Discussion Note on
Collection of Good Practices in Protection

The identification and exchange of examples of good practices in protection can greatly contribute to improved planning and programming and ultimately to enhanced protection for persons of concern.[1] According to *the IASC Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen the Humanitarian Response,* it is the responsibility of each cluster to identify good practices in its area of expertise.[2] The collection of good practices has accordingly been recognized as a key priority for the global Protection Cluster Working Group (PCWG) in 2008.

1. Current situation

There are many examples of successful and innovative projects and programmes being designed and implemented at the field level by various human rights, humanitarian and development actors. Currently, however, no centralized mechanism exists for the systematic identification, evaluation, exchange and/or dissemination of good practices in protection. While several agencies and organizations have in the past or are presently engaged in the collection of "good" or "best" practices on a range of topics, such initiatives usually focus on specific themes or topics of interest to the organization concerned rather than on protection. In addition, such initiatives are often time-limited or under-resourced, which may limit their usefulness and sustainability.

In order to bridge what would appear to be a gap in the collection of good practices in protection it is recommended that the PCWG, in line with its terms of reference and work plan, agree upon a framework for the collection of such practices. Some of the key elements of a potential framework are outlined below.

2. A framework for the collection of good practice in protection

A framework for the collection of good practices in protection should include a working definition and evaluation criteria, as well as an agreed method of identifying, evaluating, storing, exchanging and disseminating good practices. The framework should be practical and flexible while at the same time ensuring that the collection takes place in a systematic and structured manner.

2.1. Definition: What is a good practice?

There is at present no agreed definition of what constitutes a good practice within the human rights, humanitarian or development community. Different definitions and evaluation criteria have been used at different times by different actors.[3] A review of several past and existing initiatives confirms however that there are several recurrent elements that can be drawn upon to form a working definition for the PCWG. A good practice could thus potentially be defined as:

> *An action or a set of actions that, based on quantitative and/or qualitative evidence, has been demonstrated to have had a positive and tangible impact on a given protection issue, problem or challenge, thus resulting in enhanced protection of and respect for the rights of persons of concern.*

It is worth noting in this context that a good practice is not necessarily exhaustive or perfect. Rather it can be seen as representing the best available solution to a specific problem in light of available resources and the working environment in a given context.

2.2. Scope

A good practice collection should ideally reflect the broad range of activities undertaken by human rights, humanitarian and development actors in support of protection in humanitarian operations,

---

[1] It is recommended that the PCWG use the term "good practice" rather than "best practice", as the latter implies a hierarchy of practices and does not take account that the success of a given practice will to a large extent depend on the context. Protection, in line with the IASC definition, is understood to refer to all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of the relevant bodies of law, namely human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law. See *Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*, Policy Paper Series No. 2, IASC, 2000.

[2] *IASC Guidance Note Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen the Humanitarian Response*, IASC, 24 Nov 2004, p. 4.

[3] See Annex I for an overview of past and existing good practice initiatives relating to or of relevance for protection and Annex II for an overview of relevant publications and websites on good practices.

whether in complex emergencies or natural disasters. This could include preventive, responsive, remedial as well environment-building activities that take place during the different stages of humanitarian operations, including during sudden onset emergencies, protracted emergencies or during the recovery and transition phase. It could cover practices designed and implemented by various actors, including, but not limited to, international organizations, UN agencies, NGOs, governments, civil society actors, and affected individuals and communities themselves.

Annex III lists some types of activities which could be included. It is recommended, however, that during the initial stage the PCWG focus on collecting practices in a limited number of categories, as indicated in the Annex. It is similarly recommended that the PCWG focus on collecting good practices that are innovative and have the potential to adapted and replicated elsewhere.

2.3. Identification
Given the broad range of sources and contexts from which good practices may need to be drawn, it is important that the participants in the PCWG as well as other protection actors commit to facilitating and assisting with the identification of potential good practices. Identification could take place by different means, including:

➢ Desk review of existing good practices, evaluations, reports, sit reps and related material.
➢ Identification by staff and partners in the field, for instance through an online submission form on the PCWG website *(see Annex IV for a template for submission of good practices).*
➢ Identification by staff and partners on mission during evaluation, support or emergency missions, training events, workshops and seminars.
➢ By targeted outreach and field-based research missions.

It is recommended the that PCWG consider using the first three options presented above to identify potential good practices on an ongoing basis, keeping open the option of undertaking targeted outreach missions only if and when considered necessary. The identification of good practices could be coordinated by the PCWG Support Cell, in close cooperation with interested partners.

2.4. Evaluation criteria
To ensure quality, consistency and coherence, including compliance with relevant human rights and humanitarian law standards, potential good practices should be assessed and evaluated according to standard criteria. An evaluation must not only assess the positive impact of a given practice but also the extent of any unintended negative impact occurring in the medium or longer-term.

Drawing on recognized human rights principles and established evaluation standards several criteria for good practices can be identified.[4] These can be divided into key criteria (impact, relevance and coherence), which should be met in all instances, and additional criteria, which can be applied more flexibly. The criteria should be seen as presenting a framework for assessment of a practice rather than a rigid evaluation standard or a cumulative test. A given practice would not have to meet all of the criteria listed in order to qualify as good practice.

▪ **Standard evaluation criteria**
  Key criteria
  ☐ Impact   *Did the practice have a positive and tangible impact and result in improved protection for individuals and/or communities? Did it have any negative impact? Did impact differ in the immediate, medium or longer-term? Did impact differ depending on factors such as age, gender and/or socio-economic background of persons of concern?*
  ☐ Relevance   *Did the practice address the needs and priorities of persons of concern? Did it do so in an appropriate manner?*
  ☐ Coherence   *Was the practice consistent with overall policy and professional codes of conduct, including relevant legal standards and IASC guidelines? Did it complement rather than duplicate or undermine similar practices or projects?*

---

[4] The evaluation criteria listed are drawn from the *OECD-DAC Criteria for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies* and the *OECD-DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance.* It is worth noting that the Anti-Discrimination Unit of OHCHR has adopted the following criteria for good practices: impact, relevance, effective, participation, sustainable, and replicative.

<u>Additional criteria</u>
☐ Effectiveness *Did the practice achieve what it aimed to achieve (in a timely manner)?*
☐ Efficiency *Was efficient use made of available financial, human and other resources? Could the same result have been achieved through more efficient use of resources?*
☐ Sustainability *Was the practice sustainable and/or did it have a sustainable impact? Was an effort made to seek solutions to root causes?*

- **Protection criteria**
  ☐ Respecting and protecting rights *Did the practice aim to improve the protection of individuals and/or communities? Was it based on and aimed at ensuring respect for the rights of persons of concern as outlined in relevant bodies of law (human rights law, humanitarian law or refugee law)?*
  ☐ Participation *Were persons of concern consulted and did they participate in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the practice? Did the practice strengthen local capacity and encourage local ownership?*
  ☐ Non-discrimination and equality *Did women, men and children of different ages, abilities and backgrounds have equal and effective access to the practice? Alternatively, did the practice aim to combat discrimination and further equality by building the capacity of certain individuals and groups, such as such as women, children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and/or minorities?*

Practices that do not meet the criteria outlined above could be made available under a different heading or category, for instance as "promising" or "interesting" practices. This could, for instance, include practices that have much potential but are still too recent or untried to be conclusively labelled as good practices, and/or practices that while not meeting the minimum criteria contain innovative or interesting ideas or approaches that could prove useful elsewhere.

2.5. Storage, exchange and publication of good practices
Examples of good practices should be stored and made accessible in an organized, secure and user-friendly manner. This would require a centralized repository, including a database to enable browsing, cross-referencing and keyword search. The database could be made available online on the PCWG website and, should it be considered necessary, off-line in a CD/DVD format.

The database would have to be periodically reviewed and updated in order to ensure that the content remains relevant, accurate and useful. This is necessary as a practice that initially may have been considered to represent a good practice may over time have had an unintended negative impact or side-effects for persons of concern. Ideally, the database would enable immediate feed-back from experts and practitioners that have tried to adapt and replicate a given practice, for instance through a standardized data submission form.

Measures should be taken to ensure privacy and confidentiality of information where necessary. Politically or culturally sensitive information may also need to be handled with care. Practices must thus be carefully selected, drafted and disseminated. In some cases, it may be appropriate to share practices through an access-controlled and password-protected part of the database rather than through its public interface.

2.5. Project management and oversight
It is recommended that the PCWG consider establishing a small reference group tasked with overseeing the project, including evaluating and vetting potential good practices. The work of the group could be largely informal and take place through electronic communication. The participants should ideally have an institutional link with relevant evaluation/lesson learned sections within their organization and have legal as well as operational knowledge of protection, as well as evaluation methodology and criteria.

_____

Annexes:
Annex I – Overview of past and existing good or best practice initiatives.
Annex II – Existing publications and/or websites on good or best practices having relevance for protection.
Annex III – Overview of protection categories and topics for the collection of good practices.
Annex IV – Template for the collection and dissemination of good practices.

ANNEX I
Overview of past and existing good or best practice initiatives

The **DPKO** Peacekeeping Best Practices Section, together with OCHA, is commissioning a year-long independent study to identify lessons learned and good practices in implementing the protection of civilians mandate in peace-keeping contexts, with emphasis on the role of the UN military and police. See www.un.org/Depts/dpko/lessons/

IASC, in the context of the IASC Reference Group on Humanitarian Action and Human Rights, commissioned a series of field studies 1998-2002 and published a good practice collection, Growing the Sheltering Tree, in 2002.

The Inter-Agency Learning Network, together with **UNICEF and Columbia University,** is embarking upon a project aimed at identifying good practices in child protection. The first consultative meeting is scheduled in Oslo in the fall of 2008.

NRC (ICLA and CCCM projects) is currently undertaking an evaluation of protection monitoring in their operations, including collection of best practice. It is expected to be finalized by April 2008.

OHCHR is currently working on developing criteria for good practices, including through its Anti-Discrimination Unit, which will be hosting a workshop with experts and practitioners in March 2008.

UNAIDS publishes cases studies, policy papers, lessons learned and other material as part of a Best Practice Collection, available online at www.unaids.org/DocOrder/OrderForm.aspx.

UNDP maintains a Gender Best Practice Database which documents good practices and lessons learned in gender programmes, projects and activities. See www.sdnp.undp.org/gender/practices.

The **UNESCO** MOST Project Best Practice Database provided (until 2003) examples of good practice in poverty eradication, social integration, gender equality, housing, economic development, community participation, urban governance and crime prevention. See www.unesco.org/most/bphome.htm#2.

UNHABITAT maintains a database on best practice, good policies, laws, cases and studies related to land and property from over 140 countries. There is a standing call for submission of best practice from public, private and civil society and a reward, the Dubai International Award for Best Practice to Improve the Living Environment, is awarded on a yearly basis. See www.bestpractices.org.

UNHCR has published several handbooks which contain good practice examples, including the Reference Guide on Operational Protection in Camps and Settlements, the Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls, and the Guide on Selected Good Practices in Reintegration.

UNICEF maintains an internal database of evaluations, lessons learned and good practice in child protection, as well as public website with a few best practice examples. See www.unicef.org/evaluation/index_goodpractices.html

WFP is currently collecting examples of good practices, which will be made available to a wider audience upon the completion of the project, scheduled for late 2008.

WHO, together with **UNFPA, USAID and other partners**, runs the Implementing Best Practices Initiative in Reproductive Health, which aims to maximize the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of reproductive health services by identifying and exchanging best practices. See www.ibpinitiative.org

The UNDG Policy Network for MDGs and the MDG Asia Pacific Network has launched a global call to all country teams to identify and share good practices to achieve the MDGs before 2015. See www.undg.org/?P=554.

Existing publications and/or websites on good or best practices relevant to protection

Publications
- A Practical Guide to Empowerment: UNHCR Good Practices on Gender Equality Mainstreaming, UNHCR, 2001.
- Best Practices in a Global Context, UNHCR (Colombia), 2008.
- Best Practices in Peace Building and Non-Violent Conflict Resolution, UNHCR / UNESCO / UNDP / UNFPA / UNICEF / UNIFEM, 1998.
- Examples of "Good Practices" to Fight Against Racism and Intolerance in the European Media, European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), Council of Europe, 2000.
- Gender Perspective: Working Together for Disaster Risk Reduction: Good Practices and Lessons Learned, United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, UN/ISDR, 2007.
- Growing the Sheltering Tree: Protecting Rights through Humanitarian Action, IASC, 2002.
- Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls, UNHCR, 2008 *(See page 7 for a list of good practice examples).*
- Manual on Field Practice in Internal Displacement, IASC, 1999.
- Operational Protection in Camps and Settlements: A Reference Guide of Good Practices in the Protection of Refugees and Other Persons of Concern, UNHCR, 2006.
- So You Want to Consult with Children? A Toolkit of Good Practice, International Save the Children Alliance, 2003.
- UNHCR Guide on Selected Good Practices in Reintegration, UNHCR, 2006.

Websites on good/best practices
- Advance Africa's Best Practice Compendium in Reproductive Health and Family Planning Service Delivery → www.advanceafrica.org/Compendium
- Best Practice Database, UNHABITAT → www.bestpractices.org
- Better Care Network for Children without Adequate Family Care (BCN) → www.crin.org/bcn/theme.asp?themeID=1003&pageID=1046
- Gender Good Practice Database, UNDP → www.sdnp.undp.org/gender/practices/completed.html
- Good Practices in Education for Sustainable Development, UNECE / UNESCO → www.unece.org/env/esd/GoodPractices/index.html
- Implementing Best Practices in Reproductive Health, WHO / UNFPA / USAID and partners → http://www.ibpinitiative.org
- MOST Best Practices Database (eradication of poverty and reduction of social exclusion), UNESCO → www.unesco.org/most/bphome.htm#2
- Peacekeeping Best Practices, DPKO → www.un.org/Depts/dpko/lessons
- Reliefweb section on Evaluations and Lessons Learned → www.reliefweb.int/rw/lib.nsf/doc207?OpenForm&query=4&cat=Evaluation%20%2F%20Lessons%20Learned
- UNICEF Good Practice Website → www.unicef.org/evaluation/index_goodpractices.html

Other websites
- Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) → www.alnap.org
- Best Practices Signpost, the INFO Project → www.infoforhealth.org/practices/signpost.shtml
- Promising Practice Network on Children, Families and Communities → http://promisingpractices.net
- The Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) → www.tsunami-evaluation.org/home

<u>ANNEX III</u>
Overview of protection categories and topics for collection of good practices

The matrix below list several key protection categories and topics that could be used to classify potential good practices. The list is not exhaustive and should primarily be used for internal purposes. It should not, at this stage, be used for outreach. It is recommended that the PCWG focus on collecting practices related to the topics that are highlighted during the initial phase.

CATEGORY	TOPIC
Principles of protection	Right-based approach to programming
	Non-discrimination and equality (including age, gender and diversity mainstreaming)
	Participation
General activities	**Protection coordination** (including TORs for PWGs, coordinators, etc)
	Protection assessment and monitoring (including needs assessments/situational analysis and incident monitoring)
	Strategy development
	Programme monitoring and evaluation
Specific activities	**Advocacy**
	Access and presence
	Capacity-building
	Legal aid and assistance
	Information and communication activities
	Evacuation / relocation
	Psycho-social support
	Coordination and management of camps and collective settings
	Mainstreaming protection
Specific protection issues / themes	Preventing or mitigating forced and unlawful displacement
	Protection of civil and legal status (including documentation)
	Protection of life, safety and security
	Preventing and responding to gender-based violence
	Mine awareness and education
	Preventing and responding to human trafficking
	Liberty and freedom of movement
	Protection of family unity
	Access to justice
	Land and property
	Political participation
	Shelter
	HIV prevention, treatment, care and support
	Health
	Livelihoods (including employment)
	Education
	Food and nutrition
	Water and sanitation
Groups with specific needs	Children
	Older persons
	Women and girls
	Persons with disabilities
Other	**Working with national authorities**
	Working with communities / persons of concern (community mobilization)
	Working with military actors

Template for submission and dissemination of good practices

IASC PCWG

Good Practices in Protection

SUBMISSION FORM

Please fill in the form below, 1-2 pages maximum, and send it to HQPROCLU@unhcr.org.

Title: *(Be as descriptive as you can)*
Summary: *(Provide a short summary, 1-2 sentences)*
Actor(s): *(List the agencies and/or organizations that designed and implemented the practice)*
Location: *(Country, region, town, etc.)*
Start/end date: *(Month, year)*
Keyword(s): *(List any keywords that come to mind)*

Background *(please describe the context and the protection issue/problem the practice aims to address)*

Description *(please describe the practice/project itself)*

Impact *(please describe any positive and/or unintended negative impact in the immediate, medium or longer-term)*

Lessons learned *(please describe any lessons learned and/or give advice on ways to improve the practice)*

Further information *(please list below or attach references or further information, such as reports, evaluations, photographs and other available material, and include contact information if appropriate).*

7