

# Preface

In its analysis of the Kosovo crisis in 2001, ALNAP's first ever *Review of Humanitarian Action*, showed that humanitarian agencies did not give enough attention to people's protection. Many agencies focused on the provision of material assistance, leaving protection to mandated agencies such as UNHCR and ICRC. The *Review* concluded that the humanitarian community was at last waking up to the fact that all humanitarian agencies have a role to play in people's protection in war and disaster. Agencies realised that they have an obligation to work with communities, mandated agencies and responsible authorities to ensure people's safety as well as providing assistance to those in need.

But how? A search through ALNAP's database of evaluation reports revealed that there were alarmingly few evaluative reports that dealt with protection, in spite of its importance. Although some excellent publications were available elsewhere, there was little material available which was specifically tailored to help humanitarian practitioners think through the key issues and practicalities of protective programming. ALNAP member agencies therefore asked for this gap to be filled in the form of a guidance booklet on protection for humanitarian agency field staff.

After extensive consultation with protection specialists and with many agency staff throughout the ALNAP network, the *ALNAP Guidance Booklet for Humanitarian Protection – Pilot Version* was published in 2003 and then tested in the field by practitioners throughout 2004. It has been ALNAP's most popular publication to date suggesting that the need for guidance on protection is as great as ever. ALNAP is grateful to all those agencies who participated in the pilots and the lessons learned have been incorporated into this new first edition.

This new road-tested guide is now better equipped to help practitioners get to grips with both the concepts that underpin protection and the operational elements involved. Sections 1-3 will help people understand the context of people's protection needs and also provides an important framework for understanding protection in terms of responsibility and action. Sections 4-8 offer a practical schema designed to help agency staff think through the practicalities of protection focused programming in four clear steps: assessment; programme design; implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

It is well understood that this guide is not a panacea and that people's protection in war and disaster will continue to be a very difficult undertaking. But all of us in ALNAP share the hope that this guide will have significant value in helping to ensure the safety and dignity of those people who need it most.

**John Mitchell, Head of ALNAP**