



Tool

Capacity strengthening | Community protection structures | Material support
Roles and responsibilities | Selection of volunteers

📍 Democratic Republic of Congo

Terms of reference of Community protection structures (CPS)

By Oxfam's protection team

Explanation of community protection structures

There are three different community protection structures (CPSs) at the local level – community protection committees (CPCs), women's forums (WFs) and agents of change (AOCs), which can receive support from steering committees. Generally speaking, their roles include the following: analysis of protection, awareness-raising, advocacy and referrals (guidance towards services). CPSs are not there to replace the authorities, but to supplement their work in a certain way. Unlike other community groups, associations and human rights defenders, CPSs do not get involved in individual cases or mediation.¹

The three main structures and the steering committees are detailed below.

Young people in CPSs

It is essential that young people be represented in CPSs in order to ensure that their concerns are taken into account, that they participate in decision-making and that awareness-raising activities reach them.

To avoid creating multiple parallel structures, Oxfam has decided to not necessarily create a young people's forum. However, it is important to guarantee a minimum number of representatives of young people in CPSs. According to the communities, it might be a good idea to set a quota for the number of young members. Moreover, it has proven a positive thing having youth focal points among the CPS members, which guarantee liaison with associations and representatives of the community's young people.

Lastly, organising meetings for young people (both male and female) who are members of CPSs either with each other or with community youth groups, in order to analyse their protection priorities, is good practice.

¹ Although CPSs do not carry out any mediation themselves, their members should be trained in the basic principles of mediation. This is in order to acknowledge that, to a certain degree, the members will not be able to say no to requests for mediation by other community members (e.g. domestic violence). However, we must always insist on a proper risk analysis.

Internal rules

It is advisable for CPSs to establish a form of internal rules or code of conduct. This explains how the CPSs wish to work among themselves and how individuals should behave so as not to harm their CPS's image or pose risks to themselves or other members.

Community protection committee (CPC)

The CPC is a central structure for the programme. It is responsible for identifying protection threats, as well as drawing up, implementing and monitoring community protection plans.

Though the CPC is often considered to be the "central" protection structure, it is not superior to the other two structures. It is the responsibility of all CPS members to contribute to protection analyses and actions.

Roles and responsibilities

It is the CPC's responsibility to carry out:

- **Analysis and action plan**

- In consultation with the WF and AoCs, identify the local protection threats of the highest priority for the community protection plan (CPP).
- Conduct an analysis of the power wielded by the authorities who have influence over the threats described in the CPP.
- Identify possible actions to reduce the threats identified, conduct a risk analysis, and draw up a protection action plan.

- **Awareness-raising**

- In consultation with WFs and AoCs, undertake actions aimed at raising awareness in the community and spreading the message about protection and the relevant national and international laws, depending on the threat.

- **Advocacy**

- Facilitate good collaboration between the local authorities and the population.
- In consultation with the WF and AoCs, undertake advocacy actions depending on the threat.

- **Referrals**

- Map the available protection and care services, identifying gaps and difficulties, and share the information with women and men in the communities.
- Help victims of abuse to access these services.

- **Coordination**

- Organise monthly meetings with WFs and AoCs with the support of the steering committee, if necessary.

Limits

- Check information properly: triangulation;
- No promises;
- No name on protection reports;

- Do not be defenders/judges;
- Do not replace the authorities;
- Do not get involved in political affairs;
- Do not ask for money or other compensation in exchange for a service provided.

Composition

12 members (six women and six men), elected at general meetings.

Women's Forum (WF)

The objective of the WF is to provide a framework in which women can express themselves, where they can discuss the specific protection threats facing women and girls (or those threats that have a greater impact on them).

The structure of the WF was established after it was noted that women were not talking very much during CPC meetings and that their opinions were not always taken into account in CPPs. WF meetings are held before the monthly CPS meetings and before the CPP update meetings, so that their contribution can be included.

It is good to include women from different social strata within the communities, such as women who are members of different associations or networks, young women (both married and not yet married) and older women. This guarantees that the opinions of people with different experiences are taken into account, and that information is shared with different groups within the community.

Roles and responsibilities

- **Analysis and action plan**
 - Identify protection risks, especially those specific to women and girls.
 - Based on reflection about the ways and means of finding solutions to these problems, develop a women's protection plan (WPP), to be integrated into the CPP.
- **Mobilisation**
 - Organise discussion spaces for women and mobilise them to improve their self-protection.
- **Awareness-raising and advocacy**
 - In consultation with the CPC and AoCs, undertake actions aimed at raising awareness, spreading information and advocacy.
 - Share the specific problems facing women with the authorities.
 - Improve collaboration with the authorities.
- **Referrals**
 - Contribute to mapping and spreading knowledge of protection and care services, including services that respond to gender-based violence and domestic violence. Steer victims of abuse towards protection and care services by encouraging self-referral.
- **Coordination**
 - Collaborate with other protection structures (CPCs and AoCs).
 - Participate in CPC meetings through representatives.
 - Participate in the development of the CPP.

- Work in synergy with women’s associations, without ruling out the possibility of working with men.

Limits

- The same as for CPCs.

Composition

15 women, elected at general meetings, or female leaders representing the different women’s associations.

Agents of change (AoCs)

Agents of change are inhabitants of peripheral areas who ensure that the project has a sphere of influence in the surrounding areas and neighbouring villages of the central village where the project is implemented. These areas are often affected by the presence of armed groups and uncontrolled elements of the army. There is therefore less surveillance, and numerous abuses take place there. AoCs respond to a need expressed by the population and can also reinforce links and communication between the centre and the interdependent surrounding areas.

These AoCs are elected at general meetings. They are people who are members of local networks, such as teachers, pupil parent groups, church groups and community outreach workers based at healthcare centres. They already have a network for passing on information, have awareness-raising skills and are recognised at the local level.

The relationship between AoCs and the other structures is not one of subordination. AoCs and CPC and WF members are all members of the CPPs. AoCs may attend all CPC and WF meetings and training sessions, but it is understood that they will not always be available. AoCs will often need support from the steering committee to undertake their actions and monitor advocacy activities. They will also be in contact with the committee and with other AoCs from the opposite side of the centre. This communication between the periphery and the centre needs to be reinforced.

AoCs are the most recently created structure within Oxfam’s CPPs. The CPCs and WFs therefore have more knowledge to date, and can assist with the training and support of AoCs, in particular by visiting the AoCs’ areas of provenance.

Composition

Preferably, there are at least two agents (one man and one woman) per zone.

Roles and responsibilities

- **Analysis**
 - Conduct monitoring and reports for protection incidents.
 - Analyse protection needs in their locality.
 - The only CPC activity that AoCs do not carry out is the CPP. However, they can participate at the centre level and share the most pertinent messages at their own level.
- **Referrals**
 - Contribute to mapping and spreading knowledge of protection and care services at their own local level.
 - Steer victims of abuse towards protection and care services by encouraging self-referral. Contribute to mapping protection and care services and to raising awareness among the population about the existence of such services and how to use them.

- **Awareness-raising**

- Prepare awareness-raising actions with the CPCs.
- Dissemination of information.

- **Advocacy**

- Facilitate contact between the authorities and the communities.
- Participate in advocacy at the central level and carry out advocacy at their own level (if they have undertaken appropriate training).

Limits

- The same as for CPCs.

Coordination/steering committee

The sustainability study carried out in 2016² showed that the collaboration between the three CPSs (CPC, WF and AoCs) in a given village can still be improved. In response to this, a coordination or steering committee can be put in place. This committee is responsible for coordinating the meetings and actions of the three CPSs. The steering committee consists of eight representatives of the CPC (one man and one woman), the WF (two women) and the AoCs (two men and two women).

Rotation of the representatives on this committee must be encouraged in order to prevent it from becoming a parallel structure and to avoid the risk of someone becoming inactive.

The committee may be responsible for:

- Organising monthly meetings bringing together all the CPSs;
- Organising the updating of the CPP;
- Coordinating awareness-raising and advocacy actions;
- Organising meetings with local authorities;
- Organising sessions for other members of the CPSs aimed at helping them to be more independent.

Grants to cover running costs of community protection structures

What are the grants to cover running costs and what are they used for?

The grant consists of monthly financial resources allocated to the CPSs to pay for their running costs. This idea was born out of the desire to enable CPSs to cover the costs of their activities, such as:

- Notebooks and pens to document their activities;
- Transport for organising meetings with the authorities or carrying out awareness-raising, and awareness-raising materials;
- Unforeseen costs.

2 Helen Lindley-Jones, « "If We Don't Do It, Who Will?" : A Study into the Sustainability of Community Protection Structures Supported by Oxfam in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) » (Oxford : Oxfam GB, November 2016), http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/cs-community-protection-committees-drc-160115-en.pdf.

The allocation is usually set at **\$120 per community per month**, broken down into \$40 per structure (CPC, WF and AoCs). In some communities, the CPSs have decided to use part of the money for larger projects, such as the construction of a small meeting hall.

There is nothing preventing the CPSs from using the grant for activities of that kind. However, the money must be used to support CPS activities and must not be used to meet personal needs.

There is nothing preventing the CPSs from using the grant for activities of that kind. However, the money must be used to support CPS activities and must not be used to meet personal needs.

At some sites, the CPSs have used the allowance to invest in income-generating activities (IGAs) with a view to covering the CPSs' costs in the long term. Though the community protection programme does not support IGAs as an activity, this does not prevent CPSs from investing a certain amount in these activities if they decide to do so unanimously. However, it is important to guide CPSs with an analysis of the risks that the IGAs present. For example, it is necessary to have merchants' guarantees for products purchased, evaluate the risk of disease for domestic animals, etc. Previous evaluations have also shown that IGAs can risk distracting CPSs from their protection work or cause internal disputes. In other communities, CPS members have decided to contribute an amount ranging from 200 CDF to 500 CDF per week to finance their activities or organise a 'rebate'.³ This practice should be encouraged, since it increases communities' take-up of the programme and of CPSs.

How do we decide how to use the grant?

It is important to involve the CPS members in the explanation of the allowances and in the discussion about how they are used.

Meeting to explain the objectives of the grants for running costs and discuss how they are used

Organise an initial meeting to explain the objectives of the allocation. It may be useful to use the "Framework for use of running cost grants" ([Annex 1](#)) to guide a conversation about how to split the amount across the different activities. **This framework** is just a guide, and the CPSs are not obliged to use the money exactly as defined in the framework during the project.

Signature of the agreement between the CPS and the partner about usage of the grant

The draft agreement is a document that guides and reminds the CPS about usage of the allowance and the partner's obligations to top them up again on time. **The "Draft agreement framework"** ([Annex 2](#)) can be adapted to fit the circumstances. This draft is not to be confused with the draft agreement between the CPSs and the partner about the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders.

Use of the "Utilization of running cost allowance" form to document and justify expenses

CPSs are encouraged to fill out the "**Utilization of running cost allowance" form** ([Annex 3](#)) when they need to use the running allowance for an activity and to keep a cash book to enable them to correctly manage their expenses. This reduces the risk of conflicts arising from the usage of grants.. This practice can also promote accountability, especially at monthly CPS meetings where the status of the running allowance is documented.

CPS running cost allowance management committee:

Some CPSs decide to set up a management committee for the allowance consisting of between three and five members per structure, including two focal points, one cashier, one logistics coordinator and one adviser. This committee can propose expenses to be approved by the structure members, keep materials made available to the structure and report back to the CPS members after the money has been spent.

³ 'Rebates' are a village saving and credit mechanism in the context of community resilience. This mechanism supports protection activities after the end of the project.

Annex 1: Framework for use of running cost grants

Instructions

- Use this document as a guide for discussion during CPS sessions.
- You can hold sessions with CPCs, WFs and AoCs, either separately or together.
- You can either transfer the full amount to the CPSs or use part of the amount to buy items defined by the CPSs, if it is easier for the partner to buy them.
- There is a risk that the CPSs will want to use this amount for IGAs. The key messages to be discussed with the CPSs on this matter are as follows:
 - It is the CPCs, WFs and AoCs who decide how to use the grant, yet the objective of this sum is to support the activities of the CPSs. It is for this reason that we must firstly consider the needs of the CPSs in terms of materials (notebooks, paper, etc.) and support for awareness-raising activities (for example, transport costs for the villages furthest away).
 - In some communities, the CPSs have decided to save a given amount each month for a common objective. For example, CPSs in South Kivu have used their allocation to build a meeting hall. In Beni, a WF invested its allowance in IGAs for the last three months of the project, in order to generate revenues for the activities for awareness-raising purposes after the end of the project.

Example

Name of the community			
Name of the protection structure	CPC	Date of the meeting	
Name of the leader		# of participants	12
Amount per month # of months	\$20 11 months	Total amount	\$220
Objective	Description	Estimate of the amount	To be bought by the partner or the CPS?
Writing materials e.g. notebook, pens, paper	CPS has bought these materials that it needs	\$50	CPS
Materials e.g. coats, boots	A coat and boots for each member	\$100	Partner
Transport/awareness-raising costs	\$5 per month per structure	\$55	CPS
Costs for transport/meetings with authorities			CPS
Unforeseen/not yet decided		\$15	CPS
Total amount		\$220	
Total amount for the partner to buy the planned items		\$100	
Total amount transferred to CPSs		\$120	

Annex 2: Framework for draft agreement on running cost allowance

Reinforcement of civil protection in the province of _____ in the DRC, more specifically in the communities of _____ in the territory of _____

Draft agreement on support to cover the running costs of the CPCs, WFs and AoCs of the neighbouring villages

Between [partner], represented by [name of the partner's coordinator] and Mr/Mrs _____, chairman of the CPC, WF or AoC of the community of _____, a draft agreement is entered into for the transparent management of the funds allocated to support the running costs of the community protection committees (CPCs), women's forums (WFs) and agents of change (AoCs).

Article 1: A monthly sum of \$120 is agreed upon as allowance for the running costs of community protection structures, of which \$40 is allocated to community protection committees (CPCs), \$40 to women's forums (WF) and \$40 to agents of change (AoCs).

Article 2: The members of the protection structures of _____ undertake to use the grant rationally for their functioning, including on items such as stationery, to facilitate awareness-raising and other activities, and for communication amongst themselves and with the local authority, the other protection actors in the area and the leaders of [partner].

Article 3: Any use of the funds must be dedicated to an activity that is predefined by the members of the protection structures, and cash withdrawals must be conditional on an agreement approved by the steering committee or two thirds of its members. After the activity, the user of the money must report back to the other protection structure members.

Article 4: The protection structure must make its activity planning available to the leaders of [partner] in order to justify the relevance of the support.

[partner] is, for its part, prepared to make this allocation available in a timely manner in order to facilitate the protection structures' work.

Article 5: [partner] is entitled to enquire among the structures' members about how these funds are managed.

Article 6: The two parties agree to strictly comply with the mutual obligations stipulated in this contract.

Article 7: [partner] and the structures' members agree to seek an amiable resolution before having any recourse to the competent judicial authorities in the event of a dispute.

Done in _____ on ____ / ____ /20XX

By the members of the protection structures for [partner]
