

IDP¹ AND HUMANITARIAN PROTECTION UPDATE – MARCH 2007

IDP AND HUMANITARIAN PROTECTION OVERVIEW

Among international donors, USAID/OFDA is at the forefront of the humanitarian community's effort to place greater emphasis on protection across all levels of relief planning and implementation. Vulnerable populations—including women, children, widows, and elderly, disabled, and displaced persons—often bear a heavy burden in natural disasters and complex emergencies, having lost family and community support structures and burdened with the effects of poverty and low social status. In insecure environments, women and girls in particular are at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse. Since USAID adopted an agency-wide policy for IDPs in 2004, USAID/OFDA has worked with fellow USAID/DCHA offices and other U.S. government agencies to implement and strengthen protection activities for vulnerable populations in emergencies.



A USAID/OFDA-funded literacy program in Darfur provides women with a safe space and an education. (Jane Strachan, USAID)

MAINSTREAMING PROTECTION IN DARFUR

To ensure that USAID/OFDA-funded humanitarian assistance in Darfur incorporates a protective approach, USAID/OFDA is assisting implementing partners to develop and implement protective strategies and activities. Despite significant challenges, USAID/OFDA partners are implementing humanitarian protection strategies, including responding to sexual and gender-based violence, improving camp coordination activities, and targeting vulnerable populations for assistance. A recent USAID/OFDA assessment team found that each of the seven non-governmental organizations (NGOs) implementing USAID/OFDA-funded health activities in Darfur has both participated in U.N. trainings on clinical management of sexual and gender-based violence and developed case management protocols to ensure the confidentiality of survivors and provide appropriate medical care. Four of the NGOs provide survivors with referrals to other assistance services. Two implementing partners are also using their role as camp coordinator to expand protective programming within the camps by ensuring that assistance reaches such vulnerable individuals as separated or unaccompanied children, unaccompanied elders, and persons with disabilities.

CÔTE D'IVOIRE AND LIBERIA HUMANITARIAN PROTECTION ASSESSMENT

From January 9 to 21, USAID/OFDA's principal regional advisor for West Africa, disaster operations specialist for West Africa, and humanitarian protection and IDP advisor traveled to Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia to examine humanitarian protection and IDP issues and assess related humanitarian needs. In Côte d'Ivoire, the team spoke with U.N. and NGO staff about the overall humanitarian situation and traveled in the Zone of Confidence and Guiglo and Man areas to meet with IDPs and recent returnees. In Guiglo, the team observed two examples of effective child-friendly spaces—two community centers that provide income generation opportunities and educational and rehabilitative recreational activities for conflict-affected youth. According to the

¹ Internally displaced person

assessment team, the humanitarian situation in western Côte d'Ivoire is slowly improving, as IDPs gradually return home and reconciliation ceremonies are organized.

In Liberia, the team traveled to Ganta and Saclapea, Nimba County, and met with relief agencies to discuss evolving humanitarian protection concerns as international response efforts transition from emergency to development assistance. According to the assessment team, the main humanitarian protection issues in Liberia include sexual exploitation and abuse, widespread rape, and sexual and gender-based violence. USAID/Liberia is working with the Government of Liberia (GOL) and emergency and development agencies to strengthen the rule of law in the country. Although the lack of a functioning overall judicial system presents a serious obstacle, the assessment team noted that the recent rape law, passed by the GOL in 2006, is a positive step toward addressing some of the sexual and gender-based violence concerns.

PROTECTING DISPLACED POPULATIONS IN SRI LANKA

Since April 2006, renewed fighting between Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) separatist group has led to widespread displacement in several of Sri Lanka's eastern districts. According to the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of registered IDPs in Batticaloa District more than doubled between January and March 2006, from 60,000 to 127,000 people. In response to increased internal displacement, USAID/OFDA is funding Save the Children/UK (SC/UK) to undertake humanitarian protection activities to support an estimated 4,000 women and 12,000 children displaced in three eastern coastal districts and the Jaffna peninsula. SC/UK is implementing child protection and education activities, distributing emergency relief supplies, and assisting in the registration of children who are unaccompanied or separated from their families. In addition, with USAID/OFDA assistance, World Vision is implementing humanitarian protection activities for an estimated 5,500 conflict-affected children in communities and IDP camps in four northern and western districts. In coordination with the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the GOSL, World Vision is establishing child-friendly spaces, distributing educational materials, and providing medical services and psychosocial support. Through the U.N. Common Humanitarian Action Plan for Sri Lanka, USAID/OFDA has approved funding for UNICEF to carry out protection programming for 100,000 children.

IDP AND HUMANITARIAN PROTECTION WORKSHOPS

On January 26 and February 1, USAID/OFDA held two IDP and humanitarian protection workshops in Dakar, Senegal, for implementing partners in West Africa. Staff members from USAID missions and representatives of 29 organizations, including participants from Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Togo, attended the workshops. In addition to introducing [USAID's IDP policy](#), the workshops provided participants with an overview of USAID/OFDA's approach to humanitarian protection and offered guidance on using the Additional Program Description Requirements for Protection in the [Revised USAID/OFDA Guidelines for Unsolicited Proposals and Reporting](#).



Participants at the humanitarian protection and IDP workshop in Dakar, Senegal, discuss USAID's IDP policy. (Alisia Kachmar, USAID)