INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE FOR FACILITATORS

This Guide for Facilitators is intended to serve as a tool for people who are interested in facilitating training processes to develop protection capacities in human rights defenders (HRDs), their organisations and communities. In preparing the Guide, PI's Policy, Research and Training Unit (PRTU) has received valuable support from colleagues who work in the Protection Desks in the different countries where the organisation operates. The Desks have shared their day to day experiences working with HRDs and grassroots organisations in urban and rural contexts. Equally, the Guide is rooted in the key concepts of the popular education movement, offering facilitators access to concepts that will allow them to stimulate interest among participants and offer a shared, non-hierarchical, training experience for HRDs.

This publication can be used within the framework of the capacity building work that PI carries out with the HRD organisations and communities it accompanies and as a resource to carry out a diagnostic of the security situations they face. It also contains support materials that will help them monitor and evaluate their progress implementing their security plans.

Similarly, this Guide for Facilitators contains a range of materials and advice that may be used to structure and prepare practical workshop sessions along the pathway set out in the *New Protection Manual for Human Rights Defenders* (henceforth, the NPM).[1] The Guide suggests different ways in which facilitators can transmit their knowledge, by contextualising the key contents of the NPM for different specific audiences. Thus, the Guide is designed to function as a "Toolbox" from which facilitators can choose elements to use when preparing their training sessions.

The Guide has at least six objectives:

1. To **systematise experiences of facilitation of capacity-development processes**, recognising their complexity and the need for multiple interventions .

2. To address aspects related to the **diversity of partner HRD organisations and communities** (learning patterns and experiences will be different in each case).

3. To provide **practical, participant-focused, methodological approaches** for facilitators that; to help learning and understanding among groups.

4. To provide facilitators with **tools to assess the learning needs of participants as well as monitoring tools to measure change** that occurs as a result of the capacity building provided.

5. To provide facilitators with a range of **materials and further reading** to enable them to contextualise the training they provide and to utilise partners' experiences actively as part of the learning process.

6. To simplify the content of PI's *New Protection Manual for Human Rights Defenders* and help facilitators use it effectively as resource material.

Far from seeking to impose a single approach that must be followed to the letter, the PRTU team hopes that the Guide will encourage facilitators to be creative when responding to the most frequent difficulties and challenges they face in their daily work with HRDs and grass roots organisations.

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1 Luis Enrique Eguren and Marie Caraj (2009). *New Protection Manual for Human Rights Defenders*. Protection International. Brussels.

THE NEW PROTECTION MANUAL AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROTECTION CAPACITIES: MAKING CONNECTIONS AND LEARNING TOGETHER

The NPM is the fruit of nearly three decades working with HRDs, evaluating the risks they face because of the work they do, and designing and implementing plans to improve their individual and organisational security. The NPM is intended to develop the capacities of HRDs to take responsibility – independently and in a sustainable manner – for their security and protection. In other words, it is meant to provide accompaniment to the HRDs as they themselves develop their roles as agents of change.

"Security and protection are complex areas. They are based around structured knowledge, but also influenced by individual attitudes and organisational behaviour. One of the key messages in this manual is to give the issue of security the time, space and energy it deserves, despite overloaded work agendas and the severe stress and fear all defenders and their organisations are under. This means going beyond people's individual knowledge about security and moving towards an organisational culture in which security is inherent".[2]

PI is aware that there is no magic formula that guarantees protection for HRDs, their organisations and their communities. Furthermore, each HRD is immersed in their own unique cultural, social and political context. Plus, risks change. Any attempt, therefore, to formulate a single security plan that may be applied in any situation is doomed to failure and it is extremely unlikely that a written text will be entirely valid for so many and so diverse a group of people, whose geographical, cultural and political contexts are so different.

This is why it is important to facilitate the kind of interaction that occurs in workshops or meetings and that create connections between what the NPM says and the lived experiences and needs of HRDs in the real world. This interaction occurs in two directions as might be supposed: from the facilitator to the participants and from the participants to the facilitator. This interaction can and should lead to a mutual learning process that is enriching for facilitators and participants alike.

This also explains why we consider this Guide to be a work in progress, open to improvement, change and development. The feedback received from the people who use it will be fundamental in ensuring that this is indeed the case, as it will enable us to enrich a document that is permanently available on line. We will endeavour to improve it permanently, adding complementary materials whenever we are able to. This Guide for Facilitators remains, in other words, in your expert hands.

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2 Ibid. pp. 10-11.