Photo: Oxfam / Tommy Trenchard
Woman in Lebanon
Learning by doing is the best way to learn, so through Protection in Practice we build local partner capacity by training, mentoring and co-implementing projects with them simultaneously. This means that we can help vulnerable people at the same time as strengthening capacity.

Whilst local responders are the first to respond to crises and often have access to locations where civilians are most vulnerable, there is insufficient support for local organisations to make sure their programming doesn’t harm people and/or to make sure they are able to respond to protection threats like GBV, detention, abduction or displacement. Adding to these constraints, global and national level coordination mechanisms are often very problematic for local responders to engage with.

The goal of the Protection in Practice project is to make vulnerable people safer, whilst at the same time strengthening national protection capacity and disrupting existing power dynamics in the humanitarian sector so that more power is in the hands of people actually impacted by crisis.
**TRAINING**
IRC lead a capacity building programme focused on protection mainstreaming, which involves training a wide range of local actors on how to make humanitarian programmes safer and more inclusive, mentoring them to identify risks and make plans to mitigate those risks, as well as providing funding to implement those changes to make their programmes safer and more inclusive.

**PILOTING**
Oxfam GB work closely with local actors specialising in protection, helping them to design a pilot protection project and providing them with funds to implement the project with Oxfam protection staff, who also provide guidance and training throughout the project when necessary.

**INFLUENCING**
Oxfam and IRC utilise their positions at the national and global level to elevate the voices of local actors and advocate for greater inclusion and awareness around local capacity.
PROTECTION IN PRACTICE

OUR SUCCESSES

• Local partners are now leading on protection within the humanitarian sector, with small local NGOs training agencies like ICRC and UNHCR on protection, shifting current power dynamics

• Local partners have contributed to global policy, such as the IASC Policy on Protection

• Local partners and their communities have been at the fore of global campaigns like Oxfam's 'Stand As One' campaign

• Noticeable decrease in arbitrary detention in DRC

• Access to legal protection for Syrian/Palestinian refugees in Lebanon

• Reduction of stigmatisation of GBV survivors in Myanmar

• Better coordination of protection responses for displaced people in the Philippines

• Local partners engaged in emergency humanitarian response in South Sudan
In the DRC the PiP project has made tangible changes within the community and has also effected change within government institutions.

“Before we used participatory theatre with our community groups they found it so difficult to speak with the police. They felt too threatened to speak to them about the way they abuse people, like putting them in prison for nothing. But now, they can raise these issues through drama, so they can raise any sensitive issues without feeling threatened. The police actually really liked it and now there is a big difference, because we were able to show the police what it is like being in a community living with the fear of arbitrary detention, and we showed how the abuses affected people’s lives. These examples resonated with the police and they have now changed their abusive practices and even requested participatory theatre training to be introduced in other locations across the country to combat police abuse.”

Augustine Titi, CEDIER

Whilst partner staff were trained in participatory theatre, they then went on to teach community groups and international NGO staff on participatory theatre, including being invited to do a working demonstration at the Global Protection Peer Group Meeting in Kenya, where protection staff from local and international organisations from across the globe attended and took part in the participatory demonstration.

In Myanmar the PiP project has taken on particular significance, as the camp in Kachin where the pilot project is being implemented does not allow international staff to enter, so building national capacity is of real importance, with the conflict in Kachin having escalated significantly over the past six months.

“We realised that the ‘women friendly space’ in the camp was a big problem. It is the place women come to get help if they have been raped. No men are allowed. This means that when women go there, everyone in the camp knows they have been raped and they call them names and think badly of them. This stops many women getting the help they need. So, we are changing it to a community centre, where women can still get this help, but we’ll also make sure men and boys can use the centre and we’ll teach them about respecting women and support everyone in the community, as they are all going through this war. In the centre we can give out lots of information on what to do and where to go if you need help and how you should behave. We also use it to train the local leaders on these things.”

Bum Kareng, KBC
In South Sudan the Protection in Practice (PiP) project has had a tangible impact, allowing organisations engaged with PiP to better protect people affected by humanitarian crises and shifting the power in their favour:

"After the protection training we noticed a lot of risks in our communities which we hadn’t noticed before, like sexual abuse by NGO staff. We realised that many women were being sexually abused by NGO staff. So we set up a complaints and referral system, which is something we covered in the PiP training. As a result we uncovered a lot of abuses, perpetrated by local and international NGOs. We led an inter-agency movement to address and investigate these allegations and coordinated with UNHCR. We uncovered many more cases and were able refer survivors to the services they needed and were able to get the police involved to address the matter."

Peter M. (name changed for safety)

Two organisations reported that had secured funding for protection programming as a result of PiP. One of these organisations had not previously worked in the protection sector, but following PiP capacity building were able to expand their remit. Using PiP tools and understanding gained, they were able to demonstrate their capacity to specialised protection donors (such as Saferworld).

As a result of capacity building support provided by PiP one local NGO reported being able to provide a protection mainstreaming ToT for other humanitarian actors in the region, including staff from both local and international organizations, including UNHCR, shifting power dynamics and improving collaboration amongst local and international actors:

"UNHCR, who are the Protection Cluster lead, were so impressed with us and the resources we used, which we got through PiP, that they asked us to present at future UNHCR meetings and share the resources with everyone. They were so surprised that a small NGO like ours had such good knowledge and resources – now we’re teaching them!"

William N. (name changed for safety)
Oxfam are working with PiP partners in two distinct regions within the Philippines; Tacloban, which experiences regular environmental disasters and subsequent displacement, and Mindanao, where there is active conflict, including the recent infiltration of ISIS, who join a host of other armed actors frequently threatening the civilian population and causing widespread displacement. In Mindanao, international organisations are only able to get limited access to many displaced populations, relying heavily on local organisations, making the PiP project particularly relevant.

“Refugees in Lebanon have a very difficult time with the legal restrictions, if you don’t have a lawyer to help you, you can’t get legal status in Lebanon and they restrict all of your rights, they detain you, you can’t get access to basic services like healthcare, you are exploited and have to resort to doing dangerous things to earn money, as you can’t work without legal status. Through PiP we’ve been able to provide people with legal advice to help prevent all these negative consequences. We’ve also been able to develop a protection strategy, which will help us apply for more funding.”

Lena M. (name changed for safety)

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MULTIPLIER EFFECT

For every protection organisation we co-implement with through PiP, so far, an average of twenty further organisations have been trained in protection, as well as community groups and in addition to beneficiary organisation staff. Increase in knowledge and understanding of protection mainstreaming and protection programming has been demonstrated in 100% of targeted local partners. All local protection actors we co-implement with received protection TOT training and significantly improved their confidence to train others in protection. The majority of national partners have utilised PiP capacity building opportunities to further build the capacity not only of their own organisations, but that of their communities and of other organisations (local and international) as well. All partners requested additional Training of Trainers in order to take central roles within their national contexts to provide protection support for other organisations. The value of the project is thus multiplied, with increased communities reached as a result.

SHIFTING POWER DYNAMICS

As a result of PiP, humanitarian power dynamics have been disrupted, with local organisations leading protection training for other actors, including staff from international organisations such as ICRC and UNHCR, and taking central capacity building roles within their own communities; informing the IASC Policy on Protection, which had never before included consultation with local actors) and in one location, leading the way on accountability to affected populations on the issue of sexual abuse by international and national NGOs.

ONE ORGANISATION TRAINED THROUGH PiP GOES ON TO TRAIN AN AVERAGE OF 20
WHAT WE LEARNT

PiP has so far demonstrated that you can respond and build capacity at the same time. This approach has informed the way Oxfam works on GBV. Oxfam usually partners with organisations that do similar work, so Oxfam can build their capacity. Oxfam do not provide GBV services, however, in South Sudan Oxfam are now working with a GBV service provider, facilitating capacity building for the organisation on Clinical Management of Rape, to compliment the referral work Oxfam are doing and directly building partner capacity on. This shift allows Oxfam to learn more from partner organisations and improve humanitarian response through collaboration and make a demonstrable shift away from the common sub-contracting arrangements partnerships can often represent.

VALUE FOR MONEY

For every 1 local protection actor we co-implement with, they go on to train an average of 20 more organisations on protection.

Protection in Practice focuses on learning by doing, so we fund and co-implement protection projects with partners, meaning we can respond to protection crises at the same time as building capacity.
So far the PiP project has shown that through adopting a learning-by-doing approach it is possible to respond and deliver capacity building at the same time. The multiplier effect has emerged as a key trend, significantly increasing the intended impact of the project. This effect has also highlighted how the PiP project has bolstered collaborative ways of working amongst local NGOs, which have nearly all chosen to share capacity building opportunities widely with other local NGOs, as well as international organisations.

The multiplier effect was an unpredicted benefit which has also yielded additional benefits, such as disrupting the power dynamics within the humanitarian sector, making local actors leaders in the protection sector and putting power into the hands of people closer to the frontlines of crisis.

“We have so much to learn from our partners. The collaborative approach we take with our partners through Protection in Practice means we’ve been able to build each others’ capacities, whilst helping make people safer at the same time.”

Kerry Akers, Protection in Practice Project Manager