Partnerships in the field of protection: local perspectives

Sara Pantuliano, Humanitarian Policy Group, ODI

Humanitarian Protection

Policy debates have centred on responsibility of governments to protect citizens and rights of international actors to intervene.

Protection programming has tended to fit requirements of agencies and donors.

- and is often an activity undertaken on behalf of vulnerable communities, rather than in partnership with them.

Without consultation with affected communities, external interventions may inadvertently undermine existing coping mechanisms.

Local 2 Global Protection

Conclusions

Outside actors miss many opportunities to build on and strengthen local capacities.

Deep-rooted institutional factors inhibit effective engagement with local self-protection efforts.

Dominant institutional priorities, structures and approaches don't encourage local protection.

Humanitarian agencies and donors must do more to understand and engage.

Local protection cannot be regarded as a substitute for protection responsibilities of national or international actors.
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Local 2 Global Protection
Affected populations have strong understanding of the challenges they face

- Self protection activities build social capital and intercommunity bonds
- Sources of protection include elders and other local leaders
- Local social, moral and religious values are crucial
Dilemmas and trade-offs

- Individual rights vs family or community needs
- Safety vs livelihood security
- Negative coping strategies
- Role of international agencies perceived as marginal
- International frameworks insufficiently aware of local protection activities
- Lack of coherent and systematic approach in international agencies towards armed non-state actors
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Dominant institutional priorities, structures and approaches don’t encourage local protection.

Humanitarian agencies and donors must do more to understand and engage.

But local protection cannot be regarded as a substitute for protection responsibilities of national or international actors.

It’s time to rethink how we can do better and become meaningful partners for affected populations.