



Action plans Community engagement Community protection structures
Protection analysis Risk analysis

📍 Global

Community-based protection risk analysis

Introduction

A protection risk analysis explores the protection situation in a specific area. Staff from supporting humanitarian organizations must conduct a protection risk analysis at the beginning of community-based protection (CBP) programming as part of their efforts to understand the community and its protection situation and regularly update their analysis. In addition, members of community protection structures (CPSs) also undertake protection risk analyses as part of their activities when taking decisions about their planned activities.¹

This tool focuses on protection risk analyses done with and by CPS members or other community members. It explores the objectives, content and conduct of protection risk analyses. A template table for analysing individual risks is provided, along with an example of a completed table and a table for summarizing an analysis.

What is the objective of community-based protection risk analysis?

The community-based protection risk analysis serves as a basis for [community protection action plans](#), identifying the most relevant risks for each group within a community. It ensures that CPS members have the same understanding of the protection risks they are going to address through their work, and take time to think about the causes and impacts of the threats the community faces, in order to better decide on activities to tackle them.

What does a protection risk analysis contain?

A protection risk analysis looks at the different elements of the protection risk equation (see **Figure 1**). For each risk identified by community groups or the community in general, it analyses:

- the **threat**;
- the **vulnerability** of community members to it;
- community members' **capacity** to withstand or manage it; and
- the effect of **time**.

¹ This global tool builds and further expands on existing guidance documents produced by Oxfam's protection teams in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Global Humanitarian Team.

Figure 1: Protection risk equation

$$\downarrow \text{Risk} = \frac{\downarrow \text{Threat} + \downarrow \text{Vulnerability} \text{ (x Time)}}{\uparrow \text{Capacity}}$$

When looking at the **threat**, the protection risk analysis should include threats belonging to the three categories detailed in the [protection guidance note](#): violence, coercion and deliberate deprivation. For each threat, an analysis should explore how and where the threat occurs, and when and how often it takes place. In addition, it should identify perpetrators and their motivations. In order to reduce the risk of retaliation against CPS members, CPS members can use codes to anonymise the different perpetrators; the list of codes should be kept separately from the analysis. Finally, analysing the threat also involves assessing its underlying causes.

The analysis of **vulnerability** should identify which people or group(s) of people are most exposed and vulnerable to the identified threat, and why. There are different factors that can make a person vulnerable to a specific threat, such as gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, political opinion, social status and displacement status. Often one person is vulnerable to a protection threat because of several factors (e.g. due to their gender and age) – this is called ‘intersectionality’.

The element of **time** looks at how long and how often vulnerable people are exposed to the identified threat. This could for example be once a day or once a week, and for 20 minutes or for several hours.

When analysing the **capacity** of communities to reduce and mitigate risks, one should look at different levels, including that of individuals, households, community groups and the community in general. As detailed in the [guidance note on self-protection](#), self-protection capacities include knowledge, resources, solidarity and engagement. The guidance note also includes a tool for identifying existing self-protection strategies (both positive and negative). In addition, community members can identify what resources or support they are lacking to allow them to reinforce positive self-protection strategies. Finally, the capacity section also considers what duty bearers do or do not do to fulfil their responsibilities, and what NGOs and UN agencies are doing to support communities in their protection.

[Annex 1](#) summarizes the key question for each element of the risk equation in a table that can be used to analyse individual threats. [Annex 2](#) gives an example of a filled table for a specific protection risk.

How is a community-based protection risk analysis conducted?

CPS members conduct the protection risk analysis, with the supporting humanitarian organization providing assistance, including:

- training on protection and the protection risk elements;
- helping in the preparation and use of the tools; and
- accompanying CPS members during data collection with other community members.

The first time CPSs conduct a protection risk analysis, they will need more support than subsequent times. As well as setting aside sufficient time, staff from supporting organizations should be prepared to challenge negative attitudes and social norms, as well as the personal biases of CPS members through discussion.

Before assessing each risk in more detail using the table in [Annex 1](#), there are three main steps for determining the protection risks:

- Collecting and analysing data from CPS members;

- Collecting and analysing data from other community members; and
- Validating results with community members.

1. Collecting and analysing data from CPS members

There are many possible ways to collect an initial list of protection risks, such as brainstorming; community mapping; or running focus group discussions with CPS members. If a CPS needs a rapid analysis of the protection situation in their community, they can skip step 2, but return to it later to update their plans.

2. Collecting and analysing data from other community members

CPS members should consult other community members on their perceptions of protection risks. Ideally the CPS members should work in pairs, so that one can facilitate discussions while the other takes notes. CPS members should choose to consult community groups and individuals that they have access to, and where it is culturally and socially acceptable for them to do so, this is why it is important to have a diverse and inclusive CPS in the first place. For instance, in many cases women should consult other women in the community, and people with disabilities might feel more comfortable speaking about their protection concerns to CPS members with disabilities. If CPS members speak to a mixed-gender group of community members, then the pair should be a man and a woman. Since discussions can be difficult and sensitive, it is a good idea to have staff from supporting organizations accompany CPS members at least the first few times. To ensure diversity and representativity of the results, a wide range of community members should be consulted from different ages, genders, ethnicities, sexual orientations, religions, abilities and displacement statuses.

Methods that can be used to collect information include community mapping, focus group discussions, interviews and safety audits. Regardless of the methods chosen, CPS members should seek free, prior and informed consent from participants.

3. Validating results with community members

CPS members should share the results of their protection risk analysis with community members and seek feedback on its conclusions and prioritization. Depending on the security context, this can be done in a large community meeting or in smaller groups. The information provided to the community members at this stage should not be attributable to individual community members. CPS members can use the summary table in [Annex 3](#) to record the main findings of their analysis. They should also communicate to community members when they intend to update their analysis and share these updates with the community.

Safe programming risks in protection analysis

Discussions around protection concerns can be very sensitive and have the potential to cause further harm if the protection analysis is not done in a safe way. CPS members and supporting humanitarian organizations should therefore do a [safe programming risk analysis](#) before starting the exercise. Risks include retraumatizing survivors, retaliation from perpetrators, leaking personal information, sexual exploitation and abuse during data collection, and raising false expectations.

Some mitigating measures include discouraging participants from sharing details of personal protection incidents; CPS members and humanitarian staff being able to refer victims and survivors to protection services; organizing small groups by gender, age and diversity criteria; and identifying safe ways to compile, store, use and share protection data. Those collecting data must prevent putting communities at risk and identify ways to mitigate such risks.²

² For more information on responsible data management, see Oxfam, "Responsible Program Data Policy", 2015, available <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/oxfam-responsible-program-data-policy-575950/> and Oxfam, "Responsible Data Management Training Pack", 2017, available at <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/responsible-data-management-training-pack-620235/> (both accessed July 2021).

Annex 1: Template protection risk analysis matrix

NB This table is intended to be used for the detailed analysis of individual threats. Therefore, use one table per threat.

Threat	What is the threat?	
	Where does the threat occur?	
	When (e.g. time of the day/week/season) does it occur?	
	Who are the perpetrators? What is their motivation?	
	What are the underlying causes or exacerbating factors of the threat?	
Vulnerability	Who is vulnerable to the threat?	
	Why are they vulnerable (e.g. gender, age, diversity, status, livelihood activity, health needs)?	
Time	How often and/or for how long are vulnerable people exposed to the threat?	
Impact	What is the impact of the threat on survivors and vulnerable people?	
	What is the impact of the threat on the community in general?	
Capacity	How do the vulnerable people protect themselves? How does the rest of the community protect the vulnerable people?	
	What resources, support and assistance are accessible within the community for them to protect themselves? What is missing?	
	Who is responsible for protection? What do they do? What are the gaps?	
	What do NGOs and UN agencies do? What are the gaps?	

Annex 2: Example of a completed protection risk analysis matrix

NB In this example, Z is the code for the armed group that the perpetrators belong to.

Threat	What is the threat?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extortion • Women on foot using road X being stopped by armed men when they cross checkpoint 1, being asked to pay money to be able to cross checkpoint
	Where does the threat occur?	Checkpoint 1 on road X that connects villages A and B
	When (e.g. time of the day/week/season) does it occur?	On market days (Tuesday), mainly in the late afternoon/early evening when women come back from the market; since the commander of Z left the area two weeks ago
	Who are the perpetrators? What is their motivation?	Individual armed men from Z; they want money; they want to exercise and show their power
	What are the underlying causes or exacerbating factors of the threat?	Commander of Z not in the area, so has less control over individual members of Z; members of Z have arrived recently to this area and want to impose their control and power; Z is running out of food for its members
Vulnerability	Who is vulnerable to the threat?	Women and girls travelling by food on the road on the way back from the market
	Why are they vulnerable (e.g. gender, age, diversity, status, livelihood activity, health needs)?	<p>Members of Z appear to target women specifically for their gender as they are most likely to have sold produce in the market</p> <p>Women travelling on the road late in the afternoon/early in the evening when not many others are around and the market has finished:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying produce slows women and girls down • There is no market in village A and the most direct (and most practicable) route to the market in village B is via road X
Time	How often and/or for how long are vulnerable people exposed to the threat?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once a week

Impact	<p>What is the impact of the threat on survivors and vulnerable people?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional (stress, anxiety, depression) • Physical (injuries if they resist) • Economic (loss of money because of extortion but also because some women stop going to the market to sell their produce and sell it on the road where prices are lower) • Possible food insecurity because some women stop going to the market to buy food <p>Community in village A: economic loss, possible impact on food security for families because fewer families go to market</p> <p>Community in village B: less produce available on markets, possible impact on food security in future</p>
	<p>What is the impact of the threat on the community in general?</p>	<p>Emotional (stress, anxiety, depression)</p> <p>Physical (injuries if they resist)</p> <p>Economic (loss of money because of extortion but also because some women stop going to the market to sell their produce and sell it on the road where prices are lower)</p> <p>Possible food insecurity because some women stop going to the market to buy food</p>
Capacity	<p>How do the vulnerable people protect themselves? How does the rest of the community protect the vulnerable people?</p>	<p>Women stop going to the market, with men going instead; women going in groups; women leaving the market earlier than usually</p>
	<p>What resources, support and assistance are accessible within the community for them to protect themselves? What is missing?</p>	<p>Forum of women farmers is very engaged in this issue and are raising awareness</p> <p>An alternative route could exist, but a bridge would have to be repaired</p>
	<p>Who is responsible for protection? What do they do? What are the gaps?</p>	<p>State authorities are not present in the area; since this is a non-international armed conflict, Z is responsible for protection in the area under their control (under international humanitarian law) but since commander left, there is no one with control over individual members of Z</p>
	<p>What do NGOs and UN agencies do? What are the gaps?</p>	<p>No NGOs or UN agencies present at this time</p>

Annex 3: Template table for summary protection analysis

NB This table can be used to summarize information about the different protection risks, to provide CPSs with an overview of all identified risks.

The threat	Who is targeted/most vulnerable	Underlying reasons, impact of the threat and contextual information	Affected people's coping mechanisms/capacities