



# Islamic Relief Worldwide

**Lessons from Islamic Relief Worldwide's inclusive and protective programming approach – the 6 As approach**

Learning Paper 3

# Leaving no-one behind in humanitarian programming:

## Lessons from Islamic Relief Worldwide's inclusive and protective programming approach – the 6 As approach

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# 1.1. Contents

<b>1. Version Management</b> .....	<b>2</b>
1.1 Contents.....	3
<b>2. Acronyms</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>3. Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>4. Introductions</b> .....	<b>6</b>
4.1 Background .....	6
4.2 Protection and Inclusion within Islamic Relief Worldwide.....	7
4.3 Islamic Relief’s Inclusive and Protective Programming Approach: the 6 As .....	7
<b>5. A1: Analysis</b> .....	<b>8</b>
5.1 Key Recommendations .....	11
<b>6. A2: Adapted Assistance</b> .....	<b>12</b>
6.1 Key Recommendations .....	13
<b>7. A3: Attention to Negative Effects</b> .....	<b>14</b>
7.1 Key Recommendations.....	15
<b>8. A4: Adequate Participation</b> .....	<b>16</b>
8.1 Key Recommendations.....	17
<b>9. A5: Accountability</b> .....	<b>18</b>
9.1 Key Recommendations.....	19
<b>10. A6: Adequate Capacity</b> .....	<b>20</b>
10.1 Key Recommendations.....	21
<b>11. Moving forward</b> .....	<b>21</b>

## 2. Acronyms

<b>CP</b>	Child protection
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>HQ</b>	Headquarters
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced person
<b>IRW</b>	Islamic Relief Worldwide
<b>OPD</b>	Organisations of persons with disabilities
<b>PSEA</b>	Prevention against sexual exploitation and abuse
<b>PQ</b>	Programme quality
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SIDA</b>	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<b>WASH</b>	Water, sanitation and hygiene
<b>WGQ</b>	Washington Group questions

# 3. Executive Summary

In 2016, the United Nations recognised that “millions of people are being left behind, especially the poorest and those disadvantaged due to sex, age, disability, ethnicity or geographic location.”

The principle of ‘leave no one behind’ is a defining feature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which placed addressing inequalities at the centre of humanitarian and development activity. Reflecting the urgency and importance of addressing these issues, Islamic Relief’s Programme Quality department aims to mainstream protection and inclusion throughout the organisation’s work.

Yet questions remain regarding best practice and approaches which most effectively mainstream protection and inclusions issues into practice across the humanitarian and development sector.

This paper focuses on approaches, lessons and recommendations for Islamic Relief Worldwide and other INGOs to improve efforts to mainstream protection and inclusion in their development and humanitarian activities. It aims to advance understanding and best practice in protection and inclusion through critical reflection on the approach taken by Islamic Relief through a focus on Islamic Relief Worldwide’s ‘Inclusive and Protective Programming Approach’, also known as the 6 A’s approach.

The paper draws on the experience of eight countries in addressing issues of inclusion, protection and sensitive approaches to accountable programming and considers learnings and challenges from Islamic Relief’s own inclusive and protective programming approach.

# 4. Introduction

Islamic Relief Worldwide is a faith-inspired humanitarian relief, development and advocacy organisation, working with the world's poorest and most vulnerable people. Since 1984, Islamic Relief has worked with over 40 countries globally, has served over 117 million people and employs over 3000 staff across the world. Since the establishment of the Programme Quality (PQ) department within Islamic Relief in 2015, PQ's mission has included an objective to mainstream protection and inclusion in its work. PQ recognises the need to continue to strengthen protection and inclusion humanitarian programming in some of the most fragile regions of the world.

This paper aims to advance understanding and best practice in protection and inclusion through critical reflection on the approach taken by Islamic Relief Worldwide over the past few years. It specifically provides reflections from an event held in Istanbul, Turkey between the 2nd and 4th November 2019. This event drew on the experiences of eight countries who were part of a capacity building programme, funded by the Swedish International and Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), which centred on inclusion, protection and sensitive approaches to accountable programming. This paper considers lessons, challenges and recommendations of Islamic Relief's own inclusive and protective programming approach, to serve as an inventory for learning and reflection for both Islamic Relief staff and the broader humanitarian and development sector.

## 4.1 Background

Through mainstreaming 'protection and inclusion', humanitarian and development actors can ensure that their activities are responding to the risks and injustices facing the most marginalised communities, including men, women, boys and girls of all ages and people with disabilities. Such an approach helps to ensure meaningful participation; safe and dignified access; and deliberate actions to avoid negative effects and address systemic inequalities in both crisis and development contexts.

In 2016, the United Nations (UN) recognised that "millions of people are being left behind, especially the poorest and those disadvantaged due to sex, age, disability, ethnicity or geographic location. In addition, the World Disasters Report of 2018 dedicated itself to the theme of 'Leave No One Behind', recognising that, among the 135.2 million people in need, "the most vulnerable people and the people most in need will fall through the cracks."

The principle of 'leave no one behind' emerged as a defining feature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which placed addressing inequalities at the centre of humanitarian and development activity. This stemmed from an acknowledgement of the failure of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to include a multi-dimensional and cross-cutting focus on global inequalities. Numerous goals and targets explicitly recognise inequalities and exclusionary barriers, as well as advocating

for the advancement of groups that have been historically discriminated against and excluded. Alongside the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the idea of leaving no-one behind is enshrined in various commitments and standards, including the Humanitarian Charter, the Charter on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action (World Humanitarian Summit), the Core Humanitarian Standard, the Code of Conduct for the Red Cross, the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and the Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities.

Each of these international agreements and standards reflect a growing anxiety in the international community that traditional approaches to humanitarian and development response have undermined the social, political and economic wellbeing of certain communities. This calls into question the orthodoxies of existing global development approaches fixated solely on economic growth in countries. They have also provided stimulus to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to adopt more rights-based, inclusive and equitable approaches to humanitarian and development programming.

Further, these agreements have encouraged the formulation of a constellation of policies, guidelines, approaches and tools by various NGOs, bilateral and multilateral organisations, all of which provide an entry point for confronting issues relating to exclusion, barriers, deprivation of basic rights and inequalities in

their areas of operation.

There is a question, however, of how successfully agenda-setting has translated into effective and sustained change in practice across the humanitarian and development sector, with confusion and debate over how protection and inclusion can successfully be systemised into programmes. While there is a growing desire to discuss and utilise practical methods to mainstream proactive and inclusive practices, for many humanitarian or development interventions across the world, even basic protection mainstreaming and inclusion approaches, let alone intersectional or transformative ones, are not consistently implemented.

Despite this, there is a growing desire to discuss and adopt practical strategies and methods by which protective and inclusive practises can be mainstreamed. In response to calls for practical tools by which protection and inclusion can be systematically incorporated into practice, various frameworks, guidelines and tools have been developed, which Islamic Relief has adapted.

## 4.2 Protection and Inclusion within Islamic Relief Worldwide

Islamic Relief's PQ department aims to realise Islamic Relief's values and mission in providing relief and development in a dignified manner regardless of gender, age, disability, race, or religion. Its objectives are also firmly in line with Islamic Relief Worldwide's Global Strategy (2017-2021).

Islamic Relief adheres to the principles and standards outlined in the Core Humanitarian Standard, the Sustainable Development Goals, the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, the Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender-based Violence Guidelines. It is also a signatory to the Red Cross Code of Conduct, which prioritises humanity and impartiality in humanitarian responses.

Throughout its work, Islamic Relief is striving towards developing a multidimensional understanding of the root causes of poverty and inequality. Mainstreaming protection and inclusion is a key part of increasing Islamic Relief's understanding of these issues and stems from our awareness of the intersectionality of inequalities relating to gender, age and disabilities and abuse of child rights, all of which are heightened during humanitarian crises. For Islamic Relief, this means adopting an approach based on the recognition of how inequalities are simultaneously gendered by other social dimensions, such as disability and age.

Islamic Relief has contributed amply to the discourse surrounding gender, child protection and conflict sensitivity through policy and research. Historically, PQ integrated Gender-based Violence (GBV) and child protection considerations into humanitarian programmes in Mali, Niger and Pakistan to reduce risks to GBV and increase child protection among target communities. Since 2017, PQ has led on SIDA-funded projects relating to inclusive, sensitive, protective and accountable approaches to programming which enabled target countries to assess and develop their approach towards mainstreaming protection and inclusion. Indeed, as a faith-based humanitarian organisation, we are guided by an Islamic understanding that compels us to take a strong stance against social injustice, in areas such as child protection, disability inclusion, gender justice and conflict sensitivity.

## 4.3 Islamic Relief's Inclusive and Protective Programming Approach: the 6 As

Islamic Relief Worldwide's 'Inclusive and Protective Programming Approach', also known as the 6 As approach, is designed to confront issues relating to exclusion, inequalities and the different priorities of at-risk communities. The approach was developed to provide a framework to assess and improve the extent to which Islamic Relief's humanitarian and development programming is protective, sensitive and inclusive, through responsiveness to age, gender and other diversities (See figure 1).

The 6 As approach intentionally reflects other international guidance, principles and standards such as the protection mainstreaming principles, the European Union Gender-Age Marker, the Core Humanitarian Standard, Minimum Standards for Child protection in Humanitarian Action, IASC Gender-based Violence Guidelines, the Humanitarian inclusion standards for older people and people with disabilities and Sphere's Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response.

The 6 As approach is intended to be used in conjunction with other global standards and commitments. The order of the 'As' may vary from one situation to another and do not necessarily follow a specific order. The point is that all six 'As' should be embedded into humanitarian and development programming to validate that the services we provide meet the different needs and concerns of women, girls, boys and men of all ages, as well as people with disabilities, while maintaining accountability to the affected populations and ensuring that Islamic Relief does not contribute to negative effects.

One of the challenges for a multi-mandated agency, such as Islamic Relief, is developing approaches and frameworks which are applicable across the full range of humanitarian, peacebuilding and development programmes. The 6 As approach, which is based on existing approaches such as the protection mainstreaming principles, has primarily been applied to crisis settings. However, it's important that the 6 As approach is relevant across the triple nexus and helps to promote transformative strategies relating to vulnerability, exclusion and inequality in peacebuilding and development programming, in the context of the Leave No One Behind agenda. As such, embedding protection and inclusion in programming work is a continuous learning process, both for Islamic Relief and other international non-governmental organisations (INGOs).



# 5. A1: Analysis

Extensive analysis ensures that humanitarian organisations have a comprehensive understanding of the communities with which they work and plays a critical role in improving collective protection and inclusion outcomes in humanitarian and development projects. Particular attention should be paid to the context-specific gender roles and responsibilities, power differentials and barriers to accessing services and resources, as well as the strategic and long-term needs of men and women of all ages and people with disabilities,. Framing an intervention around analysis can also ensure that unintended negative consequences, protection risks and vulnerability factors are considered and addressed. In addition, collecting data on sex, age and disability enables disaggregation to provide an intersectional understanding of these dynamics.

'Analysis' underpins other fundamental areas of the 6 As approach, including A2: Adapted Assistance; A3: Attention to Negative Effects; A4: Adequate Participation; and A5: Accountability.

A1: Analysis places particular importance on age, gender and diversity analysis and the collection and use of sex, age and disability disaggregated data. Key lessons, challenges and recommendations regarding 'A1: Analysis' are summarised below.

## Key Lessons

**Ensure diverse representation in focus group discussions (FDGs):** All countries agreed that, in deploying Islamic Relief's age, gender and diversity analysis tool, data collection and analysis should consider the cultural context as this may affect the integrity of the data. Women, men, children, people with disabilities and older persons frequently highlight different barriers and solutions specific to their contexts and these issues need to be effectively captured and understood.

Experience has shown that women will hesitate to answer questions about gender relations if men are present due to social, cultural and, in certain contexts, political barriers. Similarly, people with disabilities and children may not speak up without deliberate encouragement. Class, age, ethnic background and occupation may also influence participation in a mixed FDGs. As such, attention must be paid to the composition of focus groups, which could compromise the ability of some participants to voice opinions openly, especially on sensitive matters relating to gender or disability.

**Select an appropriate facilitator:** Responses to specific questions around gender relations and responsibilities will be more accurate, in many cultures, if female staff gather information from women. Whether the facilitator is a male or a female can greatly impact the quality of information acquired during FDGs.

**Consider who to consult with first:** According to Islamic Relief Kenya, when analysing the situation on the ground, the decision on who to consult first should be based on an understanding of established power relations, social factors and culture. In Kenya, for example, addressing women before men may be perceived as a threat to community dynamics. It is important for humanitarian organisations to use their resources to drive changes in cultural norms and values of affected societies in a culturally sensitive manner.

**Seek out non-dominant voices:** Country offices acknowledged that strategies need to be in place to ensure that dominant voices in FDGs do not override or outweigh other voices, for example, by ensuring that we consistently seek out other voices to ensure that focus group responses are constructed collectively, rather than individually.

**Prepare for contextual challenges in high-risk environments:** Some country offices, particularly Islamic Relief Syria, recognised that analysis may be interrupted due to a lack of safety and security on the ground, which may also represent a tremendous barrier in achieving protection and inclusion more broadly. Indeed, the extremely complex, volatile and ever-evolving security situation due to active fighting means that aid efforts of many INGOs are frequently curtailed. In addition, the nature of certain interventions could make data collection extremely challenging, with, for example, project interventions that carry a sense of urgency, such as mobile health facilities in Syria, where at-risk

communities may be hesitant to share information relating to difficulties across basic universal activities.

**Account for negative attitudes from families and communities about disability:** Most countries agreed that one of the most significant challenges around analysis can be the negative attitudes and stigma associated with disability. Families may not disclose, or actively hide, family members with disabilities, which perpetuates their exclusion. Individuals may also be reluctant to self-identify as someone with a disability. Knowledge and beliefs can also impact how resources are distributed and the extent to which a certain group's participation is sought.

Islamic Relief Indonesia recognised that the degree of stigma and shame attached to persons with disabilities means that asking questions about disability can be highly contentious. Families and communities may internalise the stigma rooted in societal perceptions of particular groups, particularly women with disabilities, as "incapable" or "less valuable". Similarly, it may be difficult to translate the word 'disability' into the local language effectively, especially considering the heterogeneous nature of disability, including types and gradations.

**Be aware of language considerations:** Language barriers can often complicate an appropriately informed analysis of the context for staff who work in a sector where English is the dominant language. Indeed, the use of analysis tools demands an appreciation of the underlying principles. This includes the fact that the roles of men, women, girls and boys, as well as people with disabilities, are circumscribed by society and social norms, along with a clear understanding of the aim of each tool or data collection method in addressing these issues.

## Key analysis tools

**Age, Gender and Diversity analysis.** The age, gender and diversity analysis tool is a set of FGD questions and matrices for organising collected data. It was developed by Islamic Relief Worldwide, based on Moser's Gender Planning Framework. Its objective is to help understand intersecting social factors of community members, including roles and responsibilities, relationships, access to and control over resources, including human resources (e.g. education), financial, natural (e.g. land) and social capital (e.g. networks and time) for men, women, girls, boys, people with disabilities and older people, as well as individuals from contextually distinctive, excluded or discriminated social identities. Further, it considers decision-making powers and participatory practices and how these vary by gender, age and disabilities. It also considers short-term (practical) and long-term (strategic) gender and the diversity of these needs.

**Risk Equation.** The risk equation is an analytical framework for understanding protection risks faced by a given population, in proportion to threats they are subject to, the vulnerabilities they may experience and the capacities possessed by the population to cope with the identified threat. The risk equation provides the basis for a protection risk analysis to identify the threats, vulnerability factors and capacities which an intervention should address to reduce risk and mainstream protection.

**Egg Model.** The egg model is a tool for designing a targeted response to a protection concern by identifying three stages of action (responsive, remedial and environment building). This model uses the shape of an egg to organise three different spheres of action in which protection needs to be addressed and the different types of activities required to meet protection needs.

**The problem tree.** The problem tree is central to many forms of project planning and is frequently used by humanitarian agencies

to find solutions for protection issues. It uncovers hidden root causes to a protection concern and distinguishes them from the immediate effects, which are often more visible.

**Sex, age and disability disaggregated data (SADD)** Disaggregation is a method of using data to analyse differences between men, women, girls and boys of different ages and with and without disabilities. Collecting data which can be disaggregated provides humanitarian organisations with the basis for further in-depth analysis. Every tool for collecting and analysing population or project data requires adaptation to enable disaggregation. Collecting accurate disability data to enable disaggregation by persons with and without disabilities has proven challenging. The Washington Group short set of six questions, which identify persons with disabilities by asking about difficulties in everyday functioning, such as sight, cognition, hearing, speaking, walking and self-care, can be used in certain contexts, including surveys, to collect more accurate disability data to enable better disaggregation.

**Connectors & Dividers.** This tool is used to enhance context analysis by identifying and assessing the factors which can lead to division or harmony within a community. These factors may relate to systems and institutions, attitudes and actions, values and interests, or experiences and symbols. This tool provides users with a starting point for developing a well-informed intervention about the interaction between a project and the context.

**5W-1H.** The purpose of the 5W-1H analysis tool is to generate an understanding about how a project contributes towards, or reduces, conflict dynamics to ensure an intervention does no harm. It asks key questions about the project intervention around 5Ws: Why? Where? When? What? Whom? and 1H: How?

**Stakeholder mapping.** Stakeholder analysis provides an organised way to identify stakeholders and explore how potential interactions among them may cause negative or unintended consequences through a particular project. It is also used to understand each stakeholder's importance and influence on a specific aspect of an intervention.

**Relationship mapping:** Relationship mapping is a tool used to analyse complex relationships between key stakeholders. It allows users to see the links between the different individuals and, ultimately, how their relationships could interact with an intervention.

**Risk Option analysis.** Risk option analysis is an approach used to analyse all possible response options, following identification of particular risks or potential unintended negative consequences of an intervention.

**Consult with local women's groups and organisations of persons with disabilities:** Colleagues recognised local organisations, including women's groups and organisations of persons with disabilities, as often possessing rich knowledge of how a particular emergency has affected men and women, with and without disabilities.

**Recognise inter-group differences:** Islamic Relief's age, gender and diversity analysis adopts an intersectional approach by enabling users to examine power relations and social inequalities of men and women of all ages, as well as people with disabilities and people of contextually, distinctive, excluded or discriminated identities. Marriage, caste and education level can also influence power relations and access to opportunities, which should be considered in programming. Indeed, in some cultures, the difference between mother in laws/daughter in laws, or first wife/second wife, may be extremely pronounced and a lack of

understanding of this dynamic could ignore important power differentials that impact barriers, opportunities and needs.

**Consolidate analysis tools:** Countries recognised the importance of utilising appropriate analysis tools to ensure that projects are adequately informed about the potential risks and barriers faced by communities, as well as the different roles, responsibilities and needs of communities. However, due to the lack of guidance, the expectation for project staff to possess a comprehensive understanding of the wide variety of tools can be cumbersome and time-consuming. There is also a lack of understanding of when to use each tool and how they can be adapted or merged, depending on the objective.

The potential to combine certain tools to address this limitation, such as age, gender and diversity analysis, which does not currently consider barriers with protection risk analysis, should be considered. Islamic Relief South Sudan suggested that risk option analysis could be merged with the risk equation. Once a risk has been labelled, ways to mitigate that risk can be explored through option planning. In Islamic Relief Indonesia's experience, the egg model has been used in conjunction with the problem tree analysis, where the root causes, effects and consequences of a protection issue are identified through problem tree analysis and the egg model is used strategically to think about the different areas and actions in which a protection issue, such as early forced marriage, needs to be addressed across three spheres of action.

**Develop rapid approaches to analysis:** The culture of a timely response seems to prevail in many humanitarian organisations. It is accordingly important to develop an approach to analysis that is fast and easy to administer, especially in rapidly evolving environments characterised by a sense of urgency to respond, tight donor timeframes, logistical difficulties and very real technical challenges of working with populations with diverse demographic compositions.

**Integrate analysis within Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning & Accountability (MEAL) processes:** It is important to monitor and evaluate whether protection and inclusion has been mainstreamed into a project and its impact on the population. One approach is to consult communities to assess their views and perceptions on the barriers they may have faced throughout a project, as well as issues relating to safety, dignity and participation. Further, logical frameworks could include disaggregated outcome targets and output indicators to measure issues relating to safety, dignity and accessibility. Mainstreaming protection and inclusion in the absence of accountability mechanisms may become a mere tick box exercise, without structural change and ownership.

**Adopt a participatory approach to analysis:** Country offices recognised that analysis must adopt a participatory approach by acknowledging the numerous obstacles to women's participation, as well as children and people with disabilities, while establishing mechanisms to ensure that these obstacles are minimised during analysis. One approach is to explore participatory ways of gathering information through group activities focused on interactive learning that help build the confidence of participants, such as 'steps and barriers' exercises which are designed to help people think about a baseline, what has already been achieved and what is getting in the way of progress. Participatory approaches must be attentive to language considerations, particularly for communities with a high percentage of illiteracy.

**Positive practices: Age, gender and diversity analysis in Islamic Relief Ethiopia**

In June 2019, Islamic Relief Ethiopia carried out an age, gender and diversity analysis through focus group discussions in two project locations in the Somali region, Afder Zone. The selection

criteria for the sites and respondents was based on purposeful targeting to develop a deeper understanding of historical and social inequalities faced by different groups, such as people with disabilities, older people and women. The objective was to explore their roles and responsibilities within the community, their access to power and control over resources and to develop an understanding of their immediate and strategic needs. The analysis led to a series of recommendations, including ensuring a greater focus on women's access to income generation, facilitating attitudinal change towards people with disabilities and establishing an inclusive complaints mechanism in the community which Islamic Relief Ethiopia now plans to streamline into new projects.

**Analysis must be the responsibility of more than one person:** One of the institutional obstacles to mainstreaming protection and inclusion is how tools that are designed to facilitate a protective and inclusive response are operationalised and, crucially, by whom. Country offices recognised that, to consistently and systematically conduct analysis across all projects for protection and inclusion, existing capacities and staff need to move away from simply being 'aware' of the various tools and approaches for analysis, to enhanced skills and responsibility for analysis, particularly in relation to age, gender and diversity analysis, SADD and protection risk analysis.

Further, staff must have the experience and confidence to effectively use the tools. In Kenya, for example, limited knowledge and capacities regarding analysis tools and data collection methods such as SADD were identified as a prominent constraint in their use. This could include conceptual challenges, such as understanding the difference between sex and gender, or the social model of disability, as well as practical challenges relating to the analysis of information gathered through FGDs.

**Prioritise data collection:** There are challenges in assessing disability prevalence due to a lack of reliable data, which could vastly underestimate the number of people with disabilities in a certain context. Analysis and data collection must be prioritised by country office staff, which may be greatly influenced by organisational culture.

## Approaches to consider

**Going beyond analysis:** The Dividers and Connectors tool is based on the premise that all communities are characterised by factors that can divide people and factors that can connect people. Recognising and understanding the dividers and connectors of a particular society or community should be a crucial part of any humanitarian or development intervention. This is based on the realisation that aid interventions interact with these dividers and connectors and can contribute to increased tensions in any context, particularly conflict settings. Identifying these dividers and connectors could be a critical first step to a robust context analysis. Islamic Relief Gaza has suggested extending the Dividers and Connectors tool to include recommendations for what Islamic Relief can do to build on existing knowledge regarding what connects a community and to minimise negative effects.

**Decision-making in age, gender and diversity analysis:** According to Islamic Relief Afghanistan, the age, gender and diversity analysis tool could be further developed by including a focus on the decision-making powers of men and women of all ages, as well as people with disabilities and people of distinctive or socially excluded identities. Decision-making would pertain to the capacity of all people, regardless of their gender, age, ability, ethnicity, caste, religion and so forth to make decisions freely and to exercise power over their body at an individual, household or community level. Questions could include: Do women in your

community participate in public decision-making? Do people with disabilities participate in public decision-making? What about people with difficulty to hear or difficulty to see? Who is the main decision maker in your household? Do women in your household have decision-making power?

This in turn has an impact on access to and control over resources. This is an important consideration because historically, people with disabilities, and, in particular, women with disabilities, have experienced discrimination leading to a lack of autonomy in expressing their opinions and making decisions about their own lives.

## Key Recommendations

Provide clear guidance on protection and inclusion analysis tools and how they relate to one another and can be used in combination.
Define and integrate analysis products into existing MEAL processes. This process could allow organisational consistency as well as the internalisation of analysis tools within Islamic Relief's broader accountability culture.
Use data collection tools, such as the Washington Group Questions, that avoid the term 'disability', in contexts where disability is heavily stigmatised and when working with organisations of persons with disabilities, who play an essential role in representing the interests of people with disabilities and in fighting discrimination.
Ensure that analysis is not the responsibility of one person so that, in emergency contexts, analysis tools can be quickly administered by a variety of staff members.
When using tools such as the age, gender and diversity analysis, reflect upon the knowledge and attitudes of different community members as a precursor to 'roles and responsibilities', as beliefs about gender, disability and other diverse social categories can guide how people interpret aspects of their lives, including their roles and responsibilities in society.
Ensure to monitor and report on the use and success of the analysis tools.
When conducting age, gender and diversity analysis, consider reflecting upon marked differences between different groups.
Ensure that all programme staff regularly receive training on how to utilise analysis tools, such as age, gender and diversity analysis.
Consider the availability of analysis tools and guidance in local languages with which humanitarian workers are familiar.

## 6. A2: Adapted Assistance

Regular analysis of protection risks and exclusionary barriers provides a basis for adapting assistance to ensure that all interventions are inclusive and responsive to the different needs of men and women of all ages, abilities and backgrounds and to mitigate potential negative effects. The purpose of adapting assistance is to ensure non-discrimination and meaningful access for all groups, such as through measures to enable accessibility and provide reasonable accommodations. It could also include targeted activities that address the risks and needs of specific groups or individuals. Key lessons, challenges and recommendations regarding 'A2: Adapted Assistance' are summarised below.

### Key Lessons

**Ensure adequate budgets for protection and inclusion:** Many country offices reflected on the challenge of budgeting for protection and inclusion across projects. Specifically, adding a largely undefined protection and inclusion-related line item has, in some instances, been difficult to justify to finance teams due to its broad and unspecified nature. However, it is important to consistently emphasise that protective and inclusive approaches with budgetary implications are about extending existing practices to accommodate the most marginalised, which should not be seen as an "added luxury" or subject to timing and resource restrictions. Indeed, the cost of excluding marginalised communities should be viewed as significantly higher, as this could mean that Islamic Relief fails to adhere to its values.

**Coordinate with local and specialist organisations:** An important place to begin adapting assistance is to map local resources and networks which can help to address specific concerns relating to a particular demographic, such as the assistance of specialists to engage with children in target communities. According to Islamic Relief Gaza, a truly holistic approach to mainstreaming protection and inclusion also requires coordination with local organisations, particularly women's groups and OPDs. In Gaza, many organisations are committed to a rights-based approach to disability and have voluntarily shared resources to support disability-inclusive programming, such as providing sign-language interpreters or printing documents in braille. Greater collaboration between Islamic Relief and specialist organisations focusing on women, children, older people and people with disabilities could not only leverage an enabling environment for facilitating and coordinating protective and inclusive programming, but also provide indispensable access to resources.

**Identify indicators for protection and inclusion:** Project log-frames that are consistently anchored on a gender-sensitive and inclusive approach could have a tremendous impact on outcomes for marginalised groups. Identifying indicators to measure progress on protection mainstreaming and inclusion would require project staff to articulate specific changes that are envisaged for a particular project and could play a crucial role in embedding protection and inclusion within a project, upholding

accountability and improving performance. This approach may also enhance ownership and sustainability of protection and inclusion-related outcomes more widely among project staff and beyond protection and inclusion focal points.

#### Positive practices: Using analysis to adapt assistance in Islamic Relief Kenya



Islamic Relief Kenya is currently running a SIDA-funded peacebuilding project in Mandera County, Kenya. The project aims to support target countries in transitioning to peace, as well as managing and resolving their differences and disputes through non-violent approaches.

A gender and conflict analysis was undertaken, followed by meetings between the project team and technical specialists to reflect on its findings. The analysis results revealed that, although the project included activities to ensure participation of women in peacebuilding activities, it had not adequately considered the impact of conflict-related GBV and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). As such, Islamic Relief Kenya applied for additional funds for activities relating to GBV and FGM prevention. This request was granted at the time of writing this report.

**Provide project information in accessible formats:** According to Islamic Relief Pakistan, providing project information in braille to people with visual impairments may not always be appropriate, particularly where communities cannot read braille signage. In such circumstances, it may be useful for country offices to consider audio methods of distributing information on mobile phones (if communities have access to this technology) as a means of adapting assistance.

## Key Recommendations

Ensure an appropriate budget for adapting assistance, including through measures to provide accessible information at project sites, inclusive accountability mechanisms, awareness raising, reasonable accommodations and accessibility for different groups, as well as capacity building and learning opportunities for staff.

Proposals and log-frames should, wherever possible, reflect and include clear indicators relevant to the protection and inclusion of marginalised groups. This would enable country level staff to track the involvement and impact of a particular project on marginalised groups to support adapted assistance.

Protection and inclusion must be woven throughout project proposals to ensure that our programming considers and ensures the rights, safety and dignity of all affected populations.

# 7. A3: Attention to Negative Effects

In many cases, humanitarian and development assistance could cause unintended negative effects which, if unaccounted for, could potentially trigger more significant negative effects, including at an individual, community, socio-economic and environmental level. There are well-documented examples of humanitarian aid efforts causing negative effects and undermining a community's ability to recover. As part of continuous and active efforts to conduct analysis, every project should analyse both potential negative effects and mitigation measures.

Key lessons, challenges and recommendations regarding 'A3: Attention to Negative Effects' are summarised below.

## Key Lessons

**Take steps to mitigate the diversion of humanitarian assistance:** According to Islamic Relief Afghanistan, in contexts characterised by violence with two or more warring parties, it is important that information relating to food distributions is disclosed confidentially to the target communities. The visibility of distributed goods should also be reduced and food distribution points located closer to the homes of target communities. If aid and the locations in which aid is distributed are not safeguarded, there is a risk that the atmosphere of confusion, the erosion of accountability and the prevalence of weapons could provide multiple opportunities for warring parties to control resources intended for civilians. They may also be assaulted when transporting food rations home.

**Involve the local community at all stages:** It is important to maintain and optimise the role of the local community in all stages of the project. All country offices agreed that active involvement of the local community in defining the selection criteria could increase understanding and awareness about why certain groups are prioritised. Without community participation, targeted communities could face backlash and increased tensions. Further, it is crucial to establish community committees that include men, women, youth, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and older persons to ensure that interventions are culturally appropriate, the time and location of distributions is suitable and that targeting is fair and equitable.

**Explore different modalities for cash assistance:** According to Islamic Relief Gaza, one of the central dilemmas of providing humanitarian assistance are the risks associated with dispersing assistance that could, depending on the context, be diverted, misused, stolen or corrupted. As such, different modalities for cash assistance should be explored to reduce these risks, including transferring money through electronic payments, such as ATM cards or e-vouchers. Such modalities may also minimise the risk to both staff and recipients of cash assistance, as they could eliminate the need to travel through insecure areas to deliver cash at a pre-determined location.

**Seek the participation of host communities:** In situations of displacement, for example, refugees and internally displaced

persons may find themselves living with host populations that are already experiencing chronic poverty and poor access to basic services. As such, it is possible that tensions may emerge between host and refugee populations, as the former may feel that refugees are favoured for humanitarian assistance, while their needs are neglected. The support and participation of host communities could not only uphold equitable access to aid by addressing the needs of both populations, but also facilitate the peaceful integration of the refugee or internally displaced person (IDP) population into the host community.

**Adopt a faith-sensitive approach:** It is important to consider a faith-sensitive approach, particularly when dealing with protection issues that are rooted in a community's social norms and traditional practices, such as female genital cutting (FGC) or early-forced marriage (EFM). Religious leaders can be powerful advocates for the protection of the most vulnerable groups. They can sensitively raise awareness of the negative effects of certain practices and work towards prevention through advocacy, dialogue and campaigning. An approach to tackling deep-seated protection issues within a community that is devoid of faith may be viewed as unfavourable or a threat to a community's practices.

**Work with local and national partners:** It is important to identify government agencies and other national/local organisations that operate in specific areas such as WASH, health, food & nutrition, as well as organisations dedicated to supporting the rights of people with disabilities and women, to gain a full understanding of the context, including the groups most at-risk and to identify any potential negative effects of planned interventions.

## Positive practices: Minimising negative effects in Islamic Relief Afghanistan



Islamic Relief Afghanistan delivered a project that aims to support women's economic and social empowerment in the eastern region of Afghanistan. As part of this project, Islamic Relief Afghanistan

carried out a 'context analysis' to understand a broad array of relevant social, political and cultural issues. One of the key issues identified was that community members who were not selected to take part in the project by the 'beneficiary identification committee' expressed frustration, causing tensions between community members. As a result, Islamic Relief Afghanistan consulted with faith leaders, who were able to draw on their influence to explain the selection criteria to the community members that were not selected for the project. Islamic Relief Afghanistan recognises that it is important to involve all relevant stakeholders in defining and understanding the criteria for selection and to transparently explain the selection criteria, in collaboration with faith and community leaders, to justify the selection. Through a context analysis, Islamic Relief Afghanistan was able to understand and mitigate the potential negative effects that could have arisen.

**Identify safe distribution points:** According to country offices, the need to consciously select distribution points around the wider socio-political context of a particular community, where there may be a conflict or where rights violations and abuses are prevalent, can be extremely challenging. This is particularly relevant in contexts characterised by conflict, such as Yemen and Syria, where humanitarian activities may be undertaken in inherently difficult and dangerous circumstances. In contexts where populations are dispersed, this also means considering the distance that communities have to travel for food distributions. This can mean making a compromise between the human and material resources available, convenience for the populations and safe, accessible and dignified access.

According to Islamic Relief Kenya, it is also important to ensure that the timing of activities, such as distributions, awareness raising sessions and focus group discussions, are suitable for the target communities to travel to a location and return home without being exposed to harm. Women may not be available at certain times of the day due to care-giving obligations or during peak labour periods. The timing of activities must not undermine women's caring responsibilities.

**Be aware of the potential for backlash against changing power relations:** According to Islamic Relief Kenya and Islamic Relief Afghanistan, offices need to develop a deeper understanding of the local culture and established power relations within a particular community when implementing livelihood projects and distributing cash assistance. Livelihood projects may leave women with less time to undertake other socially-sanctioned duties, causing unintended negative effects, such as an increase in violence against women or children suffering from neglect. Cash assistance may also lead to increased tensions and abuse within the household, due to rapidly changing power dynamics. This exemplifies the paradoxical nature of certain projects that may not immediately shift the ideological underpinnings of gender inequality, as well as age and disability-related stigma, but superficially 'empower' women or people with disabilities. It is important to carefully consider options, such as alternative care providers or involving men in cash assistance.

**Devise inclusive cash-for-work programmes:** Programme staff must ensure that people with disabilities and older persons are not left behind in cash-for-work programming. Historically, humanitarian and development interventions have adopted the 'charity model' approach of focusing on individuals as objects of 'tragedy' in need of 'handouts', which can reinforce stigma and dependence and severely undermine their agency. Having a disability does not imply complete vulnerability and the way in which people with disabilities experience physical, attitudinal and institutional barriers varies greatly, depending on the type of impairment, form of acquirement and the intersection of other social factors such as gender and age. Collaboration with OPDs could help to devise effective and suitable cash-for-work projects

that are inclusive, safe, dignified and accessible for people with disabilities.

## Key Recommendations

Ensure an equal balance of male and female staff during assessments and project implementation, particularly in conservative settings.
Adopt a participatory approach, throughout the project lifecycle, to minimise any unintended negative effects, particularly with communities that are typically marginalised, such as people with disabilities and adolescent girls.
Implement awareness raising activities for any project that could potentially alter existing power relations or which is designed to integrate principles of gender equality. Communications initiatives should be aimed at disseminating messages and promoting community dialogue for both women and men, such as including men in consultations for the design of livelihood projects.
Ensure that mechanisms relating to safeguarding and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) complement, rather than undermine, existing community-based justice systems.
Work closely with local institutions and organisations to ensure programme staff are acutely aware of negative effects beyond the local community and in other tiers of society, such as the local economy and wider environment.
Explore different modalities for cash assistance to minimise the risk of cash being stolen, diverted or corrupted in fragile contexts. Methods to reduce these risks include transferring money through electronic payments, such as through ATM cards or e-vouchers.

## 8. A4: Adequate Participation

It is now widely acknowledged that the key to effective protection and inclusion is to ensure that target communities are at the forefront of programming efforts. It is necessary, as well as morally imperative, that humanitarian and development initiatives are grounded in a commitment to meaningful participation in decision-making. If the aim of humanitarian and development interventions is to sustainably address the actual needs and priorities of men and women of all ages, abilities and other social backgrounds, it is crucial to design projects in collaboration with the target communities. Further, Islamic Relief must foster a culture where communities no longer wait for an invitation to participate, but are proactively engaged from the outset of any intervention. Listening to the views of women and men of all ages and social categories, with and without disabilities, is likely to result in a far more effective response, as it will reflect and respond to their priorities.

Key lessons, challenges and recommendations regarding 'A4: Adequate Participation' are summarised below.

### Key Lessons

**Pay particular attention to at-risk groups:** Frequently, the inclusion of people with disabilities, older people, or women and children is addressed purely through targeting these groups for handouts, or by delivering training on gender or disability that is divorced from the root causes of their exclusion (systemic power imbalances, stigma and discrimination). Such an approach could result in an atmosphere of superficial engagement with the concerned communities. At the same time, it is important to develop community understanding around the importance of the participation of women, children, adolescents, people with disabilities and older persons, particularly in contexts where existing attitudes and beliefs may deny these groups their dignity and generate obstacles for their full and effective participation. Participation of marginalised groups must be approached with sensitivity and involve traditional powerholders, otherwise there is a risk of upsetting local structures and power dynamics, which could lead to backlash against particular groups.

**Raise awareness on 'participation':** According to Islamic Relief Syria, 'participation' is not a familiar concept among marginalised groups, such as women, in Northern Syria. This may be due to historic marginalisation of certain groups and, as such, they may not possess a 'rights-based' attitude, or they may simply not be aware of the fact that Islamic Relief relies on a constructive relationship, based on dignity and respect, with persons of concern. This issue could be resolved by strengthening awareness on the importance of community participation, particularly communities who have been historically neglected or discriminated, as well as those who are typically authoritarian where decisions are made by traditional powerholders, such as men.

**Budget for participation:** It is important to remember that communities are not homogenous and, as such, creating an

enabling environment for meaningful participation is required to reach and support women, children and people with disabilities, in particular contexts, to facilitate their participation throughout the project lifecycle. This may have budgetary implications, such as arranging meetings in accessible buildings or ensuring that sign language interpreters are available to facilitate the participation of people with hearing impairments.

**Support and build on existing capacities:** A truly participatory approach should recognise the existing capacities, resources and community structures of target communities, such as women's groups, associations of persons with disabilities, unions and saving groups and recognise when it is necessary to support the development of representative civil society structures. This forces us to reflect on the temporary nature of our presence and the sustainability of our interventions. Maximum participation and ownership are achieved when interventions are grounded in decisions made by the community.

### Positive practices: Active participation in Islamic Relief Kenya



In 2018, Islamic Relief Kenya delivered a project focusing on humanitarian response and resilience-building for drought-affected communities in Wajir, Kenya. Women were involved in all project activities, including selection and registration of the rightholders of food and non-food items. In addition, a total of 90 females and 110 males were trained on community-managed disaster-risk reduction, enabling the community to develop a community-based management plan for the disasters commonly

affecting the surrounding areas. The project also conducted student, community and duty-bearer awareness and knowledge raising on GBV, child rights and child protection issues, including FGM, to help survivor's better access services and support.

**Enable participation in emergencies:** Although the humanitarian community has long recognised the importance of active participation to improve the effectiveness and accountability of interventions, the lack of time in crisis situations to thoroughly consult every segment of a community could pose a significant challenge. However, community participation during emergencies is even more important as affected populations may experience the loss of community structures, social support networks, assets, caregivers and so forth. As such, even if full participation is not possible during the initial stages of crisis response, it is essential to establish open lines of communication and provide frequent opportunities for feedback and communication.

**Build staff understanding of true and active participation:** There may be a lack of understanding among staff as to what true and active participation entails. As such, staff may not be familiar with the various stages of the 'participation ladder' and may treat the transfer of information from the community, without involving them in every stage of the discussions which inform the final decisions, as full and effective participation. This can be addressed by adding a section, such as participant lists, to existing tools and processes for reporting on the quality of participation by different people in an event, meeting or activity, which could further encourage a deliberate process of reflecting on the extent to which participation in communities has occurred.

**Manage community expectations:** If participatory processes are not designed and communicated carefully, with sensitivity to the context, they could raise expectations of affected communities that are subsequently disappointed if humanitarian organisations do not address specific concerns that were highlighted, such as when these concerns are beyond the scope of the organisation. It is therefore important to manage the expectations of the community, including through meaningful dialogue, consultation and transparency, about the organisation's limitations in its human and material resources. Communities have strong and genuine desires to improve their predicament and treating people with respect and listening to them will build an effective and sustainable programme.

## Key Recommendations

Ensure the organisation understands how a community views a particular intervention, the issue it aims to resolve and how they can improve the process with their capacities and participation.
Gather information about existing community resources, including local advocacy groups, community-based organisations and faith groups.
Advocate for the value of participation by women and men of all ages, as well as people with disabilities, so that they are included in decision-making processes in a culturally-sensitive manner.
Budget for participation to ensure that any potential barriers to participation are mitigated, such as in relation to accessibility and communication requirements.

Be mindful of additional practical barriers facing certain groups from participating, such as the unavailability of childcare, and ensure that provisions are made to overcome these barriers, through arranging meetings in child-friendly locations.
Avoid using the term 'beneficiary' as it implies that communities are passive recipients of interventions. This suggests an uneven power dynamic between humanitarian organisations and the communities with which they work.

# 9. A5: Accountability

Accountability is about the responsible use of power. The communities with which we work face high levels of risks and inequality. As a result, it is essential that we establish mechanisms through which all members of the affected population have the information and opportunity to identify poor performance and seek redress and improvement. It is also important for an organisation to establish inclusive complaints mechanisms by identifying and addressing the barriers facing different groups, such as children, older people and people with disabilities. The essential elements of what constitutes sound protection and inclusion programming are also those that constitute an effective system for accountability. A quality programme that uses power responsibly, ensures that protection risks are mitigated, respects the inherent dignity, safety and capacities of communities and ensures that no one is left behind, is at the core of successful and accountable programming.

## The centrality of protective, inclusive and accountable approaches in Islamic Relief Worldwide



Islamic Relief's own organisational accountability tool, Ihsan, requires country offices to assess themselves against a comprehensive set of indicators linked to the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS). Many of these indicators are relevant to protection mainstreaming and inclusive programming, including:

- 5.1.1: In choosing to initiate new projects and programmes, we ensure that previous experience and learnings in similar contexts inform the opportunities and risks that could affect a potential programme. We assess and plan for potential constraints, such as limited access, delays and administrative issues, to ensure these will not hamper project delivery. We make sure that local capacities are taken into account as soon as possible. (A6: Adequate Capacity)
- 5.1.3: We analyse i) the wider needs of communities and not only those on which we are able to intervene directly; and ii) the differentiated needs of women, men, girls and boys of all ages, as well as people with disabilities and minority communities. The needs assessment is conducted by appropriate staff at managerial and technical levels. (A1: Analysis)
- 5.1.4: We ensure that the context and stakeholder analysis recognise collaboration and coordination opportunities, taking into account the risk of negative potential impacts of aid. We adhere to 'Do No Harm' principles and conduct risk assessment on aspects of the programme which could put children, young people

or vulnerable adults at risk of harm directly or indirectly (PSEA). (A1: Analysis, A3: Attention to Negative Effects)

- 5.1.9: We budget for and develop the following plans from the outset of each project: Beneficiary Communication plans which i) are inclusive of different vulnerable groups and abilities; ii) detail principles, behaviours and deliverables that communities can expect from us; iii) promote a culture of open and two-way communication with communities; and iv) outline how they can provide feedback and complaints via a variety of means. Beneficiary Participation plans which detail how communities and beneficiaries, including those with different vulnerabilities and abilities, can engage and communicate their priorities and risks throughout the project cycle. (A2: Adapted Assistance, A4: Adequate Participation)
- 5.1.10: Projects incorporate monitoring and review mechanisms so that interventions can be adapted and adjusted based on feedback from affected communities and other stakeholders, as well as changing needs on the ground. (A2: Adapted Assistance, A5: Accountability)
- 5.1.12: Mechanisms are established to identify, minimise and act upon any potential negative effects of our actions. (A3: Attention to Negative Effects)

Key lessons, challenges and recommendations regarding "A5: Accountability" are summarised below.

## Key Lessons

Set the foundation with partner organisations: According to Islamic Relief Indonesia, there is a risk that, due to a lack of understanding and appreciation around accountability, some partner organisations may hesitate to share complaints or dismiss them entirely. There may also be a fear of reprisals, through loss of contracts, among partners. When working through partners, particularly in contexts such as Gaza where a large number of our projects are delivered in this way, we need to ensure that we formalise critical processes with partners, including feedback

and complaints channels, codes of conduct, policies around safeguarding, PSEA and complaints. This means that capacity building around accountable approaches to programming should be cascaded further down to partners to ensure a consistent operational approach. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) should include a clear statement on Islamic Relief's stance on the importance of feedback and complaints, safeguarding and PSEA, followed by a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of complaints focal persons, safeguarding focal persons and senior management in committing to accountability.

## Positive practices: Identifying barriers to accessing complaints and feedback mechanisms in Islamic Relief Gaza



Islamic Relief Gaza recently conducted a focus group discussion (FGD), as part of a cash-for-work programme, in which people with disabilities expressed the various barriers they faced in accessing complaints and feedback mechanisms. The FGD assisted in helping staff understand the way in which people with disabilities prefer to submit complaints, as well as illustrating the need for a range of accessible mechanisms to be put in place. As a result of these discussions, Islamic Relief Gaza now plans to collaborate with representatives of people with disabilities to develop more effective and accessible complaints and feedback mechanisms that address the barriers faced by these groups.

### Understand and address barriers to feedback and complaints:

A mix of mechanisms need to be in place to ensure that the most at-risk communities are able to provide feedback and voice their complaints. Older people, people with disabilities and children may have different communication and information requirements, for example, and a mix of modalities should be available, such as providing information in braille or easy-to-read format, establishing peer-to-peer support for people who are physically unable to submit complaints and providing information in pictorial formats or role plays for children. Communities may face significant physical and attitudinal barriers in accessing feedback and complaints mechanisms. Literacy levels may mean that written modalities for submitting complaints are inaccessible to certain communities, or people may fear retribution or stigmatisation as a result of complaining. According to Islamic Relief Afghanistan, there may also be cultural barriers to accessing complaints and feedback mechanisms equitably. Communities that are instinctively dominated by men in traditional societies may require alternative and less visible approaches to feedback and complaints mechanisms to minimise any backlash.

**Raise awareness amongst staff:** All country offices agreed that country level staff require training to understand the rationale behind complaints and feedback mechanisms, as well as relevant procedures to uphold these mechanisms. It is important for staff to understand how complaints will be received and tracked, as well as how learning from previous resolutions can be incorporated into future planning.

**Be sensitive to cultural attitudes that act as barriers to complaints:** Cultural barriers in different contexts are a difficult barrier to overcome in establishing effective and inclusive

complaints mechanisms. Despite Islamic Relief's efforts to establish a variety of modalities to access complaints and feedback processes, there may still be deeply rooted cultural barriers. Complaining may not be acceptable in certain cultures and women and girls, in particular, may not be able to voice their concerns in conservative societies where the traditional powerholders are men.

**Continuously share information:** According to Islamic Relief Ethiopia, it remains a challenge to ensure that communities, particularly women, children and people with disabilities, have a comprehensive awareness of their rights, what they can expect from Islamic Relief and the mechanisms through which they can submit complaints. Consequently, it is important for Islamic Relief to continuously share information in a variety of formats to the communities with which we work.

## Key Recommendations

Facilitate community discussions using relevant languages and tools so that communities are sufficiently aware of the organisation's accountability to them.
Continuously review mechanisms to ensure they are designed to enable full coverage and access by recognising that communities have different communication and information needs. To achieve this, it is crucial that MEAL focal points are also aware of the importance of inclusion when designing complaints and feedback mechanisms for men and women of all ages, as well as people with disabilities, so that this is not treated as something parallel to be undertaken by the protection and inclusion focal point in each country.
Ensure appropriate budgeting for the various modalities and resources required for establishing a successful and effective complaints and feedback mechanism, in recognition of the different requirements of the population.
In contexts where the organisation works through partners, ensure that guidelines and procedures relating to complaints and feedback are communicated carefully and built into agreements with partners.
Build complaints and feedback mechanisms around community-based approaches, acknowledging the importance of relationships between individuals, families and communities and find ways to support these approaches, rather than undermine them.

# 10. A6: Adequate Capacity

Adequate Capacity is a cornerstone of Islamic Relief’s approach to mainstreaming protection and inclusion. It requires strengthening individual knowledge, skills and experience, as well as developing organisational capacity around strategic orientation, policies, operating procedures and leadership. As such, ensuring adequate capacity is not just about making sure that staff understand how to include people with disabilities and women in project proposals, but also removing institutional barriers to providing those staff with the time and resources to systematise all the positive practices outlined in this report.

It is not enough to be motivated by donor requirements. The changes required to achieve a fully integrated, protection-sensitive and inclusive response require an appreciation that the issues addressed throughout the 6 A’s approach are intrinsically linked with the values and principles with which Islamic Relief identifies itself. Key lessons, challenges and recommendations regarding “A6: Adequate Capacity” are summarised below.

## Key Lessons

**Explain protection and inclusion in staff inductions:** In Islamic Relief Pakistan, staff inductions include references to protection and inclusion. It is important that Islamic Relief’s commitment to protection and inclusion is conveyed in inductions which are premised on a sound understanding of the values and ideologies that underpin protective and inclusive approaches to programming. This means providing new employees with the necessary critical consciousness regarding the importance of gender justice, disability inclusion, child protection and Islamic Relief’s commitment to safeguarding and PSEA.

**Appoint protection and inclusion champions:** All country offices agreed that, to truly enable protection and inclusion at every level, focal persons per project site should be appointed to act as champions and to meaningfully influence projects that impact the communities with which we work. Due to logistical challenges between project sites and the main country office where most protection and inclusion focal points are based, this approach should be considered mandatory, particularly in contexts characterised by frequent crises. This approach is already being used in Islamic Relief Pakistan.

## Positive practices: Capacity-building in Islamic Relief Pakistan



Enhancing staff capacity around protection and inclusion has featured prominently in Islamic Relief Pakistan’s Protection & Inclusion Strategy (2018-2021). Trainings and orientation sessions

have been conducted in Islamic Relief Pakistan at different levels throughout 2018 and 2019, targeting at least 75% of staff. A key strategy for effectively and efficiently maximising the protective and inclusive impact of Islamic Relief Pakistan’s interventions is to ensure that protection and inclusion ‘champions’ are appointed in each project location. Protection and inclusion champions are tasked with ensuring that protection and inclusion is streamlined across key areas of project planning, monitoring, evaluation, community mobilisation and workshop facilitation. In addition to this, an informal WhatsApp group has been created for staff working in protection and inclusion to share regional cross-learning and promising approaches.

**Scale up training opportunities for all staff:** Although it is widely acknowledged that training on protection and inclusion needs to be part of a country-wide strategy, for a variety of reasons, such as a lack of time to attend training this may not always be the case. Training is frequently undertaken by only a handful of staff, but this may be inadequate to effectively mainstream protection and inclusion, particularly if there is already a lack of coherence or overall strategy within which protection and inclusion can be framed. A solution could be to provide more long-term support, such as a modular approach to training, as opposed to one-off trainings for a selection of staff.

**Promote inclusion through recruitment:** According to Islamic Relief colleagues, gender equality and disability inclusion should be promoted in both our delivery of services (external) and through recruitment processes (internal).

**Make protection and inclusion part of all programmes and staff roles:** It is typical for an organisation to assign any tasks relating to protection and inclusion to designated staff members, such as protection and inclusion focal points within Islamic Relief. However, the potential to redistribute tasks, so that the capacity to undertake protection and inclusion-related activities becomes

a responsibility of all existing and new staff, should be explored. Mainstreaming protection and inclusion should not be seen as an objective of its own, to be undertaken by one appointed person, but as an integral part of the management of a high-quality programme across all components.

**The role of local protection and inclusion focal points**

The role of the protection and inclusion focal points is primarily concerned with providing strategic input and influence to ensure that protection mainstreaming and inclusion is integrated throughout the country office’s programmes. Protection and inclusion focal points can provide specific technical assistance and advice, but to truly uphold the values and principles associated with protection and inclusion, it is crucial for all staff to assume and recognise their own role as integral to mainstreaming protection and inclusion. Furthermore, it is important that all management hierarchies thoroughly internalise the process of mainstreaming protection and inclusion, as well as safeguarding and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), including at the highest strategic decision-making levels of an organisation.

**Provide real-time mentoring and support to programme staff:**

There may be challenges in relation to the practicalities and potential complexities of using analysis tools, even beyond the capacity-building phase among programme staff. In addition to training staff on various analysis tools, it is important to stress the importance of contextual factors, such as the style of FDGs, location, composition of groups and how to use the results of the analysis to adapt our interventions. As such, staff require ongoing mentoring and support to translate theoretical concepts into practice. Addressing inequalities and ensuring the inclusion of the most marginalised groups also requires adequate time and planning.

## Key Recommendations

Ensure that country offices become ‘protection and inclusion-aware’ through the implementation of protective and inclusive practices in their daily routines, including decision-making, regular training, orientation sessions and opportunities to share learning, as well as incorporating protection and inclusion into the individual objectives of all programme-level staff, including senior management.

Dedicate financial resources to building and sustaining capacity around protection and inclusion, such as by making the protection and inclusion focal points role a mandatory position that is actively involved across a portfolio of projects and that projects include resources for learning and capacity building.

INGOs should work with local groups, such as OPDs, and ask how we can complement, learn and support the work of existing organisations, without unintentionally undermining or discrediting local capacities, particularly ones directly engaged with at-risk communities.

## Approaches to consider

Protection and inclusion-related requirements should be included in job descriptions which accurately mirror a particular staff member’s workload. If protection and inclusion is part of all staff members’ job descriptions or key



performance indicators to some extent, staff are likely to have a clear incentive, depending on the nature of their role, to ensure protection and inclusion considerations are integrated in their work.

## Key Recommendations

Disasters, emergency situations and contexts with development challenges affect all members of society, but they can also have varying impacts on particular groups. People with disabilities are often the most excluded in their communities and subject to endemic poverty. Children, older people and certain ethnic groups also face significant risks during emergencies, due to pre-existing inequalities and vulnerabilities, facing threats to their lives, wellbeing and dignity. While gender inequality can affect both men and women, it is frequently postulated that women and girls are disproportionately affected by inequalities, due to harmful gender norms stemming from socially-constructed distinctions between men and women across the world.

Adopting a protective and inclusive approach to programming is about recognising that women, men, girls, boys, older people, people with disabilities and other socially-excluded or distinctive categories in a particular context will experience different protection risks and barriers. Islamic Relief’s inclusive and protective programming approach, also referred to as the 6 As approach, is designed to provide programming staff with a criteria to assess and validate the extent to which projects and programmes are mainstreaming protection and inclusion.

The lessons from this paper are drawn from discussions that took place with eight countries funded under the a SIDA-funded project on Inclusive, Sensitive, Protective and Accountable approaches to programming between 2nd and 4th November 2019, as well as three countries outside of the SIDA project. As implementation spreads more broadly across Islamic Relief offices, there are more lessons to be learned and approaches to be devised on mainstreaming protection and inclusion. It is imperative that Islamic Relief adopts this learning to continuously improve its approach.

<https://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/savinglives>

Although Islamic Relief's approach to protection and inclusion was primarily developed as a humanitarian framework and applied in crisis contexts, it is also relevant for developing and peacebuilding contexts. As such, Islamic Relief aims to mainstream protection and inclusion across all programmes, including longer-term development interventions.

UN (2016) No one left behind is ethical imperative of new development agenda, [Online], available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2016/01/519872-no-one-left-behind-ethical-imperative-new-development-agenda-un-deputy-chief>

Global Protection Cluster <http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/tools-and-guidance/>,

<https://www.islamic-relief.org/publications/>

<https://www.islamic-relief.org/publications/>

UN (2018) Leave No One Behind\*, available at: [https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2754713\\_July\\_PM\\_2\\_Leaving\\_no\\_one\\_behind\\_Summary\\_from\\_UN\\_Committee\\_for\\_Development\\_Policy.pdf](https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2754713_July_PM_2_Leaving_no_one_behind_Summary_from_UN_Committee_for_Development_Policy.pdf)

Global Protection Cluster: Protection Mainstreaming Toolkit:

[http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/\\_assets/files/aors/protection\\_mainstreaming/gpc-pm\\_toolkit-2017.en.pdf](http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/_assets/files/aors/protection_mainstreaming/gpc-pm_toolkit-2017.en.pdf)

Deniz Kandiyoti (1988), Gender and Society, Vol. 2, No. 3, Special Issue to Honor Jessie Bernard, pp. 274-290.

Burns et al (2004) Making Community Participation Meaningful, The Policy Press, [Online]. Available at: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/jr163-community-participation-development.pdf>

The following analysis tools can be considered for undertaking context analysis: Connectors and Dividers, 5W+1H, Risk option analysis, Stakeholder mapping and Relationship mapping

This could include expressing opinions and priorities about improvements, safe passages, location of distribution points, as well as participating in the implementation of the project through management activities.

Informal justice systems are usually a common means of resolving issues in many rural and urban areas, such as in Afghanistan where the "jirga" system is still firmly established.

For example, some studies suggest that large scale distribution of food could have negative effects on small and medium-sized markets in particular contexts: Zyck, S. et al (October 2015). Markets in Crises: the 2010 floods in Sindh, Pakistan (HPG Working Paper). London, ODI. Retrieved from: <http://www.odi.org/publications/10089-markets-crises-2010-floodssindh->

The participation ladder is an important tool which provides a common set of terms to describe different levels of participation which could enable the programmes team to monitor the quality of participation and document it.

Paying attention to the potential negative effects that may arise as a result of this is also relevant during analysis and data collection stage, and as such, A1: Analysis and A3: Attention to Negative Effects.

In cases such as in IR Syria, where the request for 'participation' is not readily understood, it is important to be clear about what IR is asking and why. Why is it relevant to the particular group or individual and why is their feedback and participation sought?

According to IR Kenya, it may be necessary to seek the permission of community leaders or speak to men prior to talking to women in the community in order to avert the risk of backlash.

One example is budgeting for a sign language interpreter or captioner in order to ensure the full and inclusive participation of people with hearing impairments. Other examples include providing transportation for people with limited mobility

Please note, this is not an exhaustive list of Insan indicators relevant to protection & inclusion.

Some of the barriers relating to accessible and inclusive complaints mechanism emerge simply from a lack of information and understanding. For example, communities may be reluctant to complain due to a fear of retaliation, particularly with regards to sexual exploitation and abuse. Building trust and understanding will ensure that communities are aware of their right to submit complaints, to raise issues relating to sexual exploitation and abuse and other safeguarding matters, in a manner that will be treated with confidence and urgency by Islamic Relief.

For example, using a mix of posters, leaflets, plays, radio broadcasts, and meetings could ensure that IR is covering a breadth of modalities to raise awareness

The challenges of setting up inclusive, protective and accessible complaints and feedback mechanisms will be easier if there is a disaster preparedness element attached to complaints and feedback mechanisms planning. Budget flexibility is also essential to respond to deeper and more contextualized issues that arise throughout the project lifecycle.

The 'ecological approach' suggests that underlying socio-cultural context could have implications for whether complaints are received and particularly, on issues relating to sexual exploitation and abuse.

People with disabilities, women, children and older persons may be an untapped resource, as they play a key role in their communities.

Their ability to advocate on behalf of their communities should not be underestimated and it is essential for humanitarian

organisations to engage and work with these groups on the ground, to ensure a protective and inclusive approach to programming

