect of planning and programming by providing **accessible information** and ensuring that a meaningful process for **participation and feedback** is in place and that humanitarian programme design is responsive to the needs and views of affected communities and people, especially women and other vulnerable groups;
- ensure that the **voices** of the most vulnerable groups, considering gender, age, ethnicity, language and special needs are heard and acted upon to create an environment of greater **trust, transparency and accountability;**
- promote the **voices of local actors** and strengthen their **capacities** and mandated roles to fulfil their responsibilities;
- safeguard that all humanitarian programming processes and interventions are **conflict sensitive and do no harm;**
- facilitate inclusive **decision-making processes** and **multi-stakeholder dialogue** that foster mutual trust, social cohesion, reciprocal respect and understanding;
- **Use arts, cultural activities and social initiatives** to facilitate safe spaces for dialogue and joint action involving both refugees, IDPs, host communities and local authorities;
- Develop capacities of **independent media** to report factually and analytically, debunking fake news and infodemics that negatively portray refugees and IDPs.

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2.2. VIC approaches and tools in the humanitarian programming cycle

Whereas section 2.1. presented thematic entry points for Voice, Inclusion & Cohesion, this section of the resource guide offers a selection of approaches and tools that can be mainstreamed into the different stages of the humanitarian response programming cycle. Evidently, **not all tools and approaches should be applied and some of them overlap.** While some of the key approaches and tools are described in brief below, additional online references and good practices that aim to inspire **tailor-made and contextualised humanitarian programming** are listed in annex 4.1. for further inspiration.

2.2.1.Analysis & Assessment

Conflict and protection risk analysis

As the basis of our overall humanitarian programme design, it is important to profoundly analyse and understand the unique context in which the humanitarian action takes place. Particularly in conflict situations it is crucial to assess and address conflict drivers, protection gaps and risks that affected communities, staff, partners and other stakeholders face. We have an obligation to ensure that our work will not cause harm or expose people to unacceptable risks in all contexts, particularly in conflict, fragile or insecure environments. The first steps in HELVETAS' 3-steps guide for Conflict Sensitive Programme Management (CSPM) emphasises the importance of understanding the **conflict context.** CSPM helps to identify existing conflict dynamics, dividers and connectors and measures that can minimize negative unintended consequences and maximize positive, transformational effects an intervention can have on a given conflict. A solid conflict analysis focuses on factors which can reduce or increase tensions. Some of the key questions to address include: What is the context that shapes conflict? Who are the actors that influence conflict? What causes conflict? What are the current conflict dynamics/trends? What are the connectors and dividers ?

Understanding the context and anticipating the consequences of humanitarian action that may affect the safety, dignity and rights of the affected population demands that we work with partners and groups of affected women, men, boys and girls to do regular risk analysis as the situation changes over time. Enriching the conflict analysis with a protection risk analysis gives an additional overview of the protection environment and needs of the concerned popu-

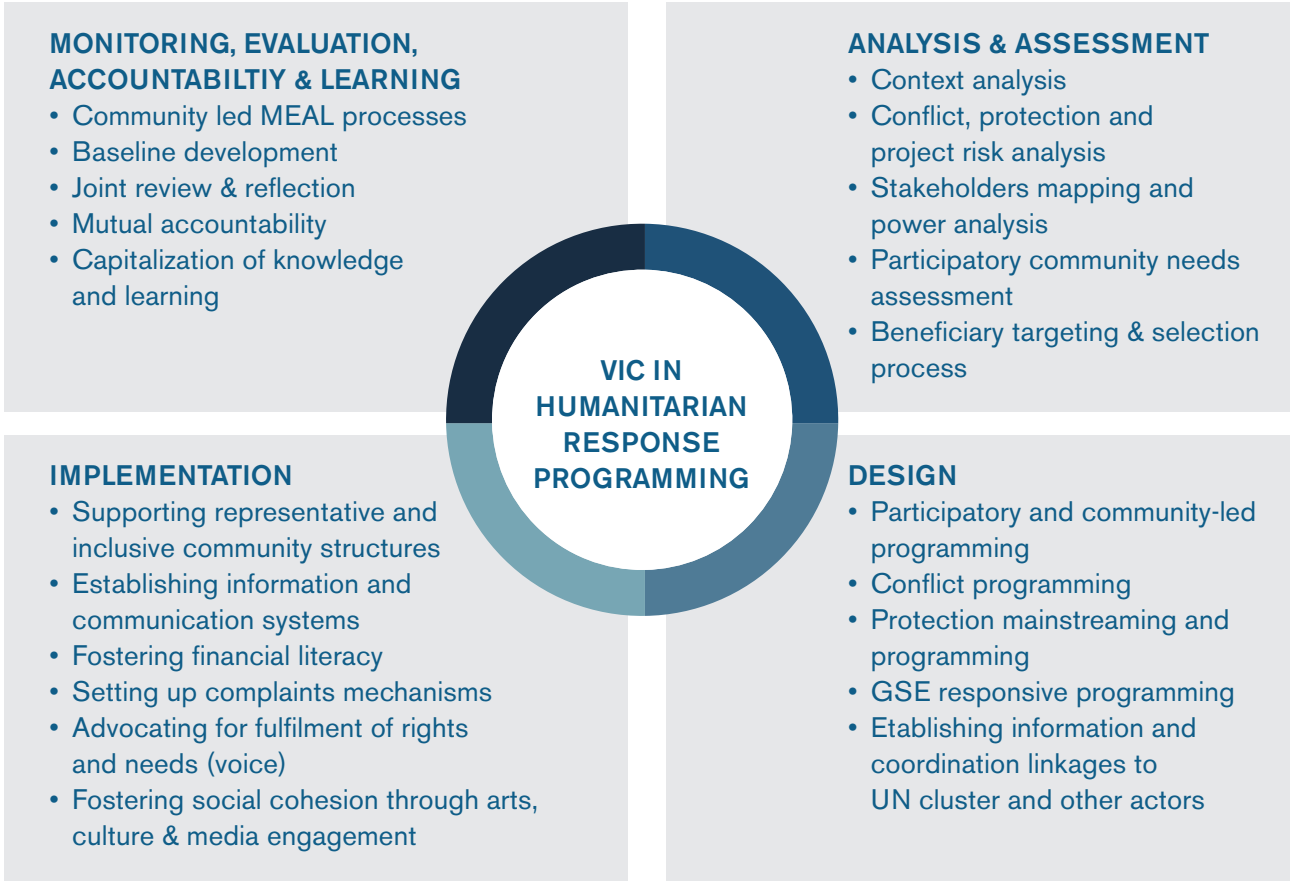

Figure 5: VIC approaches and tools in humanitarian response programming

lation, especially women, young girls and children who are often at risk of: sexual and gender-based violence; physical and psychological abuse; limited safe and secure access to basic services and facilities; trafficking; and trauma from forced displacement, conflict and war. Conflict sensitivity is an integral part of protection and is a needed first step in achieving protection for vulnerable populations. CSPM aims to ensure that minimally programmes do not support dividers – that is factors that create harm, conflict, or tensions. Wherever possible, CSPM also aims to support connectors, or factors for peace.

Protection goes beyond conflict sensitivity. Conflict sensitivity focuses on inter-group dynamics related to socio-political tensions or violent conflict. Protection assesses these dynamics and then asks: what can be done to protect the physical and psychological well-being of affected individuals? In conflict contexts, there is often overlap between protection and conflict-sensitive actions when looking at systemic or environment-building issues. In a nutshell, a protection risk analysis consists of assessing threats, vulnerabilities, and coping mechanisms by following the diagram below:

Protection is about understanding why some individuals may be more vulnerable to the exposure and negative consequences of **threats**. Factors related to human development such as gender, age, and income/level of assets often make some people more vulnerable than others. In conflict contexts, factors such as ethnicity, religion, displacement, legal status, and geography are important additional **vulnerabilities** to consider. The **capacity of people to positively or negatively cope** with threats influences their level of vulnerability. The **duration** of a threat also affects the level of harm to which people are exposed the extent as well to which coping capacities are strained. For example, a protracted crisis where people are displaced for years or decades will result in increased exposure of people to secondary threats, as well as likely straining coping capacities, compared to a displacement that lasts weeks or months.

To put it in more general terms, the risks prevalent in a setting where humanitarian action is implemented are many and go beyond the safety and security risks of staff and beneficiaries. Contextual risks are inherent in the wider context. They can include political and social risk factors such as intensified conflict, political instability and the collapse of the rule of law; economic or developmental factors, such as high inflation, the collapse of state service infrastructure and market failure; and wider security issues, such as organised and transnational crime. Many of these contextual risks are, to some degree, beyond the control of humanitarian actors, though this does not mean that they cannot be predicted.

Figure 6: Protection risks equation

Project/programme risk analysis

Programmatic risks can be grouped into two main areas – the risk of failing to achieve programme objectives, and the potential to cause harm to others – which is intrinsically linked to our CSPM approach. Setting aside external contextual factors, there are a number of risks relating to programme implementation. These include setting overly ambitious objectives, using innovative or untested programme approaches, basing programmes on flawed needs assessments, and not having the necessary operational resources to match project ambitions. There is also the risk that programming will not achieve a comprehensive response or that programmes may duplicate other interventions. The second area covers a range of risks related to the Do No Harm approach. This includes physical risks to civilians arising from the presence of humanitarian actors or specific programmes; the risk of fuelling a war economy or replacing state functions through substitution of service delivery; the risk of compounding ethnic,

13 Connectors are things that create, or contribute to, cooperation, trust, and good will across divided groups. Dividers are things that create, or contribute to, mistrust and divisions.

14 Very well done tools developed by the European Commission «Humanitarian Protection: Improving protection outcomes to reduce risks for people in humanitarian crises» and SDC in Myanmar «Operational Concept on Protection for Myanmar 2019–2023»

religious or gender discrimination; and the risk of creating dependence on external assistance.

Institutional risks include the increased risk of politicisation and securitisation of aid in complex international interventions which balance competing political, security and development agendas with humanitarian priorities. This has a secondary impact on other institutional risks, including operational security. Fiduciary or corruption risks, such as bribery, extortion, kickbacks, nepotism and cronyism, are also particularly acute since humanitarian interventions typically take place in contexts which are characterised by weak or non-existent rule of law, endemic corruption and overwhelming need. The risk of inconsistent or inflexible funding is also prevalent. Humanitarian funding is increasingly influenced by donors' political and security interests and public opinion. As a result, some humanitarian crises are neglected, while others may receive huge allocations. Failure to sustain humanitarian funding throughout the length of a protracted response also poses serious risks to the gains made by initial relief operations. Many institutional risks relate to reputation.

Stakeholders mapping and power analysis

Stakeholder mapping, including a specific power analysis, is a participatory process that involves affected populations to analyse how power relations affect their precarious situation and how shifting power dynamics might be changed for the better. When working with affected communities in humanitarian responses, it is on the one hand important to understand the power structure and hierarchy within the community and other stakeholders. On the other hand, one needs to be careful and conflict sensitive when doing such an analysis in order to prevent potential fuelling of tensions. The HELVETAS PEPA manual (Political Economy & Power Analysis) is useful for deepening the understanding of the approach, and offers a range of tools that help us to understand and transform the forms of power that reinforce the precarious situation of affected populations. Some of the key PEPA questions to address in a humanitarian response concern:

- Who are the main actors?
- What are their interests, goals, strategies, expectations and motivations?
- What power do they have, how do they exert power, what resources or support do they have?
- What are their incentives and disincentives for making humanitarian responses responsive to the needs of affected people and communities?
- What capacities do they have to affect the context?
- Who could be considered spoilers? What divides people? Who exercises leadership and how?
- What are the relationships between actors, what is the strategic balance between actors (who is 'winning' and 'losing')?

Participatory community needs assessment

Community participation at the early stage of needs assessments ensures we are asking the right questions and getting the right information to design an appropriate response programme that meets people's needs. It also sets the stage for community participation right from the beginning of the process and demonstrates how we intend to work. Participation happens in two ways: first, participatory exercises can be used to allow people to share their views and priorities with the needs assessment team. Second, community representatives can be part of the needs assessment team itself. The assessment should always consider the views of marginalised groups, including the people left, or at risk of being left, behind. A gender analysis should be integrated into the humanitarian needs assessment and into all sector assessments or situational analyses and throughout the humanitarian programme cycle. It allows for an understanding of who in the population is affected by the crisis, what they need and what they can do for themselves during recovery. Thinking about the gender dimensions of your work improves what you do, how you do it and ultimately how effectively your work meets the needs of all those impacted by emergencies, especially the most vulnerable. Feedback should be shared with the community on the findings and decisions that are taken as a result. In an emergency it is equally important to consider people's **information and communication needs.** This includes what information they want to know and what they want to share with humanitarian agencies; the communication channels they have access to (and which they trust); how information is traditionally shared in their communities; and what impact the disaster has had on communication channels.

Beneficiary targeting and selection process

The targeting and selection of beneficiaries can be a huge challenge in humanitarian responses. Constraints in terms of time, access to populations and access to information are examples of regular obstacles to target and select beneficiaries. Undertaken properly, targeting ensures that individuals receive the most appropriate support to address their needs and reinforce their capacities. It thereby also contributes significantly towards a more effective use of resources. In the framework of the joint principles for

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targeting assistance to meet food and other basic needs to persons of concern, UNHCR and WFP identify the following principles as cardinal in selecting and identifying beneficiaries: protection-focused, collaborative, participatory, inclusive, evidence-based, relevant, accurate, coherent, proportionate, accountable, and monitored.

The process of targeting includes assessing the distinctive needs and capacities of the populations, defining eligibility criteria and selecting a targeting approach. In this latter area, based on joint contextual analysis and the particular objective of the action, the implementing organization, the local authorities and communities and, where relevant, partners, will agree on the most appropriate **targeting approach.** Typical approaches include: demographic/categorical targeting based on vulnerability criteria; geographic targeting focusing on people living in specific locations; **community-based targeting** in which the community takes part in defining the eligibility criteria and/or identifying beneficiaries; self-targeting whereby individuals must apply for assistance or self-select for activities; statistical methods such as proxy means tests. Often a mixed methods approach is most appropriate. Regardless of the approach used, the participation throughout the targeting process of intended beneficiaries is crucial.

Double nexus and tension fields

Working in the double nexus can present tension fields between practitioners from respectively the humanitarian and development sector. Being conscious and pro-active in addressing such tension fields is therefore crucial in humanitarian responses. As examples, practitioners must reflect on:

- how to strengthen advocacy and voice in humanitarian response programmes while continuing to observe principles of impartiality and neutrality
- how to use or adopt the right-based language in contexts where refugees and forcibly displaced people are not recognized by governments
- how development sector principles and approaches for right to information, transparency, inclusion, participation and accountability may be combined with humanitarian principles and core humanitarian standards.

2.2.2. Design[15]

Participatory and community-led humanitarian response programming

In contrast to traditional development programmes, the routine and systematic use of participatory approaches is less common in humanitarian responses. Factors that tend to limit their use of participatory methodology include the need to move quickly in emergencies to save lives. It is often claimed that since participation takes time, it is a luxury that is ill-affordable in the face of emergencies; the skills and profiles of humanitarian relief workers; vertical command structures found in many humanitarian and relief organizations; internal procedures, e.g. planning and budgeting cycles often limited to one year; donor humanitarian/relief assistance policies which often have short time horizons; the fact that local institutions are destroyed or weakened by the emergency itself, and are often side-lined by the process of providing emergency assistance; and the practice of viewing emergencies as sudden and dramatic events rather than as events with long gestation periods, of which the emergency is just a symptom.

15 Most elements listed under this section might be also used in the next section (implementation) and during other phases of the project cycle.

However, community-based participatory approaches when applied to protracted crises can make interventions more effective, less wasteful, and more supportive of local institutions than externally-designed and managed programmes. Participatory community approaches in humanitarian responses are concerned with affected communities' involvement in decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and the sharing of responsibilities. It increases control over resources and institutions by groups who would hitherto have been excluded and it enhances ownership and self-reliance. It is based on dialogue between various stakeholders, whereby the agenda is jointly set, and local views and knowledge are deliberately sought and respected. A plethora of tools and approaches are available to support participatory and community-led humanitarian response programming such as: Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) which is a participatory approach/method, which focuses on local knowledge and promotes communities doing their own appraisal, analysis and planning; Participatory Action Research (PAR) which emphasizes the importance of inclusive, participatory, locally owned, driven and led processes of understanding phenomena such as the analysis of the drivers of violent conflict and factors of resilience.

Conflict-sensitive programming

As outlined in section 2.2.1., the first step in HELVETAS' 3-steps guide for Conflict Sensitive Programme Management is about understanding the conflict context. The second step is about understanding the interaction between the intervention and the conflict. Based on these two steps, the third step is to take "**strategic decisions for programme and project management**": Based on the factors which are creating tensions or are having a positive impact on the humanitarian context that have been identified, strategic management choices have to be made.

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Protection mainstreaming and programming (including GBV)

Building on the protection analysis, protection mainstreaming implies incorporating protection principles and promoting meaningful access, safety and dignity in humanitarian aid. Protection mainstreaming refers to upholding Protection Principles 1 and 2 from the 2018 Sphere Guidelines. Integrating protection in the design of activities enables the project to ensure that protection risks and potential violations are taken into consideration. To do so, according to the Global Protection Cluster, the following elements must be taken into account in all humanitarian activities:[16]

1. Prioritize safety & dignity and avoid causing harm: Prevent and minimize as much as possible any unintended negative effects of your intervention which can increase people's vulnerability to both physical and psychosocial risks.
2. Meaningful access: Arrange for people's access to assistance and services – in proportion to need and without any barriers (e.g. discrimination, harassment, sexual and gender-based violence). Pay special attention to individuals and groups who may be particularly vulnerable or have difficulty accessing assistance and services.
3. Accountability: Set-up appropriate mechanisms through which affected populations can measure the adequacy of interventions, and address concerns and complaints.
4. Participation and empowerment: Support the development of self-protection capacities and assist people to claim their rights, including – not exclusively – the rights to shelter, food, water and sanitation, health, and education.

Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) or, more broadly, GBV is one of the main and most systematic protection risks worldwide. GBV mainstreaming stands for integrating GBV aspects into programming, in particular to minimize and mitigate the risks of SGBV in a sectoral response (i.e. make sure that water facilities are safely accessible for adolescent girls collecting water; provide locks for shelter, etc.), GBV mainstreaming is not only a goal in itself but also contributes to better outcomes in sectoral response as a whole. For example, a food distribution is more effective when men and women feel safe accessing it; girls and boys attend school because the schooling environment does not expose them to GBV.[17]

GSE (Gender & Social Equity) responsive programming

When women and men are included equally in humanitarian action, their entire affected community benefits. As members of crisis-affected communities, women as well as men are among the first responders and play a central role in the survival and resilience of their families and communities. As such, their inputs into identifying humanitarian needs and potential solutions are crucial in formulating any response. Local women's groups, youth, differently abled persons and LGBTQI groups, where they are active, are often well placed to mobilize change, identify solutions and respond to crises in ways that can help to combat gender and social inequalities and barriers to inclusion. The integration of gender into humanitarian programming helps to ensure that the particular needs, capacities and priorities of women, girls, men and boys are recognized and addressed. Achieving gender equality and promoting women's empowerment in humanitarian action ensure that the response is equitable, and both establishes and protects the human rights and fundamental rights of all persons. Gender equality programming contributes to realizing the right to meaningful and relevant participation (including by girls and boys and older men and women), affords protection, increases access to assistance and self-reliance and promotes transformative change. It also leads to better quality and more effective humanitarian outcomes for individuals, households and communities.

Establishing coordination linkages to UN Clusters and other actors

For HELVETAS it is important to ensure that our humanitarian actions complement those of national and local authorities and other humanitarian organisations. Through the UN cluster approach it is consequently essential to a) participate in relevant coordination bodies and collaborate with others in order to minimise demands on communities and maximise the coverage and service provision of the wider humanitarian effort and b) share necessary information with partners, coordination groups and other relevant actors through appropriate communication channels. The aim of the UN cluster approach is to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies and provide clear leadership and accountability in the main areas of humanitarian response. It aims to strengthen partnerships, and the predictability and

16 Global Protection Cluster, Protection Mainstreaming.

17 according to the IASC Guidelines for integrating GBV in humanitarian action from 2015

accountability of international humanitarian action, by improving prioritization and clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of humanitarian organizations. It achieves this by:

- Supporting service delivery by providing a platform for agreement on approaches and elimination of duplication;
- Informing strategic decision-making for the humanitarian response through coordination of needs assessment, gap analysis and prioritization;
- Planning and strategy development including sectoral plans, adherence to standards and funding needs;
- Advocacy to address identified concerns on behalf of cluster participants and the affected population;
- Monitoring and reporting on the cluster strategy and results; recommending corrective action where necessary;
- Contingency planning/preparedness/national capacity building where needed and where capacity exists within the cluster.

2.2.3.Implementation

Supporting representative and inclusive community structures

Meaningful and genuine participation of affected communities, IDPs and refugees in decisions impacting all aspects of their lives is essential in helping them to regain their dignity, foster civic engagement and play a leading role in change. Engagement with these groups also facilitates the identification of the most serious protection risks; explores their causes and effects; and enables decisions to be made jointly on how to prevent and respond to them. Thus, supporting **representative and inclusive community structures** strengthens delivery of assistance, encourages ownership and responsibility amongst affected communities, refugees, IDPs, and promotes sustainability of interventions by capitalizing on their inherent capacities. Community representation is a core activity of the site management (SM) Sector, often in coordination with the protection sector. Whereas specific guidelines (and election procedures) for community representation structures always have to be developed based on the particular context and uniqueness of the humanitarian response, the following collective responsibilities for community representatives apply:

- Participating in participatory assessments of needs and gaps, and raising specific concerns with relevant actors;
- Ensuring that affected communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements and have access to information,
- Ensuring inclusion and promoting the right to equal access, participation and security of persons without discrimination,
- Supporting the meaningful participation and decision-making abilities of women,
- Mobilizing and engaging the affected community on important issues, including services and facilities for protection, education, health, food security, WASH, basic site safety and emergency preparedness for natural disasters,
- Sharing information with the community around distributions, cash-for-work, selection criteria/targeting, and available services,
- Promoting community understanding of essential services, and referring people to existing complaints and feedback mechanisms,
- Strengthening information sharing and communication channels thus contributing to transparency and accountability mechanisms and supporting efforts to mitigate exploitation, fraud and corruption in the delivery of assistance,
- Encouraging affected communities and people to provide feedback on their level of satisfaction with the quality and effectiveness of the assistance received.

Establishing information and communication systems

Information is a right and can be lifesaving in itself. Having **access to information** is essential for affected communities to be able to participate in transparent decision-making and hold humanitarian agencies to account. Having effective ways to share information with communities and to facilitate two-way communication between communities and aid agencies (and other stakeholders) is an important starting point for **accountability. Sharing information** in itself does not equal participation – it is an important step, but it is important to move beyond simply providing information. Meaningful participation is supported when people have a say in deciding what information they want and can engage in a dialogue. Access to information and well-functioning channels of communication is a necessary means to provide awareness to empower and to educate in a way that it enables affected people to understand and advocate for their rights. This includes:

- Informing people of their rights and entitlements, for example in relation to return and resettlement options;
- Working with specialised organisations providing legal aid to inform people of their rights under the laws and regulations of the country;
- Providing information in languages that affected

people can understand;
- Using multiple formats (such as written, graphic or audio) to make information as widely accessible and culturally appropriate as possible;
- Testing message comprehension with different groups, considering variations in age, gender, education level and mother tongue.

The potential **means of communication** are multiple such as: transparency boards; posters and leaflets on community rights; arts and culture as means of information and expression; radio and radio listener groups; and social media.

Fostering financial literacy for budget analysis

The Core Humanitarian Standards highlight that "communities and people affected by crisis can expect that the organisations assisting them are managing resources effectively, efficiently and ethically". Yet, **access to financial information and financial accountability** is an aspect that is often missing in humanitarian responses. To really hand over power to communities and ensure their effective participation throughout the process, it is essential that they have access to accurate and accessible information about the budget and budget execution for the humanitarian response. They should ideally have a role in deciding how it is allocated and monitoring how the money is spent. This is often the most problematic and challenging area of accountability in emergencies, but one where there is the most potential to shift power relations, lay the foundations for longer term change and help communities hold other stakeholders to account. Affected populations have a right to know how much money is being spent in their community, where it comes from, and how it is being used. This **transparency about budget allocations** is the first step in empowering communities to scrutinise the way money has been spent. Budgets should be displayed in accessible public places. The main aspects of **financial literacy** and accountability include:

- Sharing project budget information and funding sources with communities;
- Supporting communities to understand and analyse budget information;
- Sharing copies of bills and vouchers for public scrutiny;
- Establishing community vigilance or watchdog committees,
- Involving communities in the procurement process (identifying needs, selecting samples, choosing suppliers, verifying products),
- Sharing executed budgets.

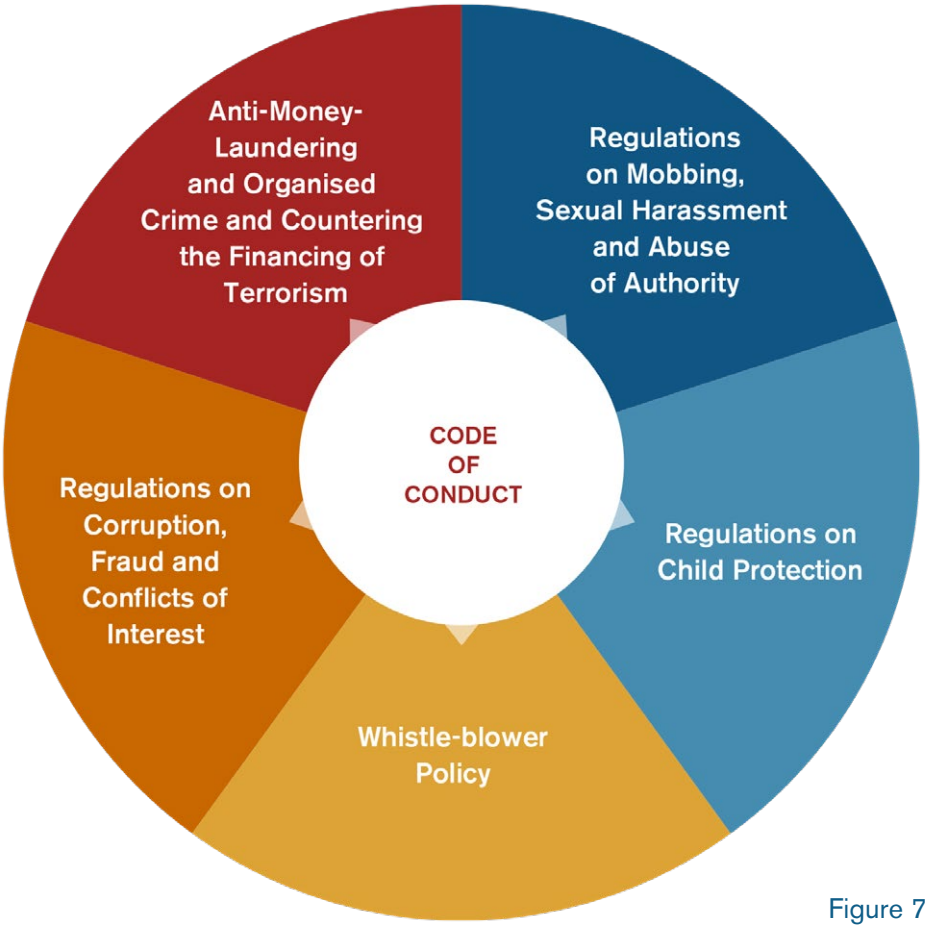

Figure 7: HELVETAS Code of Conduct

Setting up complaint mechanisms

Affected communities have a right to complain, if there are problems, and to have those complaints taken seriously and addressed. **Feedback** and **complaints** help to improve humanitarian programmes, yet there is a difference between the two. Feedback can be general comments or suggestions about a programme that help to improve the design, adjust implementation or learn lessons for future response. It can be both positive and negative. Complaints, on the other hand, are specific problems that people want to raise and which require specific responses. Complaints can include serious issues, such as financial corruption, sexual exploitation and abuse, and must be taken seriously. Often, feedback and complaints will need to be handled differently. In some cultures, people may feel comfortable giving feedback collectively in public forums, but individuals with sensitive complaints to raise would need access to confidential channels. It is therefore necessary in each different context to consult with communities and people affected by crisis on the design, implementation and monitoring of complaints-handling processes.

A key part of accountability is for humanitarian actors to open up to scrutiny and accept that we won't get it right all the time. In order for complaint mechanisms to be used effectively, people need to be aware of their rights and understand the standards that humanitarian organisations can be held accountable to. HELVETAS has a Code of Conduct and regulatory framework that has to be adhered to at all times. Depending on the context, different complaints mechanisms can be considered, including complaints and suggestion boxes; SMS incident reporting; hotlines; community help desk; and community grievance committees.

Advocating for fulfilment of rights and needs

One of the four protection principles stresses the importance of supporting affected people to assert their rights and to access remedies from government or other sources. It equally stresses the importance of assisting people to secure the documentation they need to demonstrate their entitlements. Advocacy is nevertheless a longer-term process and is best introduced once the initial phase of the emergency response is over. It can be a way to link the accountability implementation stage with the monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning stage of the humanitarian response programme cycle. The advocacy efforts can take many shapes and forms as shown below, but for all instances, advocacy efforts

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have to be conflict sensitive through e.g.:

- Public hearings and people's assemblies;
- Presenting community needs and complaints at UN cluster meetings;
- Citizens' reports, which is a process of documenting people's views and priorities around a particular issue, which is then used as a basis for community-led advocacy and campaigning;
- Mutual accountability processes, as described in the MEAL section 2.2.4.

Fostering social cohesion through arts & culture and independent media engagement

VIC aims to foster social cohesion in affected communities and between affected people, including internally displaced persons/forcibly displaced persons and host communities, thereby contributing to a pluralistic, inclusive and peaceful society through intercultural dialogue, independent and objective

media reporting, non-discrimination and respect for diversity. HELVETAS' pluralism toolbox provides examples of our experiences and lessons learned from development projects using arts & culture for reconciliation, transformational change and social cohesion. A common approach towards fostering social cohesion is to **create and facilitate safe, neutral spaces for dialogue through arts and culture.**

Local CSOs working with artists, cultural professionals, as well as their associations and networks, are therefore essential stakeholders in humanitarian responses. Local CSOs are more likely to succeed in these endeavors with the involvement of **opinion leaders** promoting pluralism and social inclusion such as faith, religious, and community leaders; teachers; scholars; media professionals and other duty bearers such as local authorities. It is challenging to tackle existing social exclusion rooted in traditional norms, beliefs, customs and practices but joint efforts of local CSOs, artists and cultural professionals as well as opinion leaders promoting pluralism and social inclusion can overcome these challenges and have a positive impact towards a more inclusive society. Some of HELVETAS' tested tools and approaches include:

Open History initiatives. Different generations and different groups in a society with their different circumstances, differ in their ideas, their habits, their norms, even their feelings. Every time a gap opens between groups, they may blame each other, and the gaps remain. A society, in order to live in harmony, requires its members to connect with, learn about and respect each other, irrespective of different backgrounds. Living in the same area does not necessarily mean harmonious co-existence. It is normal that people have different histories and different circumstances. These differences should not lead to breakdown of society. The participatory and artistic process of creating an Open History Exhibition invites participants and visitors to reflect on their memories, identities, and to exchange with others. This allows them to connect with each other and to build mutual understanding and respect.

Arts & crafts workshops present spaces where people come together to make art and learn how to make it. One can learn, for example, how to paint with watercolours and how to mix the colours with each other, how to make paper cuttings, how to fold origami figures or how to construct clay sculptures. Since the art is free and there are no limits, the ideas that can be realized are also countless. Together the group can also plan an exhibition and invite art lovers and other interested people to participate. Such workshops can provide a safe space, e.g. for children and youth from different backgrounds to experience the world of creativity. The emphasis is on ensuring that all participants do art always together and never alone. Through this, all of them get to know each other, make art together and can thus overcome possibly existing stereotypes. In this way, arts & crafts workshops can contribute to social cohesion and a pluralistic society.

Community dance & theatre has always been an important part of people's lives, giving them the opportunity to meet each other, to enjoy the beauty of the moment to express themselves and to address community needs and challenges. Participants with different cultural backgrounds are given a physically and emotionally safe space throughout the process and receive coaching and psychosocial support. Emphasis is placed on making all decisions together, e.g. the style of dancing or language in which the theatre is performed. During the process, the participants learn how important critical thinking and collective decision-making are in order to contribute to social cohesion and a pluralistic society. These tools can also be strong applied in advocacy efforts, as critical issues are approached constructively, and joint solutions are proposed.

Working with **independent media and journalists** is equally critical to foster social cohesion. Affected people need trusted information to understand the world around them, engage in conversations with their host communities and leaders, make decisions, and act to improve their lives. Strong independent media and investigative journalists are critical for ensuring objective reporting that presents facts, debunks fake news and infodemics that negatively portray refugees and IDPs. Some of the key interventions to be considered in humanitarian responses include:

- Training of investigative journalists to better understand the complexity of humanitarian responses so they can report objectively and accurately;
- Raising awareness of data protection issuesand the importance of carefully managing data;
- Supporting community radios to ensure that affected persons and host communities have access to impartial information including producing and broadcasting public service messages to affected people in local languages;
- Producing interactive media programs that promote multi-stakeholder dialogue and give voice to the affected population.

2.2.4.Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability & Learning (MEAL)[18]

Community-led MEAL processes

Humanitarian actors are increasingly encouraging community participation in programme design and implementation. However, the role of affected communities in monitoring and evaluating humanitarian response programmes is often given less attention. Nevertheless, it is critical to ensure that the perspectives of the people for whom the programme is designed are the strongest voices in determining whether it was successful, and what should be learned to make improvements in the future.

Community monitoring, evaluation and learning is a process where community members identify and track the progress of work carried out by humanitarian agencies, national governments, local authorities and others. The affected community may set their own indicators of success or anticipated changes, measuring, collecting, recording and analysing information and then communicating or acting on it to enhance performance and delivery. During emergencies, it may be difficult to put the full system in place, but some kind of feedback mechanism can be set up. For example, quality and quantity of relief services and facilities, the number of people reached, and timeliness of deliveries can still be monitored by existing social structures and institutions in communities and refugee camps. The real strength of community-led MEAL processes is that they people-led, and not driven by humanitarian agencies.

Community participation in MEAL processes should be planned from the beginning of the humanitarian response. Thus, when we are developing the MEAL framework in the programme design phase, we need to think about how participatory approaches can be integrated. This section describes tools and approaches that can be incorporated to strengthen community participation in MEAL processes of HELVETAS' humanitarian response programmes.

Baseline development

Many participatory tools can be adapted for developing baselines for humanitarian responses. If you are starting mid-way and do not have all the relevant baseline information, you can in some cases ask participants to create a map/calendar/tree, etc. to show what the situation looked like when the response started. This will not be as accurate as one created at the time but will give you a good idea of the changes that the participants feel have come about since the beginning.

Joint review and reflection and mutual accountability

Joint review and reflection processes help to create a democratic space for affected communities and other actors to assess whether chosen strategies and actions are working, how we can do them more effectively, or how to change them based on feedback from the community. In open meetings, communities and other stakeholders can use the processes to review information, including monitoring data, case studies, budgets, success stories, best practice, learning and challenges. Findings from joint review and reflection processes should inform changes or adaptations to the programme design and implementation, and feed into HELVETAS' reporting systems.

HELVETAS' MEAL processes also ensure that we are **accountable** to affected communities. Social audit is a process where affected community members review and scrutinise project progress and the use of funds. Humanitarian partners or community committee members will present to the wider community what has been done, reporting against the commitments that

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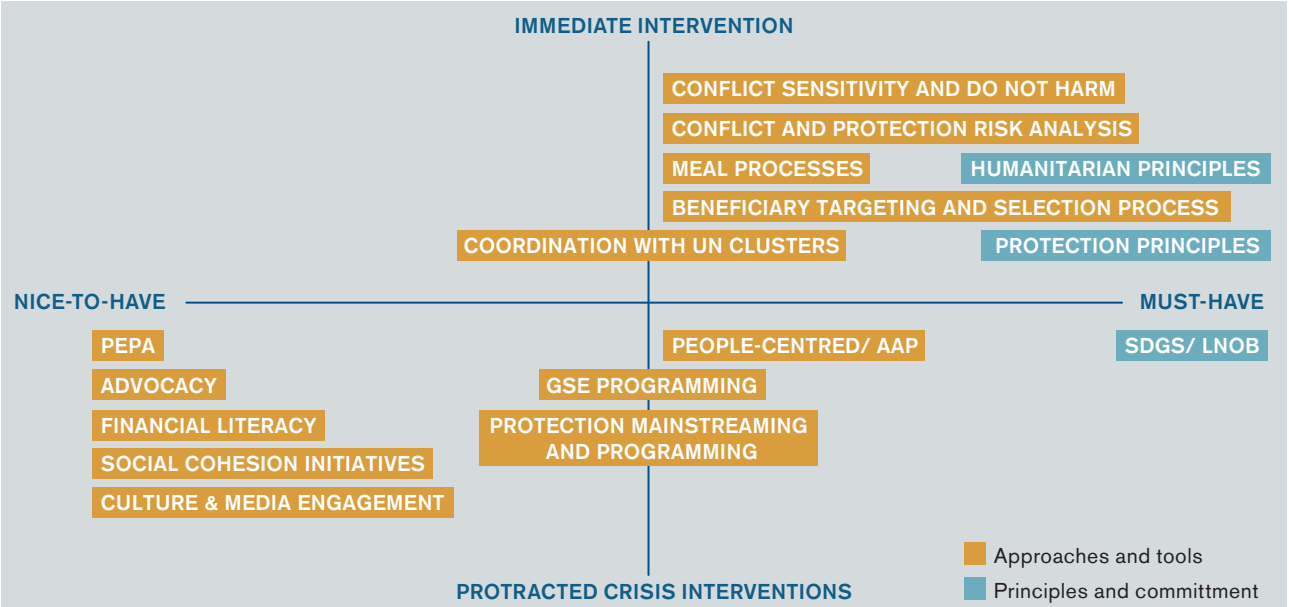
18 The different analysis and assessments mentioned above (e.g. CSPM, protection risk analysis) are ongoing throughout the humanitarian response programme cycle and should be regularly repeated.



The differentiations are only meant as a – subjective – orientation since there is no blueprint solution for which tools, approaches and interventions to apply when. It all depends on the specific context as well as the nature of the humanitarian reponse and the specific needs. However, one should take note of the must-haves which are derived from humanitarian principles and other commitments adopted by United Nations Member States

Figure 8: Differential application of tools and approaches in immediate responses and protracted crises

were shared publicly through transparency boards and other mechanisms. They also share supporting documents and financial records, which community members are encouraged to review and challenge where necessary. Not only being a tool to track progress in HELVETAS' programmes, it can also be used to track local authorities and other humanitarian actors' performance against their commitments. Community score cards are a similar participatory tool for affected people to assess the services that are supposed to be provided in their communities. Score cards can be used to evaluate projects HELVETAS is implementing in emergencies. They could equally be applied in a post-disaster context to monitor government disaster response and recovery programmes, or the implementation of disaster management and disaster risk reduction policies.

Capitalisation of knowledge & learning

HELVETAS is an international organisation that puts knowledge, learning and innovation at the centre of our interventions. As a relatively recent actor in the humanitarian-development nexus it is even more pivotal for the organisation to harvest and capitalize the accumulated knowledge and lessons learned so that our humanitarian responses can continuously adapt, and innovate. In addition to monitoring reports, reviews and evaluations a myriad of effective ways exists to capture knowledge and lessons earned including video diaries; recorded testimonies; podcasts; stories of change; and case studies.

2.3. VIC Team Profile and Advisory Services

The VIC team (VIC@helvetas.org) comprises 10 international experts that are committed to work closely with and develop capacities of country programmes and partners to strengthen HELVETAS' engagement in humanitarian responses either through direct short-term deployment or remote provision of advisory support. The thematic expertise and relevant approaches offered by the team include:

VIC Advisory Services in Humanitarian Response

- Conflict Sensitive Program Management
- Political Economy & Power Analysis
- Gender & Social Equity Assessment
- Right-based Advocacy
- Social Dialogue & -Audits
- Arts & Culture for Social Cohesion
- Feasibility Analysis
- Protection Risk Analysis
- Stakeholder Analysis
- Community Needs Assessment
- Participatory Community Planning & Budgeting
- Reviews & Evaluations
- Case Studies & Stories of Change

Figure 9: VIC Advisory Services in Humanitarian Response

3. CASE STUDY OF VIC RELEVANCE

3.1 Bangladesh: Cox's Bazar

The HELVETAS experience in Cox's Bazar is a typical example of a protracted crisis which highlights the need to have a holistic approach, including interventions addressing multiples challenges in terms of social cohesion, inclusion, accountability and participation.

In 2019 Bangladesh hosted a total of 911,113 refugees in Cox Bazar.[18] Until the Rohingya refugees can safely return back home, HELVETAS is in partnership with the Government of Bangladesh, UN agencies and other humanitarian actors committed to addressing the multiple needs of the refugees and their host communities.

The 2017 influx of Rohingya refugees caused a desperate need to organize over 700,000 arrivals in Cox's Bazar over a short period of time. The 'majhi system' was therefore established as an emergency response arrangement in August 2017 to: estimate the refugee population; identify immediate survival needs; and link the Rohingya refugees with emergency assistance from various providers. The majhi system was established without the participation of the Rohingya communities and it consequently lacked any **representation** of, and **accountability** towards, them. The credibility and trust towards majhis wa low because they are not traditional leaders or elders from the Rohingya communities. Majhis were therefore not necessarily respected members of the community, nor did they reflect the age, gender and diversity composition of the Rohingya refugee population. Nevertheless over time the majhis increasingly became the default focal points for Camps in Charge and humanitarian 'engagement' with the refugee community.

Although the majhi system was convenient and efficient in its relief operations, it has has increasingly been criticized for a lack of accountability, corruption and abuse of power. That voice, inclusion & cohesion is relevant in the response to the Rohingya refugee crisis has been reinforced by several assessment reports of which some (Christian Aid) conclude that the current accountability systems are largely ineffective, i.e. there is an overreliance on complaint boxes and phone lines that are the least preferred and least trusted mechanisms and are generally unused. Only 16% of women and 25% of men are aware of any feedback and complaints mechanism. Thus, accountability is about more than rolling out systems, it also requires significant orientation for frontline humanitarian workers, volunteers and Rohingya communities. Women and men have very different attitudes towards accountability. Women indicate a substantially higher demand for feedback possibilities and different preferences for accountability mechanisms than men. Women's already distinct vulnerabilities in the camps are compounded by ineffective accountability mechanisms. The low levels of Rohingya literacy, language differences and cultural norms that restrict many women from public space are some of the main challenges for ensuring effective accountability mechanisms. Both women and men indicated preferences for verbal and face-to-face mechanisms, such as meeting with individuals and using voice recorders. Only 27% of women and 17% of men report that they understand their rights related to humanitarian assistance. Across many other specific rights' areas, women and men report varying, but generally low understanding of their rights. Finally, Rohingya refugees generally feel assistance is appropriate (although women less so than men), but people largely feel it is not timely and they lack influence in decision making. 39% of women and 54% of men feel they had no influence at all in decision making.

While in October 2018 there was a clear divide in perceptions between Rohingya and Bangladeshi communities on issues of **social cohesion,** with Rohingya viewing the relationship quite positively and Bangladeshis quite negatively, the divide has since lessened. Previously, 72% of Rohingya felt welcomed by the host community; now 64% feel that way. While Rohingya communities are slightly more negative, responses among Bangladeshis have become more positive. In October 2018, only 20% of those surveyed thought Bangladeshis in their area were welcoming towards Rohingya, jumping to 44% in April 2019. There is a slight geographical difference in Rohingya responses, with 72% of Rohingya surveyed in Teknaf feeling welcomed by locals, compared to 63% in Ukhia.

Rohingya views on harmony between the two communities have become more negative while views among Bangladeshis have improved. In October 2018, 61% of Rohingya and 30% of Bangladeshis

18 UNDP, Impacts of the Rohingya refugee influx on host communities, 2019

believed there was harmony between Rohingya and Bangladeshis, while in this round 45% of Rohingya and 42% of Bangladeshis said the two communities have a harmonious relationship. Both Rohingya and Bangladeshi respondents who do not think their communities have a harmonious relationship name competition for employment and livelihoods as the main source of tension. Rohingya also name restrictions on their right to work in the local economy as a source of tension, while host community respondents point to Rohingya unofficially working in the local economy as straining the relationship. 47% of Bangladeshis who believe there is a lack of employment opportunities believe it is because Rohingya are willing to work for less money and are getting the jobs in the area (Needs and outlook bulletin). This issue was also discussed by a host community audience on the radio programme Betar Sanglap, where they explained that while local labourers demand a daily wage of BDT 400-500, Rohingya are willing to work for BDT 200-300. Bangladeshis also report that while their income has decreased, the cost of food, medicine, transport and education has seen a sharp increase since the influx of Rohingya. There are reports of attempts to counteract the negative effects on local markets, with Rohingyas claiming that local police have shut down small shops and markets that have sprung up around the camps to ensure that people shop at the host community leader's market. Although cultural differences are also cited as a source of tension, Rohingya and Bangladeshis who believe the relationship between the two communities is harmonious both point to shared religion as the main factor facilitating good relations. Rohingya also cite the hospitality of locals while Bangladeshi respondents consider the social bonds between the communities, including friendships and marriages, as key to facilitating a harmonious relationship.

There is still a sense among Bangladeshi respondents that they should be receiving aid and services similar to what is provided for Rohingya communities. When asked what they believe could improve relations with the Rohingya communities, Bangladeshi respondents called for increased support from NGOs and the government as well as for more job opportunities. Rohingya surveyed remain more open to establishing social ties than Bangladeshis living in or near the camps, with 73% of Rohingya saying they would like to have the opportunity to meet with and talk to locals, compared to only 34% of Bangladeshis surveyed who would like to meet with and talk to Rohingya. While this willingness among Rohingya has remained consistent since October 2018, there has been a decline in that of Bangladeshis, where previously 43% had been open to socialising. Male Rohingya respondents are more open to the idea of meeting and talking to locals than female Rohingya respondents. Among Bangladeshis surveyed, those who regularly come into contact with humanitarian organisations are more open to socialising with Rohingya (43%) than those who have little contact with humanitarian organisations (31%).

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There is more that aid providers could do to support local communities directly. Not only would this improve their lives, but it would also help reduce resentment at the perceived inequality of current distributions. That said, the issues of social cohesion cannot be addressed by simply increasing service provision among Bangladeshis, and more direct attempts to tackle the issues head-on are needed. Moreover, given the obvious long-term nature of the crisis, there is an imperative to start tackling issues around social cohesion quickly. Should relations significantly deteriorate, it would be much harder to make any progress in fostering a harmonious relationship between the two communities. Agencies should consider what might be the shared social interests that could bring both communities together in a way that could foster more positive relations. It is already clear that the shared religion is an opportunity to bring people together around a common identity, but perhaps other activities could be done too. For example, involving both Rohingya and Bangladeshis in sporting events or art and culture could reduce the perceived notion of cultural differences, which acts as a barrier to positive engagement. Given the shared demand for economic opportunities, consider doing more joint programming, which could perhaps include joint vocational classes or cash for work schemes that both groups can participate in together. This has the advantage of not only bringing the two communities together, but it does so in a way that also addresses some of their shared and pressing concerns.

3.2 Covid-19 impact on vulnerable communities in Nepal

The recent HELVETAS experiences in Nepal are good examples of short-term responses which highlight the relevance of VIC tools and approaches in a humanitarian context – both stand-alone and mainstreamed. This relevance is illustrated by a people-centred approach which promotes meaningful participation, inclusive process and accountability to affected populations (AAP).

The example relates to the Covid-19 crisis in Nepal when the Government imposed lockdown to reduce/control the wide spread of the virus. Restrictions on the movement of people and commodities have affected all aspects of life, from the ability to earn a living, attend school, purchase food and medicines, and provide access to health services. Men, women, children and elderly in the marginalized community who rely on daily wage for living, suffered the most.

Helvetas with its partners supported affected vulnerable communities (Dome, Musahar and Chamar Community of Kshireshwornath Municipality, Province-2) through unconditional cash transfer.

The most significant impact of the Covid-19 in this community was on daily wage labour. The affected households were unable to continue wage labor due to restriction in mobility i.e., lock down, enforced provision of isolation or quarantine if Covid-19 test were positive or if symptoms had been suspected. More than two-thirds of the households had lost their daily wages labor job, 13% migrants had lost their jobs and had to return home. Loss of daily wage labour – the only household income source – resulted in more vulnerability and risks.

The baseline assessment identified the four topmost immediate needs: food needs; medicine needs; loan payment or repayment of amount borrowed from local elites; and investment of fund to revive or start up some livelihood means (e.g. micro enterprising-farm and off farm) as an alternative to daily wage labor.

The Helvetas intervention was successful in decentralizing and localizing the decision-making process. The identification of beneficiaries by ward level mechanism led by elected ward chair enabled to better assess needs and target beneficiaries, minimize conflicts and increase ownership by partners and government system. Furthermore, complaints and feedbacks were handled locally through the Mayor (Municipality) which led the grievance handling committees. More generally, the intervention established open and community centric communication policies. Communities were encouraged to put their concerns, need, interest and risk to whoever they access immediately (e.g. ward chair, bank staff, project staff) and these concerns were conveyed across the concerned partner. This channel has helped each partner to understand the need of the communities and act upon it immediately. This communication mechanism facilitated immediate identification of need, interest and risk of each household, easy communication for the communities.

In addition, the intervention enabled to empower beneficiaries, in particular women, by opening bank accounts – even for people who lacked complete legal documentation. This allowed to bring these households into the formal financial mechanism and potential to continue such accounts for their own business and other cash transfer supports (both government and non-government sector support). This also allowed to significantly increase the participation of women in household decision-making process.

In summary this humanitarian response was able to meet most of the commitment of the humanitarian standard thanks to the commitment of partners, a transparent and decentralized decision-making process, a better targeting and decentralized grievance handling mechanism. The local government's effort in this whole process was considered very successful. Mostly the ward chair's and ward members' roles were crucial in identifying households, finalizing beneficiary list, account opening of households who did not have citizenship and addressing grievances. This process has contributed in improving accountability and the governance in local government – since these elected ward chairs were accountable to their voters. Therefore, making local elects and government more responsible and accountable is one of the strengths of this process, which has been reflected through focused group discussion, key informants' interviews and observation of the field level evidences. This experience illustrates the importance of a people-centred approach through the promotion of local governance mechanisms.

5. REFERENCES

Online Resources

Code of Conduct (HELVETAS)
Conflict Sensitive Programme Management (CSPM) (HELVETAS Guide)
Community-based targeting in the Social Protection sector
Community score cards
Complaints mechanisms - Overview of NGO – Community Complaints Mechanisms
Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action
Global Protection Cluster (GPC) website (with the 2020-2024 strategic framework, sitrep, tools, etc.)
Humanitarian Charter | Sphere Standards
Humanitarian principles
IASC Guidelines for integrating GBV in humanitarian action
IASC statement and policy on the centrality of protection
IASC framework on durable solutions for IDPs
ICRC Professional Standards for Protection Work
Participatory Action Research
Participatory Rural Appraisal
PEPA manual
Pluralism toolbox (HELVETAS)
Protection mainstreaming
Protection risk analysis
Risk analysis
Social audit
Sphere Handbook
UNHCR/ WFP Joint Principles for Targeting Assistance to meet food and other basic needs to persons of concern
USAID Beneficiary Targeting and Verification Guide for FFP Emergency Food Security Activities
WFP Community-Based Targeting Guide

General information and trends

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration Webpage
Global Compact on Refugees Webpage
Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2021 - Development Initiatives
Global Humanitarian Overview 2022 | Global Humanitarian Overview
Grand Bargain
UN cluster approach

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