

REPORT ON UNHCR-NGO WORKSHOP

“Strengthening Partnerships and Enhancing the Role of NGOs in the Resettlement Process”

Washington DC, 23-24 March 2005

Participants:

UNHCR:

Eva Demant, Resettlement Section, Geneva (*Co-chair*)
Nick Coussidis, NGO Liaison Unit, Geneva
Anne-Birgitte Krum-Hansen, Resettlement Section, Geneva
Larry Yungk, Regional Office Washington
Anne-Marie McGranaghan, Regional Office Washington
Michael Casasola, Branch Office Ottawa
Sean Henderson, Branch Office Nairobi
Kimberly Robertson, Branch Office Kathmandu
Walter Sanchez, Branch Office Quito

NGOs:

USA:

Mark Franken, USCCB (*Co-chair*)
Anastasia Brown, USCCB
Berta Romero, RCUSA
Sasha Bennett, RCUSA
Annie Wilson, LIRS
Lavinia Limon, USCRI
Geraldine Owens, CWS/IRP
Abigail Price, IRC
Eric Newman, HIAS
Gary Fairchild, WR
Mitzi Schroeder, JRS
Bob Carey, IRC
Bernadette Cisse, LIRS
Dick Parkins, EMM

Canada:

Fariborz Birjandian, CCR-CCIS
Barbara Treviranus, CCR-RSTP
Liz McWeeny, CCR-RCDTB
Paulette Johnson, CCR-CSS
Carolina Gajardo, CCR-COSTI

Australia:

Paris Aristotle, VFS

Denmark:

Mette Marie Honoré, DRC

International:

Ken Patterson, ICMC Geneva

Private citizen:

Mark Hetfield, USCIRF

Report of Working Group Session:

Group A – Identification and Referrals to UNHCR

Objectives:

This session will explore potential partnership to expand or enhance UNHCR’s capacity to identify and refer refugees in need of resettlement, especially, unaccompanied refugee minors and other vulnerable refugee groups. The session will focus on (a) individual refugee referrals to UNHCR in camp and urban settings, (b) identification and proposals of groups to UNHCR, and (c) registration efforts in the resettlement context. Training issues, including the need for fraud awareness and safeguards, will be a cross cutting theme.

Facilitator: Anastasia Brown

Rapporteur: Michael Casasola

The session began by reviewing and clarifying the working group session objectives. It was agreed that the session would focus on the identification and referral of all refugees, but that it would “keep in mind” unaccompanied minors and vulnerable refugees in order to ensure that their needs were not overlooked. The group agreed to first examine the identification and referral of individual refugees in camp and urban environments, and to examine the identification and referral of groups separately.

The working group realized that access to resettlement, as well as to protection, was a key challenge that would influence any models it considered.

It was recognized that “frontline NGOs” (NGOs providing direct assistance to refugees) whether in a camp or urban setting are very familiar with the characteristics and needs of the refugee population they are serving and thus could be a potential source for resettlement referrals. However, it was immediately noted that many such NGOs are uncomfortable with or unable to play this role because they have limited resettlement experience. This is because their organization and staff may fear being overwhelmed (given the reality that resettlement is highly sought after) and may not have the capacity

to manage such requests. Involvement in resettlement could also bring along pressures leading to malfeasance. It may also lead to mission drift and undermine the NGO's initial purpose for working with the refugee population.

It was also recognized that frontline NGOs may not be aware of resettlement's purpose and criteria. Thus a NGO may not consider a resettlement referral as a potential response or it could prioritize referrals that are not in keeping with the guidelines set out in the *Resettlement Handbook*. It was agreed that training on resettlement for such frontline NGOs would be an important first step to help build understanding of resettlement's purpose and criteria.

Recognizing the difficulty and potential reluctance for frontline NGOs to become involved in making resettlement referrals, the working group discussed a model of involving an intermediary NGO in the actual submission of a resettlement case. This model would allow a frontline NGO to submit a potential resettlement referral to an intermediary NGO. The intermediary NGO would not be involved in providing assistance to refugees. It would only examine resettlement submissions based on a referral from a frontline NGO. Once the frontline NGO had made the referral, the intermediary NGO would be responsible for any development or follow up, such as interviews, home visits, case preparation and liaison with UNHCR. It was believed that this approach would lessen potential pressures upon the frontline NGO as their involvement would be "behind the scenes".

The intermediary NGO would ensure referral integrity, assuring the quality and thoroughness of a resettlement submission as well as including safeguards against potential fraud. The intermediary NGO could also play a role in referring and follow up concerning vulnerable refugees such as an unaccompanied minor. NGO staff with particular expertise in best interest determinations may also be seconded or assist with unaccompanied minors.

The resettlement referrals prepared by an intermediary NGO would be submitted to UNHCR. Depending on the protection environment such a referral might be submitted to the relevant UNHCR protection unit who may consider resettlement as a possible response.

Key to any NGO referral arrangement is UNHCR's coordination role. It was recognized that there must be clarity so that any resettlement identification process does not create confusion in referral routes and thus risk the possibility of fraud or duplication.

In order to ensure access, it was agreed that if an intermediary NGO were to play a resettlement referring role, that such submissions would be in addition to or a complement to existing identification mechanisms and would not replace regular UNHCR resettlement identification submissions in keeping with the criteria established in the *Resettlement Handbook*.

The discussion on this model was informed by the experiences of the IRC in Pakistan, HIAS in Kenya and Ecuador and ICMC in Guinea, all of whom are examples of NGOs that played a variety of intermediary roles in the respective countries that relied upon referrals from frontline NGOs for the identification of potential resettlement referrals. The session was also updated on the progress UNHCR has made in implementing Project Profile, which is already in place in 19 countries. Such improvements to refugee registration will benefit resettlement. It was acknowledged that NGOs may also be able to play a role in registration through the secondment of staff. NGOs may also have an important role in facilitating and promoting registration.

Responding to self-referrals was an issue that was flagged but not fully explored or resolved. Included in this discussion was how to respond to refugees who may identify themselves through e-mail or internet based applications. It was recognized that already UNHCR offices and NGOs receive large numbers of self-referrals. The challenge is to ensure that a resettlement program is accessible to those in need of resettlement and not only to those best able to promote his/her case.

It was noted that the session's discussion focused primarily on referrals in a camp environment. While the intermediary referral model might also be applicable to an urban setting, the challenges of its application as well as the overall referral challenges in an urban setting were not discussed because of limited time.

NGO involvement in Group Resettlement

The benefit and utility of group resettlement was affirmed during the session. Group resettlement was recognized as a useful tool for UNHCR that could further extend UNHCR's resources and impacts. It was roughly estimated that as many as 10,000 refugees were resettled as part of UNHCR's group methodology in 2004.

It was emphasized that the resettlement of groups needs to be part of a protection plan or strategy not only for the population involved, but for the country and/or region.

In keeping with the principle of maintaining access, it was also noted that while group resettlement is a useful tool, it is a complement to existing identification mechanisms and does not replace regular UNHCR individual resettlement identification submissions.

It was agreed that NGO assessment trips have played a useful role in the identification and referral of groups for resettlement. These assessment trips which NGOs in the United States have undertaken sometimes include congressional representatives and/or their staff. These trips provide several benefits. They can identify potential groups for resettlement or help refine the criteria for those who may be eligible. In addition, the report of the visit, which the NGOs make public, can be an important advocacy tool for understanding and promotion of a group for resettlement. The trips have been used to build political and financial support from governments and NGO constituencies for refugee protection.

Assessment trips were recognized as having many benefits, including being used to complement the expertise of “frontline” NGOs with the work of other NGOs experienced in partnering with governments in resettlement countries. It has been the experience of NGOs who have organized these assessment trips that coordination with UNHCR and other partners in both the field locations and capitals has been the key to the success of these trips.

Next Steps

As a follow up to the session, the working group considered some next steps. These activities were examined as to how they would improve identification, address misrepresentation and respond to vulnerable refugees.

Individual Referrals

Training for “frontline” NGOs on resettlement’s purpose and criteria was determined to be a useful activity to expand the potential capacity of such a NGO to refer cases where appropriate.

Concerning the development of an “intermediary NGO referral model”, a subgroup of NGO participants (Abby Price, Ken Patterson and Mark Hetfield) agreed to further develop this model following the workshop to present a concrete proposal for discussion and potential implementation. Given the importance of concrete outcomes, it was proposed that two pilot projects be developed to test this model.

A pilot project would require the support and involvement of the relevant frontline NGOs. It was agreed that in order for this model to work training on resettlement criteria should be made available to NGOs who may be potentially able to refer refugees. The model should be applied in a camp environment in which the refugee population is stable and well organized.

The intermediary model would provide the opportunity of involving specialized expertise. It was underlined that the application of this model would need to be linked with the protection strategy in the respective country or region.

The involvement of an intermediary NGO could assist program integrity as its involvement would be based on protocols and standard operating procedures. It would assure assessment of cases and would examine family composition. An intermediary NGO would also include as part of its terms of reference, its links with UNHCR protection and community services, so that the NGO may also be able to refer refugees for such assistance where appropriate.

Group Referrals

Training on UNHCR’s group methodology is needed for all actors including NGOs in the field and in resettlement countries in order to ensure a coordination of effort and a common understanding among all those involved in the identification and resettlement of groups.

Such a common understanding and coordination of effort would assist with the identification and development of specific group criteria that were fair and inclusive. Information exchange and coordination on the criteria for defining a group is important. It was noted that NGOs in resettlement countries may have useful information relevant to the establishment of the criteria for a group based on their experience with the same population.

Assessment trips play a useful role in providing information about a potential group that might be considered for resettlement. While American NGOs have been involved in such trips in the past, in the future such trips could be done in combination with NGOs from other countries as well. As already outlined, such trips would be done in coordination with UNHCR.

The reports of these trips provide useful input to UNHCR. The result of a trip could be developed into a concept paper on the resettlement of a potential group. Nevertheless, as group resettlement is part of the protection strategy in any given country, it is imperative that the concerned UNHCR field office be involved in the discussion regarding the resettlement of a group and ensure its inclusion in the corresponding country operations plan.

While assessment trips play a useful role in bringing an outside eye to the identification of potential groups, they also can build political and financial support domestically for the group's resettlement. The information gathered can be used to inform future processing issues. The attention that assessment trips provide can help build political support for a group, including vulnerable refugees within the group who may require additional assistance upon admission to a resettlement country. The awareness raising may ultimately spur a more welcoming environment in the country of resettlement.

Group B – Discussion on the role of NGOs in case preparation and submission in refugee resettlement

Facilitator: Sean Henderson

Rapporteur: Liz McWeeny

OBJECTIVE

1) The UNHCR-NGO meeting held in Washington explored ways in which to build and enhance partnerships between UNHCR and NGOs in the resettlement of refugees in order to increase UNHCR's capacity to resettle more refugees. Working Group B was asked to explore the possibilities for greater inclusion of NGOs in the Case Preparation and Submission phase of UNHCR's resettlement work.

PRINCIPLE

2) Working Group B started from the agreed upon principle that:

NGOs involvement in the resettlement continuum may be as broad or as narrow as the situations suggest but always in coordination with UNHCR. The challenge is in how to manage and implement the planning, coordination and operationalizing of the partnerships.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

3) The following recommendations emerged from the Working Group B discussions:

- i. UNHCR, in collaboration with its NGO and governmental partners, develop a framework and operational mechanisms that reflects the determination and commitment of the partnership between UNHCR, NGOs and Governments in the resettlement of refugees.
- ii. UNHCR recruit and train NGOs from resettlement countries to work in the group processing of refugees destined for that resettlement country. Roles for NGOs within the group processing could include:
 - Counseling and case preparation (if short forms)
 - Verification
 - Pre-departure orientation
- iii. UNHCR use existing opportunities to pilot the inclusion of NGOs throughout the continuum of resettlement, using both site specific and population specific contexts. Some suggestions for potential large impact include:
 - Malaysia
 - Bhutanese in Nepal
 - Africa (e.g. Kenya)Smaller population contexts could include Ecuador or sites with protracted refugee populations.
- iv. UNHCR seek ways to expand the current Resettlement Deployment Scheme to include a broader mandate and increased flexibility to address the varying ways in which NGOs may enhance UNHCR's capacity in resettlement.
- v. UNHCR build local arrangements and partnerships with international NGOs present in the field.

The following reflect the discussions held by Working Group B

Assumptions

- 4) The Working Group agreed on the following basic assumptions in its discussion:
- NGOs have a role to play through every stage of the continuum of resettlement.
 - International NGO presence is desirable.

- NGOs with integration and resettlement experience can add value to the field stage of the resettlement process, particularly to the pre-departure orientation.

Current Working Models

- 5) The Working Group chose first to examine some recent initiatives where NGOs are in partnership with UNHCR that offer some examples of best practices and principles that may be applied in other contexts.

Ecuador

- 6) Resettlement is not a main priority for UNHCR in Ecuador; however identification of refugees in need of resettlement is a value added outcome of the work of NGO partners and UNHCR field offices that are doing protection and community service work. The local NGO implementing partners doing registration and first instance refugee status determination interviews identify cases in need of resettlement and refer them to the UNHCR. External NGOs involved in other areas of refugee work funnel cases of concern to the implementing partner for a first assessment and follow-up.
- 7) Although this is not strictly a function of case preparation and submission, it offers an example of how a front-end opportunity exists because of the broader role of an implementing partner. Moreover, the UNHCR office in Quito stated that international NGO involvement (i.e. an ICMC deployment) following initial referral would be desirable in order to provide assistance in case preparation.

Costa Rica

8. In Costa Rica, the local NGO implementing partner responsible for providing legal, financial and social assistance to asylum-seekers and refugees is trained and supervised to identify and document potential resettlement cases to go forward to the UNHCR office for a first assessment and follow-up. The local NGO implementing partner receives self-referred cases and referrals from government agencies, embassies, inter-governmental and other non-governmental organizations coming into contact with refugees. The local NGO implementing partner also identifies potential resettlement cases through its regular assistance work.

Emergency Response Roster

9. The Danish Refugee Council, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the Swedish NGO Radda Barnen have a standing agreement with UNHCR to maintain a roster of experts in various fields for emergency deployments, who are pre-trained, pre-screened and ready to mobilize on 72 hours notice.
10. The readiness capabilities of this type of roster offer a useful model for quick response to emergency movements or, where the response time need not be so fast, in group processing and verification initiatives where work is focused and relatively short term.

Sri Lanka

11. The Danish Refugee Council, in collaboration with the UNHCR office in Sri Lanka and the Sri Lankan government took on the RSD, including the preparation and submission of the RRF.

Suggestions, Ideas, Proposals

12. The following emerged throughout discussion and brainstorming and are presented here in no particular order. Several are echoed in the recommendations above.
13. All partners must work in concert with UNHCR to ensure consistent application of criteria and avoid confusion.
14. Processes and dialogue between UNHCR and its NGO partners must be ongoing.
15. Develop regional rosters for specific programmes and/or specific aspects of the resettlement programme.
 - e.g.:
 - rosters to provide NGOs for a specific resettlement country programme
 - rosters of persons/organizations with specific expertise such as BIDs
 - rosters of persons trained in a specific task such as group verification
- 16) Use virtual tools to identify specific needs and plans in the field in order to engage NGOs in a timely and effective manner.
 - i.e.
 - website
 - 'living' inventory
- 17) Ensure the feedback loop between the field and the receiving community in order to enhance preparation, integration, promotion and public education as well as community development.
- 18) Build local capacity in countries of refuge by using local expertise, training local partners and including local sectors of international NGOs.
- 19) Develop a training model to support refugee workers while they are in the field i.e. not just pre-deployment but ongoing support.
- 20) Use opportunities for peer mentorship.

Challenges and Inhibitors

- 21) The UNHCR planning and budgetary process.
- 22) The difficulty in obtaining additional funding from donor states once their commitment is confirmed even though there is often need for flexibility and timely response to particular initiatives.

- 23) Ensuring that processes and dialogue between UNHCR and its resettlement NGO partners are ongoing and effective. In particular, seeking continuity of dialogue throughout the year, not limited to the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement.
- 24) Gaps and surges in resettlement activities.
- 25) Uneven appreciation at UNHCR offices for refugee resettlement and for NGO involvement.
- 26) The strategic use of resettlement by governments in managing migration flows and irregular movements.
- 27) Promotion to governments of the benefits of investing in enhancing resettlement as a tool of protection and as a durable solution.
- 28) NGOs in the field are reluctant to fully engage in resettlement activities because of the impact on their overall operations, the management of expectations at the local level, security concerns, and exposure to malfeasance and for various other reasons. However, locally based NGOs are often open to undertaking specific aspects of the resettlement continuum.

Expanding / Broadening Resettlement Deployment Schemes

- 29) Working Group B affirmed the continued good results of the ICMC-UNHCR Deployment Scheme and acknowledged its important role in enhancing UNHCR's resettlement capacity. However, throughout the discussions various suggestions and recommendations emerged that call for a broadening of the ICMC Deployment Scheme's mandate and structures for the use of NGO deployees. They are as follows:
 - Expand the deployment scheme model to include both short and long term postings.
 - Develop rosters that are skills specific and/or task specific.
 - Some NGOs suggested to use broader criteria in recruitment of deployees i.e. look for skills transfers rather than certification.
 - Some NGOs emphasized the need for a transparent recruitment process.
 - Increase training support both in pre-assignment training, pre-departure orientation and briefing as well as ongoing support in the field.
 - Some NGOs suggested that a national based management of deployments as an alternative to Geneva-based management of the entire programme be considered.
 - Build greater investment of resettlement NGOs in the deployment scheme, for example:
 - i. using shorter assignments of NGO staff persons,
 - ii. staff rotations to the field from a specific NGO,
 - iii. engagement of NGOs in particular projects or initiatives

- iv. promotion of the benefits of returning staff who have field experience
 - Some NGOs emphasized the need to ensure that wage scales for deployees are not a disincentive to their participation in deployments.
 - Encourage and facilitate NGOs to incorporate deployment readiness into their professional development and staff training.

TESTING THE PROPOSALS

- 30) The Working Group B began to explore how to apply some of the ideas and recommendations discussed during the session. Unfortunately, time ran out before the Group could really expand on the initial proposals. However, there was great enthusiasm among the NGOs to get to work as quickly as possible and several were asking when and how they may begin.
- 31) The group examined four options for using NGOs in the resettlement work planned or being undertaken in Kenya.

Protection Profiling of Sudanese refugee population

- 32) The general Sudanese population in Kenya is preparing for the voluntary repatriation to take place in 2006; however some persons remain vulnerable and cannot be repatriated. UNHCR undertakes a general survey of the population as well as psychosocial interviews to assess continued protection needs, i.e. BID functions.
- 5 persons from NGOs

From an identified high risk group /profile, select cases for resettlement

- 5 persons from NGOs (different skill sets to those doing first screening)

Group Processing of minority Somali group

- 33) Group verification process at the first stage plus follow-up interviews
- up to 5 NGO persons for approximately 4 weeks

Somali CPA

- 34) The task of developing a case identification framework to do RSD of Somali refugees in Dadaab requires a methodology that has integrity in the current environment in Dadaab and will effectively identify vulnerable persons in need of continued protection following the implementation of a CPA.
- NGO Consultancy with specific expertise

Ethiopians in Dadaab

- 35) NGOs can play an important role in the profiling and assessment of Ethiopians in Dadaab for whom Vol. Rep. is not an option.
- RSD experts (usually lawyers)
 - NGO persons with skills to do family composition assessments

Expanding the Thinking

37) In building capacity to implement any of these proposals or aspects of them, there are certain cues and timelines that facilitate the management of NGO participation. These will include the following:

- The development of the COP provides an ‘early warning’ of proposed activities;
- Framework agreements and/or MOUs should be in place;
- There must be agreement from UNHCR HQ and the country office;
- There may be a lead NGO partner or a consortium of NGOs interested in various aspects of participation;
- Financial resources are identified and committed;
- NGO persons are already trained with specific skills that may be applied in various locations for example, family composition verification, BIDs, etc;

38) Group B chose to expand their thinking on the resettlement of a Somali minority group in Kenya by examining how NGOs may be inserted into the existing process.

39) One of the benefits of using NGOs in the group processing initiative will be to support the ongoing regular resettlement programme by using NGOs wherever possible rather than redeploy UNHCR staff from their normal tasks.

40) The verification process sometimes uses up to 30 staff members and needs at least 10 verifiers.

Insert 5 NGOs from destination country mentoring with 5 HCR staff for approximately a 2 week assignment.

Quality assurance is usually done by UNHCR staff who concurs with the assessments done by the verifiers. Further, work on BIDs and family assessments are time consuming and labor intensive.

Insert 2 or more NGOs from destination country for approximately 4 weeks

41) Data entry is usually a JVA role for US cases.

Insert NGOs from destination country

42) Case submission and reinterviews – usually a JVA role in US cases

Insert NGO from destination country

43) Flowback from interviews for follow-up by UNHCR office

Insert NGOs in follow-up as needed.

44) Departure processing - IOM

Reflections by NGOs

NGOs are enthusiastic and committed to supporting UNHCR in its resettlement efforts and are willing to explore ways to increase the numbers of refugees resettled globally. However, NGOs see their contributions as a partnership with UNHCR and with

governments. They expressed the importance that UNHCR integrate NGOs' status as full partners in resettlement throughout the UNHCR organization and also in its dealings with governments. While recognizing that bilateral dialogue is always important, NGOs emphasized the need for a framework that will support and facilitate continuous dialogue between UNHCR and NGOs and with governments on resettlement matters. Within this context, specific initiatives and activities can take place in an environment of collaboration and collegiality.

During the discussions, several NGOs expressed eagerness to try out some of the ideas and proposals as soon as possible and urged UNHCR to move forward quickly in order to maximize benefits for the refugees.

Report of Final Plenary Session:

Objectives: During the final session, the two working groups reported their conclusions and recommendations in plenary, which were then discussed and commented upon. Next steps for advancing the recommendations were proposed and agreed upon.

Chair/Faciliator: Barbara Treviranus

Rapporteur: Anne-Birgitte Krum-Hansen/Kimberly Roberson

General considerations framing the recommendations of the two groups included:

- The right of access to resettlement processes for all persons requiring resettlement as an overall theme.
- NGOs on ground have an overall awareness of the situation and needs, but may be reluctant to become involved in resettlement referrals due to costs, dilution of mission objectives, and being unaware of resettlement as a durable solution.
- Resettlement activities are part of the broader protection framework of strategy and response developed within a country operations plan.
- Role of NGOs could be broad or narrow, but always under the leadership of UNHCR. Lessons should be drawn from different models of past and present NGOs action in resettlement, as described below:
 - Pakistan/IRC and Guinea/ICMC model: NGOs were given specific responsibilities for identifying potential candidates for resettlement and referring them to UNHCR.
 - Ecuador and Costa Rica: NGO's purpose is not specifically resettlement but uses opportunity of contact with refugees to assess resettlement needs as well.
 - Costa Rica: Referrals from various sources are coordinated by one agency acting as a 'gate-keeper' to UNHCR.
 - DRC/NRC/Sweden: Examine the standing roster of staff with emergency experience that are pre-selected and trained for immediate deployments as a possible model.

- DRC/Sri Lanka: with support of UNHCR, NGO took on whole process of RSD and resettlement processing.

Possible avenues for enhanced NGO role in resettlement activities should be sure to address:

- Need for safeguards against abuse, misuse and general malfeasance.
- Training needs and opportunities.
- Improved response to vulnerable individuals and groups.
- Working in concert to ensure a consistent application of criteria, procedures and other standards.

Potential constraints and challenges to enhanced NGO involvement included:

- HCR planning and budgeting process.
- Gaps and surges in needs.
- Reluctance of local NGOs to be identified with resettlement activities.
- Lack of understanding of and therefore support of resettlement in some operations.

NGOs as intermediary referral entity for identification of individuals in camps

To enhance individual referrals, a model as described in the Group A notes, should be developed and tested in which an NGO would be set up to serve exclusively as an intermediary referral entity between ‘front-line’ NGOs and UNHCR. The intermediary NGO must function in a protection referral capacity, of which resettlement would be one of range of protection responses recommended to UNHCR. A generic model would be adapted to the specifics of each situation and for which standard operating procedures and guidelines would be required. The intermediary agency could also play a role in facilitating and promoting registration as well as best-interest determinations for minors.

The pre-conditions for such an arrangement are:

- The country operations plan indicates need for enhanced resettlement referrals.
- Refugee population is living in organised camps assisted by the international community and where international and/or national NGOs are currently operating.
- NGOs working in the camps know the population and have a functioning working relationship with UNHCR, but are reluctant to become involved in resettlement referrals.
- Lack of capacity to assess and refer needy refugees for resettlement.

Such an arrangement would be beneficial if intermediary NGO:

- Has expertise and experience with resettlement and can undertake training of other NGOs in the use of resettlement as a tool of protection as well as criteria for resettlement.
- Is closely linked to more general protection activities and works closely with UNHCR and with NGOs in contact with vulnerable persons or those who may need resettlement.
- Will explore fully family composition questions and other basic bio-data questions, and make assessments against agreed and strict criteria.

- Understands and follows comprehensive procedures and mechanisms to guard against malfeasance.

Enhance role in identification in group resettlement

To enhance group identification, broad training in group methodology is needed; targeting NGOs, UNHCR and others involved in group resettlement activities. Training should be cross-country and cross-functional, taking an important lesson from the experience of the workshop itself. NGOs should help ensure that important trends in resettlement needs are picked-up and passed on to UNHCR. NGOs can also assist UNHCR in the identification of criteria for group resettlement activities.

Assessment trips as advocacy tool

The value of advocacy and field assessments by NGOs depended to a large extent on the coordination of these activities with UNHCR. Field assessment brought an outside eye to a situation which might have a need or opportunity for resettlement. Field assessment also increased opportunities for gathering, analyzing and sharing best practices, as well as providing first hand information critical in alleviating concerns. All US NGO field assessment trips which were discussed were those that had benefited from US government input, including some trips in which congressional staffers participated. UNHCR and NGOs should make maximum use of the advocacy opportunities to further resettlement goals offered by Targeted Response Teams (TRTs) missions.

Deployment schemes to enhance processing capacity

Deployment schemes are an excellent opportunity for enhanced NGO involvement in building resettlement capacity. Possible improvements to the current deployment scheme models were:

- Expand the use made of deployees beyond traditional completion of RRF forms to the wider range of resettlement related activities such as identification, group verification, best-interest assessments, psycho-social and general counselling and pre-departure orientation.
- Increase flexibility in mission length, using short or longer deployment periods depending on needs
- Diversify capacity of response by using NGOs to coordinate an increased gambit of skill and resource needs.
- A general roster of selected and trained candidates for deployment may be accompanied by more specific rosters of those with specific skills or experience, such as in group resettlement activities, BIDs or pre-departure orientation.
- Expand on current diversity in profiles for team members (already 3 -4 different profiles in use).
- The process for feeding back experiences gained in the field into the NGO country office upon return from deployment must be more formalised. Relying on the initiative and will of the individual deployee is not an effective or reliable means.

Group resettlement activities in Kenya

There is possibility of resettlement of two more groups from Kenya this year. A US NGO is currently working with UNHCR in Kenya on resettlement activities for a population they will be receiving in the US later this year. This is an excellent opportunity for practical training on both the group methodology and how to best plan for the integration of this group, while providing actual results in terms of resettlement. More opportunities such as this should be explored.

Other opportunities

Other opportunities to enhance the NGO role in resettlement include:

- Developing a training model on value of resettlement targeting a broad spectrum of NGO refugee workers.
- Ensuring there is a comprehensive feedback loop to and from receiving communities covering integration, preparation, promotion, public education and community development.
- Develop local resettlement capacity through a commitment to build and to use such capacity.
- Make better use of technology to share information and respond to needs.
- Foster on-going dialogue between parties involved in resettlement.

Integration initiative

Some participants recalled the efforts made in the integration initiative and ask that this initiative be reinvigorated. Many of the steps outlined by the initiative would contribute to enhancing overall resettlement capacity. Comments were made that perhaps the time is right to raise some of the important issues coming out the integration initiative once again as there has been a change of perspective at senior levels, particularly regarding the importance of supporting emerging resettlement countries. Further, several participants stressed the need to provide receiving NGOs with case-load/case profile-specific information, information usually available to UNHCR and others processing resettlement referrals. This is even more important when resettlement focuses on vulnerable cases for which more preparation is an advantage to their successful reception and integration within the receiving communities. Lastly, it was noted that the June ATC agenda very timely includes a presentation of best practice integration experience by a resettlement country with community case workers and refugees telling their stories.

Pre-departure protection and programmes

More attention should be paid to persons waiting departure for resettlement, particularly now that waiting periods in the post 9/11 era have greatly increased. Not only could this time be made use of in preparing the more vulnerable individuals for integration, but individuals were often at risk while waiting to depart. Practical guidance on the standards for protection and care pending departure for resettlement would be helpful, as well as defining clear responsibilities for the well-being of these people. Experience indicates that pre-departure programmes should focus on the basics of living conditions in the resettlement country and provide basic language skills training useful for employment.

Next steps

The rapporteurs were called upon to provide a summary of issues and recommendations for review by workshop participants and eventual presentation to the ATC. A quick turn around time was requested, with comments to UNHCR by 8 April and a first draft to be circulated by 18 April.