

RS05 // CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY

The Community Protection Approach is a system to analyse, monitor and respond to the coercive environment affecting individuals in a given area. To ensure its applicability in the different contexts it is essential defining the concept of Community. WeWorld-GVC recognizes fundamental aspects qualifying the concept of community in its day-to-day programming. The list of aspects includes:

- ▶ A group of people (going this concept beyond the administrative connotation)
- ▶ Living in the same geographic area
- ▶ Sharing the same cultural, social, ethnic, religious, background
- ▶ Possessing a shared interest
- ▶ Sharing the same resources
- ▶ Exposed to the same risks and/or threats
- ▶ Possessing a network of social interaction
- ▶ Self-recognition as a community.

The operationalization of the CPA nonetheless requires the definition of a set of parameters ensuring that the approach is relevant and appropriate in each context. The current scope and capacity of the CPA has been test piloted in different countries; an operational definition of community has been isolated to define criteria for national applicability of the approach. The definition is drawn and elaborated from the one used by the International Federation of the Red Cross' Community early warning systems: guiding principles (2012):

“Community (...) represents a network of social interactions that may be exposed to multiple social and/or physical impacts from one or more hazards/ threats, often, but not exclusively, related by place (i.e., village, neighbourhood, watershed, etc.)”. (p.13)

The concept, mainly applied in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction, represents the essence of what we would understand by community to apply the CPA. The definition needs however further elaboration to reflect the complexity of the protection phenomenon as operationalized by the CPA.

At first, the original concept make emphasis on hazards and threats. These elements do not allow capturing the broad complexity of possible determinants of a coercive environment in a context that not necessarily turn into direct hazards or threats. This may include the legal and political framework, the role played by different actors and the vulnerabilities and capacities of the affected communities, among others.

At the same time, the protection phenomena does not involve only social and physical consequences (impacts). Rather, the coercive environment generates as well psychological,

emotional, and/or political consequences that need to be considered to capture the diversity of impacts.

Finally, the reference to a shared location bring us necessarily to the sharing of resources and assets that determines the dynamics of the affected population and its basic living condition. In particular, under a protection perspective, the resources are often key determinants of the coercive environment in terms for instance of availability, access and usage. In addition, WeWorld-GVC considers the element of shared location as an operational “must” for the implementation of the CPA and although “must”, not exclusive for the definition of community.

Taking into account the above consideration the definition of community is reformulated as:

“Community represents different groups of people that may be exposed to similar physical, psychological, and/or social impacts from multiple coercive factors and/or share the same resources, often, but not exclusively, related by place”.

The CPA should be applied and adapted to a group of people that bear as a minimum the following characteristics:

- ▶ They possess at the same time a minimum of two of the below presented dimensions
- ▶ They live in the same geographical area or location
- ▶ They have access to the same resources
- ▶ They are exposed to the same Hazards/Threats

In no circumstances the following concepts of community are never considered in isolation for the application of the CPA:

- ▶ A specific Age, Gender or Diversity group
- ▶ A group having only certain attitudes or interests in common, as for example religious or ethnic groups.



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