

Using the PIM Principles and PIM Process in the Development of a Protection Monitoring System

Iraq Protection Cluster Coordinator, Claudia Nicoletti, and Protection Cluster Co-coordinator, Yannick Creoff explain how the Protection Cluster's Protection Monitoring System has been developed in line with PIM Principles and the PIM process.

Development of a COVID-specific Community Protection Monitoring System

The Iraq Protection Cluster initially developed a Protection Monitoring System in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Protection cluster member organisations were no longer able to conduct household level protection monitoring, yet there was a real need for strong analysis of the protection impact of the pandemic.

In response to this situation, the cluster developed a protection monitoring system specifically focussed on the impact of the COVID pandemic in order to generate protection analysis to inform protection actors, donors and other key stakeholders about necessary responses and resourcing. The protection monitoring system used information derived from key informants at a community level as a way to circumvent the challenges related to lack of access to communities. Data collection and analysis was conducted on a monthly basis for a period of 6 months between April and September 2020.

Development of a broader Protection Monitoring System

The analyses generated by the COVID-specific protection monitoring system were well received by protection cluster members and other key stakeholders. While initially developed because of COVID-related movement restrictions, protection monitoring approaches that overcame access restrictions have broader resonance in the country. Claudia explains:

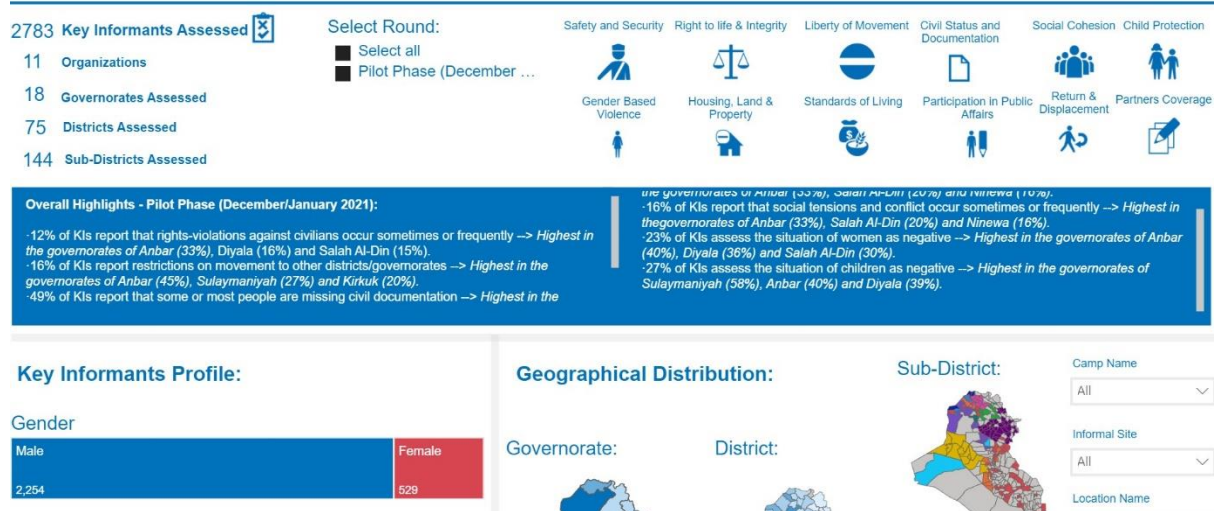
If we look at the situation in Iraq, when the pandemic hit in March 2020, it was on top of what was already a difficult situation to work in in terms of access restrictions for NGOs; local organisations to a lesser extent. Having to operate with [these access] restrictions affects the ability to deliver and implement, and on top of that we had COVID movement restrictions... The first protection monitoring [that was initiated] was COVID-specific and, jumping on that opportunity, there was the idea to have a system in place as a cluster that is [focussed at a] community level because restrictions are still in place; not just [relating to] COVID but other restrictions.

The Iraq protection cluster has now developed a revised and more comprehensive version of the community-level protection monitoring system, in close coordination with the Iraq Protection Cluster Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) and the Global Protection Cluster (GPC). The standardised protection monitoring system is more in-depth in terms of the scope of questionnaire, technical resources to support the PMS, and its processes than its COVID-specific predecessor. As described by Yannick:

The cluster has developed a Protection Monitoring System (PMS) whereby a number of partner organisations collect data on protection issues, needs and risks at the community-level through [key informant interviews] which the cluster subsequently compiles and analyses. This allows the cluster, its members as well as other stakeholders (Iraq Inter-cluster Coordination Group, durable solution actors etc.) to have access to both data and infographics through an online dashboard as well as regular and protection analysis reports where the main trends and issues are highlighted.

The new protection monitoring system was launched in December 2020. The dashboard and the first analysis report were made publicly available in February 2021.

NPC – Protection Monitoring System / Community Level



Extract from Iraq Protection Cluster PMS Dashboard

Value of a coordinated cluster-led approach

The coordinated approach of a cluster-led protection monitoring system has brought tangible benefits and improved the overall protection analysis for Iraq. According to Yannick:

[In this work] and especially last year, there was a risk of partners coming up with ad hoc tools, doing a lot of interviews over the phone, with overlap and duplication amongst them. The benefit of the cluster-led initiative was around ensuring [quality assurance] for the protection monitoring system. [The cluster] developed the questionnaire, the methodology and the processes. [Another benefit is] coordination in the sense we have over a dozen partners assigned to specific subdistricts for which they are responsible for so we avoid gaps [and] also overlaps. [This is] one of the benefits of the cluster-led initiative

The new system also addresses a gap in the sharing of protection analyses. Yannick explains:

[Protection cluster members were] doing their own protection monitoring but in terms of partners producing and sharing an analysis out of the protection monitoring process, [there was a] gap. The benefit of the cluster taking the initiative and leading on that process through our community monitoring system is in terms of the protection analysis, and [being able to give] a broad overview of key trends. ... That is one of the advantages compared to what partners were able to do [previously, given it takes] a lot of time and resources for an organisation to do the actual analysis of the data.

...Ultimately, the PMS allows a coordinated approach to data collection (including in terms of geographical coverage among partners and the use of standardised tools and indicators for data collection and analysis) as well as the production of timely and comprehensive analysis to inform programmatic interventions and advocacy efforts.

Value of the PIM Conceptual Framework in the development of the PMS

Yannick describes the way in which the PIM Conceptual Framework, and notably the PIM Principles and the PIM Process, informed the development of the protection monitoring system:

We have utilised the PIM principles as a way to organise our thinking, as a way to organise ... information management processes from the design to the actual data collection. We reference the PIM Principles as an annex to our [technical] document as ...guidance to partners.

The [first stage of the PIM [Process] is [really about] trying to identify information gaps, what are data collection mechanisms that already exist, which ones are missing and what information do we actually really need to collect, to what end and how are we going to process that.



The benefit of the PIM [Process is] to take a step back, analyse the information landscape, clearly identify the objectives and go through the reflection [about] what is the defined purpose [and] to what end do we want this information. I think that is a reflection we have been having in terms of the gaps relating to the impact of the COVID pandemic initially and [now] more broadly an integrated protection analysis in country.

[Our] reflections [also helped us] to define the scope and objective of the cluster-led protection monitoring system [compared to] other partners [and other] types of information management processes ... and this fairly large information landscape... which exist [in Iraq]...and keeping the [cluster PMS] restricted to community level through key informants.

Overall we did go through those reflections and that is why the protection monitoring system is fit for purpose.

[The other aspect from the PIM Conceptual Framework is] around ethical processes and mechanisms for data collection, sharing and processing and so on... which we included in the data sharing protocol, in our technical resources [and] in trainings to partners.

Data sharing with durable solutions stakeholders guided by a data sharing protocol

For Claudia, the PIM Principles of 'Coordination and Collaboration' and also 'Do No Harm' are critical in the current context of Iraq. Iraq is in a transitional phase, with a move towards durable solutions programming. A durable solutions technical working group has now been established:

[There are durable solutions actors and durable solutions] architecture which is separate and somehow includes humanitarian [actors] because of the nature of activities [humanitarian agencies implement]. In light of the transition to durable solutions, protection is central so [our protection monitoring] report does contain elements of durable solutions. ... [In Iraq], most of the activities humanitarian actors [do are] durable solutions in nature so we try to [share] information and become part of the conversation about durable solutions to make sure that protection is central and not just a nice word that we tick a box with.

We tried for many years ...to pass the message that protection [needs to] be central [even in durable solutions programming], so protection analysis [should] justify ... not only how humanitarians intervene [but also how] other actors intervene, [in line with] the ‘do no harm’ principle... [It is important that] stabilisation and development actors [use] information produced by humanitarians. [What] is essential ... is the passing of knowledge [to these other actors]. The humanitarian system will eventually fade away and others will need to step in. ...The more we can make sure that ... information is shared with the wider range of other actors [the better].

That is the element of PIM that I value in [terms of asking] ...in the transitional phase – ‘How do we better capitalise on this to make it function for the ones who will be [here] after us?’ This is something we want to pass on with this protection monitoring system’.

In line with this, and with the agreement of protection cluster partners and guided by the protection monitoring protocol, parts of the anonymised data set collected through the cluster’s community-level protection monitoring system are shared with lead agencies of the durable solutions technical working group. This data sharing therefore seeks to avoid duplication of data collection efforts, and to support analysis by these agencies of what durable solutions can be achieved by reference to that dataset. Yannick explains:

That is a benefit [and] good practice in terms of maximising the use of the data. [Information from the protection monitoring system] is used by the partners, it is used by us [the protection cluster], but it also helps inform durable solutions programming and policies.

Contribution to protection outcomes

The protection cluster protection monitoring system has improved the analysis of the protection situation in Iraq. The reports have highlighted and shone a light on protection risks and needs requiring continued consideration. In a context with competing humanitarian priorities and the parallel development of durable solutions interventions, the analysis produced helps keep critical protection issues in focus.

This improved analysis has also provided a basis for humanitarian country team members, UN Head of Agencies, NGO representatives and donors to engage in discussions with Government counterparts on policies relating to IDP camp closures and associated secondary displacement, and other protection concerns. Claudia explains:

Because of COVID, some donors have wanted to [reallocate] some of the money [allocated] to [psychosocial Support] interventions or case management interventions to more ‘material’ humanitarian activities. So [being able to credibly report that while Iraq is no longer an emergency] there are huge needs, especially protection needs... [allows us to] put a lot of light on the real situation in Iraq.

Donors are paying attention to the protection monitoring report, the dashboard [and] the briefings and they are asking partners to make sure ... that protection considerations as discussed by the protection cluster based on the protection monitoring analysis are central [to] their proposals. In the long run I think it will certainly bring about some positive changes in the environment.

PIM Highlights

- PIM principles referenced in technical documents and training ([PIM Principles](#))
- PMS supports coordinated data collection and protection analysis to inform response and resourcing decisions, and advocacy (PIM Principle - Coordination and Collaboration)
- PMS has a defined purpose and scope (PIM Principles, [PIM Process](#))
- PMS avoids duplication in data collection and responds to gaps in the information landscape (PIM Process - Assessing Information Landscape)
- Digital data collection and access restrictions to kobo platform and data, as well as a strict data sharing protocol build data protection into the IM system (PIM Principle - Data responsibility, protection, and security)
- Data collected through PMS used to the maximum extent possible; including through safe and responsible data sharing with durable solutions actors (PIM Principle – Collaboration and Coordination)
- Sharing of data and analysis supports centrality of protection and ‘do no harm’ in programming (PIM Principle – Do No Harm)

More information

More information about the Iraq Protection Cluster Protection Monitoring System and supporting materials can be found online [here](#).