

# Results-Based Protection



FEBRUARY/MARCH 2019 UPDATE



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

19-20 March: Training organized by the Tamarack Institute: *Collective Impact: Leading theory to action*

1-31 March: Training organized by TRAASS International: *Learning to Adapt: A Guide to Real-Time Evaluation and Adaptive Management*

22-23 May: Workshop organized by the Tamarack Institute: *Evaluation + Design: Evaluating Systems Change*

Photo courtesy of Adedotun Ajibade, 2017

## *Time to break old habits: Shifting from Complicity to Protection of the Rohingya in Myanmar*

Click [here](#) to read the full report.

**Liam Mahony argues** in his paper *Time to break old habits*, published in June 2018, that since the late 1990s humanitarian actors have maintained an approach of “quiet humanitarian support and quiet diplomacy” in the face of systemic discrimination and violence against minority populations, namely the Rohingya (pg.22). By avoiding using the word “Rohingya”, financing/staffing “prison” like camp settings (pg.26), and focusing on local inter-communal tensions rather than at the national level, he argues that humanitarians are complicit in perpetuating the very problems they are intended to help solve. In this rich report, Liam makes a series of assertions, including the fact that detailed analyses of threats, harmful policies, and conflict dynamics affecting vulnerable people are not shared among actors and are not used as a basis for human rights action and advocacy, nor for critical self-reflection and strategic re-orientation of efforts.

**“A fundamental problem was that this approach treated the state actors as partners in responding to a humanitarian crisis, rather than perpetrators of the human rights abuses causing that crisis.” (pg.23)**

Liam puts forth a series of recommendations, including (but not limited to):

- Changing attitudes and breaking through inertia (pg.10)
- Confronting the widespread belief that the Myanmar government is impervious to influence (pg.10)
- Stop assuming that doing advocacy is someone else’s job (pg.10)
- Refocusing the problem analysis to place greater accountability at the national level (pg.10)
- Empower and listen more to Rohingya voices (pg.11)
- Launch a relentless and outspoken campaign for freedom of movement (pg.11)
- Stop calling “prison”/detention camps “IDP camps”, and use the word “Rohingya” (pg.11)
- Apply strict conditionality to all financing and program support (pg.13)

While Liam focused on the case of Myanmar in this paper, this approach of quiet diplomacy is common in humanitarian crisis around the world. Two key takeaways include the suggestion for “mature and long-term analysis” (pg.10) as well as that of collective strategies (pg.38) as a way for humanitarian actors to leverage against abusive governments.



### Related Resources

#### Human Rights up Front Initiative

Following the civil war in Sri Lanka, the UN Secretary General initiated an Internal Review Panel on UN action in 2012 which subsequently led to *Human Rights up Front*.

*Report of the Secretary-General’s Internal Review Panel on United Nations Action in Sri Lanka* from November 2012

*Human Rights up Front: An Overview*

The “*Rights Up Front*” *Detailed Action Plan*, updated in March 2014

The *IASC Statement on the Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action* from December 2013

The *IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action* from October 2016

The GPC’s *Provisional Guidance Note on Humanitarian Country Team Protection Strategy*

#### Fieldview Solutions

Liam Mahony, author of *Time to break old habits*, is a co-founder of Fieldview Solutions, an organization that provides strategic planning advice, research and analysis, and training design and delivery services to NGOs.

## Three-part mini-series on “Negotiating Protection”

Register on the [CCHN website](#) to access the mini-series



**Alex Mundt, Senior** Advisor at the Center of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN), carried out research on protection advocacy and negotiations in humanitarian emergencies. This 3-part mini-series, published on the CCHN network in 2018 (register as part of the community on the [CCHN website](#) to access the mini-series), highlights some of his findings and links them to larger academic debates.

Part 1, *Protection Advocacy vs. Negotiation?* examines the blurred lines between advocacy and negotiation in protective humanitarian action. Within the humanitarian community, a dominant viewpoint expressed is that protection is not subject to negotiation, yet most acknowledge that some compromise is generally required to make progress towards achieving protection outcomes. To date, however, there is no policy guidance for frontline protection staff on negotiation – how, when, and where to negotiate, as well as what can be compromised are generally left up to individual staff members. During interviews, when asked to cite examples of negotiation, most protection staff cited an example of advocacy. Yet, when pressed, they could also cite an example of negotiation, but this “had the flavor of a dirty family secret – something well-known but rarely spoken of” (para 5).

**“In contexts of limited access and ability to verify populations, protection negotiators are often obliged to negotiate the unknown and draw lines regarding assistance to populations of concern that seek to balance distributive demands of counterparts with some degree of adherence to humanitarian principles that will ensure the inclusion of populations of greatest needs or at greatest risk.” (para.10)**

Some examples of negotiation cited by interviewees related to semantics used in Humanitarian Response Plans and other documents as decisions as to where to intervene and which sub-populations to target (and leave aside), as compromises of key principles in favor of “the interests of the greater good”. One interviewee explained how a negotiation took place and resulted in modifying “SGBV survivors” to “women who have experienced hardship” in a document. As a result, women survivors had increased access to psychosocial and medical support (para 12).

### Related Resources

[Parts 2 & 3 of the mini-series](#)

Part 2 of this mini-series *Negotiating Humanitarian Spaces: the Subjectivity of Humanitarian Principles* examines the subjectivity of humanitarian principles in an increasingly crowded and contested space and reflects on notions of power and powerlessness among negotiating humanitarian actors.

Part 3, *Negotiating Protection in a Crowded Field: Professionalization, Bureaucratization, & the Existing Humanitarian Architecture* examines the bureaucratic impediments that frontline protection staff cited and links these to academic debates surrounding the professionalization and bureaucratization of the humanitarian architecture.

(register as part of the community on the [CCHN website](#) to access the mini-series)

[CCHN’s guide on humanitarian negotiation](#)

The guide [CCHN Field Manual on Frontline Humanitarian Negotiation](#) was published in December 2018.

## *Jumping hurdles: key barriers to community feedback mechanisms*

Click [here](#) to read the article.

**Results-based approaches** to protection aim to put affected people at the center of analysis, and subsequently, at the heart of the response strategy. Community feedback mechanisms are an increasingly popular tool employed by humanitarian actors with regards to downwards accountability, yet are often treated as a box-ticking exercise. This article, *Jumping hurdles: key barriers to community feedback mechanisms* by Viviane Lucia Fluck and Dustin Barter, published in the Humanitarian Practice Network magazine in February 2019, explores some of the barriers that exist and proposes suggestions on how organizations can address them.

The authors argue that however popular community feedback mechanisms are, they often fail to “provide accountability” due to their set-up, the questions posed, the systems that organizations have in place to manage feedback (or lack of system), and other barriers. These shortcomings can have an array of negative consequences.

One systemic barrier is the lack of coordination and harmonization among actors in a given context with regards to what information to collect, how to respond, as well as sharing feedback received, i.e. when one organization receives feedback regarding another actor or their work, this may fail to make the rounds to the appropriate receiver. At the organizational level, barriers center on a general lack of organizational commitment to long-term accountability processes that may require substantial resources.

**“Efficient and successful community engagement mechanisms need buy-in from all levels, appropriate resources and, most important, a genuine commitment to put the people we serve at the center of everything we do.” (para 16)**

The authors argue that the key to tackling these many barriers “lies in a coordinated, cooperative approach that puts the affected population at the heart of everything we do” (para 13). It requires organizations to listen to affected people’s preferences for providing feedback and set the agenda, and making this happen. The next step is for feedback to be meaningfully used to adapt programming. Clusters and other coordination fora should encourage coordinated mechanisms that allows feedback to be shared. At the organizations level, dedicated staff and resources should be budgeted for and prioritized, while simultaneously reinforcing the message that everyone is responsible to support feedback mechanisms.

## *The language factor: lessons for communication and community engagement from Translators without Borders’ experience*

Click [here](#) to read the article.

Continuing the conversation on the importance of language and communication in humanitarian response, this article *The language factor: lessons for communication and community engagement from Translators without Borders’ experience*, by Mia Marzotto published in the Humanitarian Practice Network magazine in February 2019, offers insights on the Ebola response in West Africa in 2014-2015 and the European refugee response since 2015, as well as the Rohingya response and the ongoing crisis in Northeast Nigeria.

Citing several telling examples, and providing practical solutions to improve effective two-way communication, the article makes the case for collectively investing in translation in humanitarian action.

### Related Resource

Webinar: *Language in Protection Humanitarian Action: Practical lessons from Myanmar/Bangladesh and Northeast Nigeria*

Hosted by InterAction, with Translators without Borders



Results-Based Protection updates are produced regularly to share materials and events related to RBP with InterAction's members and partners. To sign-up to receive future updates, click [here](#) and submit your name and e-mail.



Previous updates are available on the [Resources section](#) of the RBP website.



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