

# Protection Sector Update

HIGHLIGHTS OF FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2014 ACTIVITIES | OCTOBER 2014

## SECTOR OVERVIEW

Natural disasters and conflict often exacerbate the vulnerability of individuals, requiring people to cope with additional threats that include sexual violence, theft, exploitative labor, and exclusion from life-saving humanitarian assistance. In response, USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) is at the forefront of the humanitarian community's efforts to protect conflict- and disaster-affected communities by funding activities that mitigate these dangers. While working to minimize and respond to specific risks, USAID/OFDA requires partners to “mainstream” protection—an approach to ensure the safety of those receiving emergency relief aid—in all humanitarian assistance programs.

In FY 2014, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$53.7 million to support stand-alone protection programs, including nearly \$9.3 million to 13 U.N. agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for global protection initiatives and approximately \$44.4 million to 20 U.N. agencies and NGOs for local protection activities in 16 countries. Worldwide, these programs have supported millions of people, providing services for child protection, psychosocial support, prevention of and response to gender-based violence (GBV), and coordination of and advocacy for protection activities.

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## IMPROVING ACCESS TO HUMANITARIAN SERVICES IN THE PHILIPPINES



A woman sits with her children in Tacloban City, Leyte Province, Philippines. (Photo by Carol Han/USAID)

On November 8, 2013, Typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan made landfall in the central Philippines—primarily impacting Eastern Samar, Samar, and Leyte provinces. The typhoon caused widespread destruction and affected approximately 16 million people, displaced 4.1 million residents, and resulted in the deaths of 6,300 individuals. To reduce the vulnerability of children, women, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan, USAID/OFDA supported NGO Handicap International to provide protection services. With USAID/OFDA funding, Handicap International improved access to emergency services in Tacloban City, Leyte Province, by establishing an Inclusion Technical Unit (ITU) that advocated for the consideration of vulnerable populations in emergency response efforts, delivered protection kits—containing a radio, solar lamp and whistle—for vulnerable and isolated persons, and

provided referral services for individuals needing specific care. The ITU also trained protection actors in best practices for providing services to vulnerable persons in emergency settings.

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## SUPPORTING GBV SURVIVORS IN CAR

In December 2013, violence and insecurity prompted hundreds of thousands of people across the Central African Republic (CAR) to flee their homes, placing women and girls at greater risk of GBV—including rape, abduction, sexual exploitation, and abuse. In camps and other informal displacement sites for internally displaced persons (IDPs), most GBV survivors are

unable to access medical and psychosocial services or do not seek support where services exist due to stigma, social blame, and fear of retaliation. Survivors often experience continued trauma, serious health risks, and life-long psychological complications. In response, USAID/OFDA supported the International Medical Corps (IMC) in establishing critical services for GBV survivors in northwest CAR and raising community awareness about these services and the importance of accessing them in a timely manner. With USAID/OFDA assistance, IMC strengthened the capacity of mobile health clinics and medical observation centers to provide quality clinical management of rape services, access to psychosocial support, and referral and transportation services for survivors who need more specialized care. USAID/OFDA is also supporting the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Rescue Committee for GBV programming in CAR. In FY 2014, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$4.3 million for protection activities in response to the complex emergency in CAR.

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## BUILDING EVIDENCE ON CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAMS



USAID/OFDA interventions aim to help children in Kolokani, Mali.  
(Photo by Katherine Echeverria/USAID)

relief activities, informal literacy and numeracy activities, parenting support activities for adults caring for conflict-affected children, and recreational, social, and emotional learning activities. Through the Safe Healing and Learning Spaces toolkit, USAID/OFDA and IRC are helping to mitigate the long-term effects of conflict on children. Despite the challenges presented in Mali and other complex emergencies, this collaboration demonstrates that it is possible to address needs and close the evidence gap at the same time.

Ongoing violence and insecurity has affected millions of children worldwide, making them more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. The direct exposure of children to traumatic events has potentially life-long and inter-generational consequences, including negative impacts on cognitive and emotional capacities. While best practices exist to guide responses to these needs, the humanitarian community would benefit from stronger evidence to help determine which interventions will have a substantial impact on the development of children in vulnerable circumstances. For example, in Mali and other contexts, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) is developing and field-testing an evidence-based Safe Healing and Learning Spaces toolkit to equip humanitarian organizations to provide timely and effective psychosocial support for children and improve their ability to cope with and heal from trauma after exposure to violence and conflict. The toolkit includes basic trauma

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## PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT IN PAKISTAN

Conflict between the Government of Pakistan and militant groups in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPk) Province has resulted in widespread population displacement and insecurity since August 2009. Following the 2009 military operations in KPk and FATA, more than one million IDPs remain, with the conflict affecting approximately 8.7 million people, according to the U.N. Ongoing security operations and subsequent displacement of nearly additional 500,000 people from North Waziristan Agency continue to generate psychosocial problems for Pakistani populations. In partnership with the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO), USAID/OFDA piloted a new program in FY 2014 testing psychosocial intervention strategies for community health workers to use in conflict-affected areas. WHO worked with local research organizations and NGOs to identify participants in the pilot program, which will provide critical care and help alleviate emotional distress for conflict-affected adults. The strategies provided include several techniques on how to manage stress, activate social support, and confront fears. This pilot program aims to provide evidence-based psychosocial intervention strategies that are electronically accessible and, if successful, replicable for community health workers to use in humanitarian crises elsewhere to help alleviate psychosocial distress in affected populations.

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