Protection Definitions

Protection addresses specific needs that arise in a variety of situations that involve humanitarian response, including: 1. Armed conflict (response), 2. Post conflict recovery, 3. Natural disasters (both during and in recovery), 4. Famine, and 5. Protracted social conflict that involves longer-term, culturally embedded discrimination, violence, impoverishment, and exploitation[1]. While more scenarios may exist, these represent the bulk of humanitarian action where protection risks occur and needs arise. Protection work focuses on **addressing and mitigating** existing protection risks to ensure people can live safely and without the risk of harm to the greatest extent possible. Protection work responds to the needs of those who have been exposed to protection risks. Protection also recognizes that people are always key actors in their own protection and therefore, people's ability and opportunity to organize and respond to needs for themselves is, and always will be, a critical aspect of Protection programming. Good Protection programming supports and works with communities to achieve their protection needs through their identified priorities and responses. Protection work is holistic only when it includes response programming, prevention programming, risk mitigation and environment building to reduce the existence of risks and threats, increase respect for human rights, and create communities that are more aware of and committed to upholding human rights for all.

Protection is **rights-based** through binding international laws and conventions. Rights-based protection is defined by the ICRC as:

> *all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law, i.e. human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law. Human rights and humanitarian organizations must conduct these activities in an impartial manner and not on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, language, or gender[2]".*

Protection recognizes that all people have fundamental rights, including the right to life, to due process of law, to freedom of religion and thought, to freedom from torture, slavery, and inhuman treatment and punishment. Ensuring these rights in emergency settings requires humanitarian organizations engage and uphold specific protection responsibilities no matter their programming focus. CARE seeks to ensure all of our Protection programming is both rights-based and **needs-based** at the same time—ensuring we understand and can address the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations in ways that are always grounded in **rights-based approaches**.

Above all, Protection programming seeks to ensure that humanitarian programming operates from a **Do No Harm** approach: Humanitarian action must be implemented in conjunction with efforts to identify and take measures to prevent any potential and actual unintended negative impacts or effects in timely and systematic ways[3]. Humanitarians must ensure that people's safety, security, dignity and rights are upheld throughout programming and that programming does not damage or limit livelihoods, the local economy, the environment, relationships, etc. Finally, all humanitarian programming must make every effort to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by staff and quickly and effectively investigate any reported incidents.

CARE's Protection Responsibilities:

CARE's protection responsibilities vary across sectors, but every member of the CARE team has protection responsibilities in humanitarian action. CARE members' protection responsibilities fall under either specific and specialized protection activities[4] or Centrality of Protection actions. In upholding Centrality of protection, cross-cutting protection responsibilities include protection mainstreaming actions, information sharing and protection integration. At CARE, the largest piece of specific protection activities is GBV and GBViE programming, followed by more general Protection programming like access to Legal Aid, community-based protection programming, and Protection Case Management. CARE has some additional child protection programming, largely focused on child protection risk mitigation and Child-friendly spaces. All other sectors at CARE uphold the centrality of protection through Protection Mainstreaming and/or protection integration. Protection mainstreaming encompasses using a protection lens in the day-to-day operations of sector work, designing and implementing programs so that protection risks are considered and minimized, and uses protection analysis to understand who is at risk from what and how programming action can potentially increase risks or mitigate them. Protection integration involves incorporating specific protection objectives into the programming of other sector-specific responses, for example, a WASH program that includes both hygiene and dignity kits with the objective of reducing high risk economic activities among women and girls. At CARE, some, but not all programs include protection integration. However, all sector specific programming should include protection mainstreaming.

Risk assessment and analysis: Protection risk assessments, analysis and rapid gender analysis are bedrocks for and inform both Protection programming activities and Centrality of Protection activities.

Gender-based Violence (GBV)/Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG): CARE's largest protection programming, encompassing GBV Response, Prevention and Risk Mitigation activities.

PROTECTION IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION
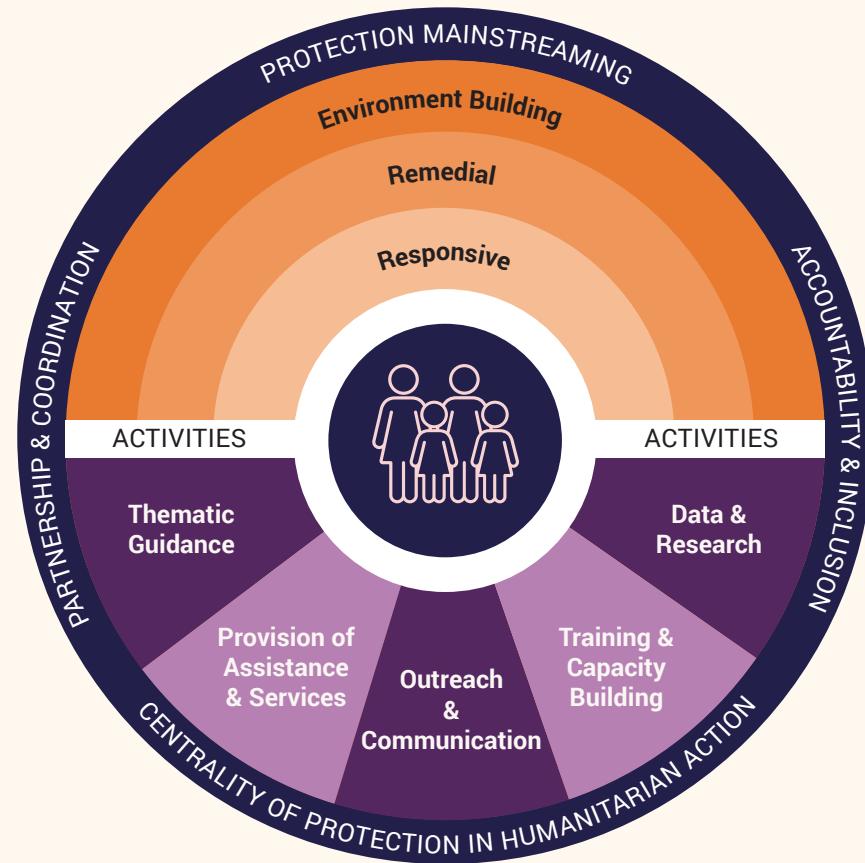
Adapted from the IOM PiHUA graphic

Protection/Rule of Law: CARE's protection work largely focuses on Protection Risk Analysis, Protection Monitoring, awareness raising, and to a lesser extent, provision of legal aid.

Child Protection: CARE's Child Protection is primarily focused on CP Risk Mitigation, followed by response services like Child Friendly Spaces and prevention services like community learning and engagement activities.

Protection Definitions[5]:

When discussing 'protection' writ large, we are referring to actions taken to reduce threats, reduce vulnerabilities, and increase capacities of affected populations and individuals.

RISK EQUATION

Adapted from the InterAction graphic

As a concept, protection refers to effective ways to maintain **personal (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) safety**; efforts to preserving **individual and collective dignity** through ensuring freedom to move, to speak, to assemble, to associate; and ensure **integrity of individuals** with personal autonomy and respond to the diverse, individual needs of a person as a human being.

Other key definitions are listed below.

Capacity

The resources and capabilities available to individuals, groups, households, and communities to cope with threats, or to resist and/or mitigate the impact of threats. Resources can be material or can be created through ways in which community is organized. Capabilities include specific skills individuals or groups possess or learn and ability to access certain services and resources or move freely to a safer place.

Coercion

Forcing someone to do something against their will or presenting them with a false choice to get a desired outcome.

Centrality of Protection

All humanitarian actors have a responsibility to place protection at the center of humanitarian action and ensure that the protection of those affected and those at-risk informs humanitarian decision-making and response at all levels. There are six key elements to Centrality of Protection, linked here.

SIX KEY ELEMENTS OF THE CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION

01 HC is responsible for leading & coordinating organizations to design & deliver a humanitarian response

02 HCT must commit to share analysis on protection, & prioritize & contribute to collective efforts to enhance protection

03 Humanitarian actors should address protection issues that intersect with their formal mandates & sector-specific responsibilities

04 Humanitarian actors must engage collectively to achieve protection outcomes that reduce overall risks to persons by decreasing threats

05 The HC & HCT must mobilize other actors within & beyond the humanitarian system, as appropriate, to contribute to protection outcomes

06 Humanitarian actors must evaluate commitments and progress towards placing protection at the center of the humanitarian response

Deliberate deprivation

Intentional actions to prevent people from accessing necessary resources, goods, and/or services that they have the right to access.

Threat

A human activity or a product of human activity that results in a form of violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation. Threats can be a perpetrator, a policy, a cultural or ethnicity norm (that violates rights or discriminates against a group, or other factors deliberately causing harm.

Violence

Intentional use of physical force or power, the threat or actual use of, against oneself, another person, a group or community. Violence either results in or has a high likelihood of causing injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.

Protection Analysis

A process undertaken to identify protection risks with the aim of informing strategies and responses.

Protection risks

Actual or potential exposure of the affected population to threats (violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation). This includes both the extreme and increased levels of risk people are exposed to in these circumstances and the potentially harmful and exploitative coping and survival strategies they may engage to navigate these risks and meet their basic and most essential needs.

Protection Mainstreaming

The actions and process of integrating protection principles into all aspects of humanitarian aid and promoting meaningful access, safety and dignity in humanitarian aid.

Protection needs

Needs that arise when victims of violations are unable to defend their basic interests and no longer benefit from the basic respect they are entitled to from authorities and/or other actors in positions of power or control or on whom they depend. Protection needs result from threats, violations and deprivations to specific groups of people or entire communities[6] which impact groups differently depending on pre-existing vulnerabilities that are usually exacerbated when the crisis hits. The most severe risks and associated needs usually result from the intersected impact of deliberate personal violence, deprivation, and restricted access to movement and/or services.

Protection Outcomes

A reduction of the risk, including through improved fulfillment of rights and restitution, for survivors. Protection outcomes include reducing threats people face, reducing people's individual or collective vulnerabilities to threats, and enhancing or increasing their capacities.

Protection of Civilians

The cornerstone of humanitarian law—civilians must not be attacked and must be spared and protected during armed conflict. All parties to armed conflicts, including present peacekeeping missions, share a common responsibility to ensure that the civilian population is protected. Humanitarian action alone cannot protect civilians from armed conflict. Peacekeeping missions' responsibilities include contributing to security and ensuring secure environments for the provision of humanitarian assistance as part of their PoC role.

Protection from Sexual Harassment, Exploitation, and Abuse (PSHEA)

The acronym / term PSHEA is used specifically to refer to incidents of sexual misconduct committed by humanitarian workers against program participants and community members.

Safeguarding

The term 'Safeguarding' specifically responds to the measures that CARE takes to prevent, report and respond to harm or abuse, and to protect the health, well-being and human rights of anyone that comes into contact with CARE, whether it is a CARE employee, related personnel, partner, programme participant or community member. To learn more, please visit CARE's Global Safeguarding Page.
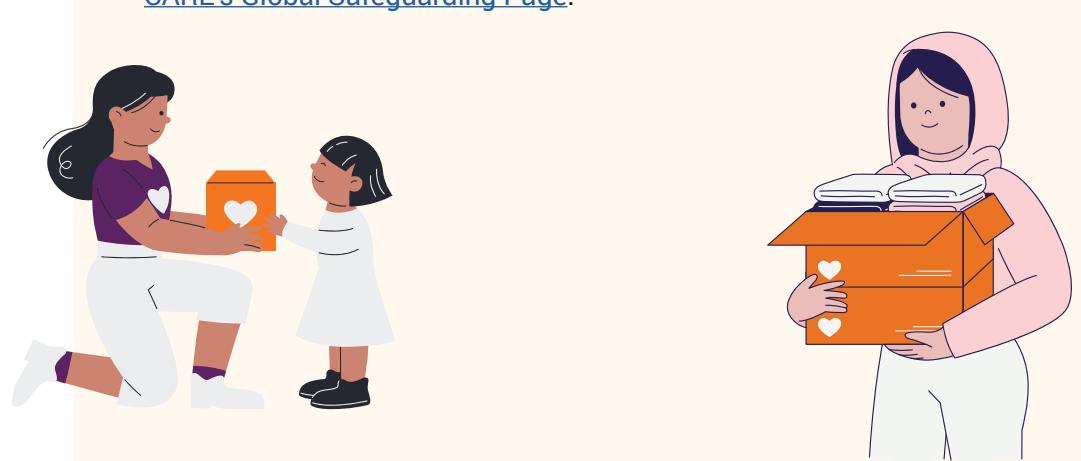
Protection at CARE:

COMMON PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS AT CARE

Legend:
- Everyone at CARE
- Protection Teams
- Education Teams
- GBV Teams
- Health Teams

Intervention	Description	Implementor(s)	Other considerations
Protection mainstreaming	The actions a specific sector takes to prioritize safety and dignity, avoid causing harm, and ensure meaningful access, participation, and accountability.	Cross-sectoral—Everyone at CARE	All sectors should be taking actions relevant to their own programming. For example, food programs ensuring all community members can safely access distribution sites.
Protection risk analysis	The process and tools used to understand potential threats and vulnerabilities, their likelihood and impact, and ways to mitigate risk. The most commonly used tool is the Protection Analysis Framework (PAF).	Protection Teams—staff & trained enumerators	Everyone can use the results of a protection risk analysis to better integrate mainstreaming actions into their own programming, across all sectors. Protection analysis results should also be integrated into Humanitarian Response Plans and influence priorities.
Community-based Protection Mechanisms	Protection teams work with communities at risk to ensure community involvement, agency and rights throughout programming. Mechanisms included community engagement, community based protection analysis, community developed protection strategies and implementation of the identified strategies.	Protection Teams & local community members	Protection teams help community members set up protection mechanisms. Community members hold responsibility for running them.
Legal Aid Services	Services targeted towards displaced communities and other oppressed groups to support them to access a wide range of rights, including rights to housing, employment, education, health services, and others.	Protection Teams	Legal aid programs are usually staffed by lawyers and/or para legal staff to assist with legal concerns, accessing rights and laws specific to the country.
Protection Case Management	A particular life-saving response model for people at heightened protection risk that is based on social work principles. Case workers provide individualized support based on a person's unique needs and experiences of oppression, marginalization and protection risk.	Protection Teams—specifically case managers	PCM takes additional, specific training and therefore, cannot be implemented by someone who has not been trained for this specifically.

Intervention	Description	Implementor(s)	Other considerations
Protection Monitoring	The systematic and regular process of collecting and analyzing information on the protection environment, risks faced by the population of concern, violations of rights and the actions taken to address protection concerns.	Protection teams & local community members	Typically protection monitoring uses various sources and methods and is done at regular intervals.
Child-friendly spaces	Dedicated spaces for children in emergency settings that provide a safe space to gather and play with other children.	Child protection teams	CFS can serve as places to play, safe classrooms, places to reestablish routines and an entry point for case management services when needed.
Child Protection Case Management	A systematic approach to addressing the needs of an individual child who is at risk of harm or has been harmed. The child and their family are supported by a case worker through direct support and referrals.	Child protection teams	CPCM takes additional, specific training and therefore, cannot be implemented by someone who has not been trained for this specifically.
Family Strengthening	Services that aim to support and empower families, increase resilience and well-being, and ensure children are better protected from abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation.	Child protection teams	Efforts and programming to ensure immediate caregivers can: Meet the child's physical, emotional, social, cognitive and spiritual needs; develop a consistent and caring relationship with the child; and protect the child from harm. This includes programs to strengthen caregiver resilience and well-being, parenting classes, peer-to-peer groups and other interventions.
Social and Emotional Learning	Activities and processes to develop knowledge, attitude and skills to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve goals, show empathy for others and establish and maintain supportive relationships.	Child protection & education teams	Social and emotional learning can and does take place in Child Friendly Spaces and schools. CP actors may help develop trainings for teachers to better integrate SEL into their classrooms. They may also integrate SEL components into activities taking place in a CFS.
Psychosocial support services	Any type of local our outside support that aims to promote or increase psychosocial well-being of individuals or groups of individuals, both children and adults.	Protection, Child Protection, GBV, health & Education teams	Psychosocial support services take place across nearly all types of protection programming, through both case management interventions, individual support, and group interventions. PSS activities are tailored to the individual or group and across Protection, Child Protection and GBV programming, they are likely to focus on different issues and needs based on the type of person/people targeted by the programming and tailored to individual's needs within that target population.

Endnotes

1   Slim, H. and Bonwick, A. Protection: An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies.
https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/115522/bk-protection-alnap-guide-010406-en.pdf?sequence=1

2   Giossi Caverzasio, Sylvie (2001) Strengthening Protection in War: a Search for Professional Standards. Geneva: ICRC, p 19.)

3   https://handbook.spherestandards.org/en/sphere/#ch005_002_004

4   Protection activities are either responsive (aiming to stop, prevent, or alleviate the worst impacts of abuse), remedial (restorative actions focused on the recovery and support to people after violations have occurred and while they live with the resulting impacts), or environment-building (focused on moving societal norms in a direction more conducive to long-lasting protection for all community members). (ALNAP)

5   Protection definitions are adapted from the Global Protection Cluster Protection Analysis Framework unless otherwise footnoted.

6   See Slim, H. and Bonwick, A. Protection: An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies, (p. 22-24)