ANNUAL REPORT 2017





NORCAP

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Benedicte Giæver

COVER PHOTO
Ingrid Prestetun/NORCAP

Sohel (5), his father Syed Alam and the rest of their family came to Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh when over 600,000 fled extreme violence in Myanmar in 2017. NORCAP expert Henry Renna Gallano was deployed to UNICEF to support their education in emergencies efforts.

PRINT
Gamlebyen grafisk

A warm thank you to all NORCAP staff and all roster members who have contributed to the report.

2017: Responding to famine, displacement and rights violations

Famine threatened 20 million people across north-east Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen at the beginning of 2017. Thanks to the concerted efforts of many parties, the worst-case scenarios did not materialise, but millions are still going to bed hungry. Their suffering is the consequence of man-made conflict, made worse by drought, floods and climate change. Continued and ever-increasing humanitarian assistance is needed, but only an end to the conflict and violence will really pave the way to restoring food security.

There is also a crisis of unprecedented proportions unfolding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Brutal violence and ethnic and political unrest led to more people being internally displaced in DRC than in any other country in Africa in 2017, and there has been an alarming increase in food insecurity. In October, the UN declared the country in the throes of a level-three crisis, the highest level of emergency and on a par with the situations in Iraq, Syria and Yemen. NORCAP has supported the UN in its efforts to scale up lifesaving aid and protection in the Kasai region of DRC, while our experts from the NORDEM roster supported long-term processes of conflict transformation and democratic dialogue in the east of the country.

Violence continues unabated in Syria, and in neighbouring Iraq ongoing commitment is needed to support reconciliation, reconstruction and the rebuilding of livelihoods. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has been defeated in its major strongholds, but internal and regional power struggles threaten new setbacks in both countries. In Yemen, the lack of political will to resolve the conflict is striking, as is the international community's inability to protect civilians. Our support in all three countries has focused on enabling a more effective humanitarian response in the face of enormous challenges.

In the course of only a few months last year, more than 600,000 people fled extreme violence in Myanmar, and NORCAP mobilised quickly to support the refugee response in Bangladesh. We deployed 24 experienced men and women with the skills needed to set up camps and provide shelter and protection for those seeking safety across the border.

NORCAP's ultimate goal is to enable our partners to protect the lives, rights and livelihoods of affected people and strengthen their resilience before, during and after a crisis. Together with international, regional and national partners, we identify capacity needs and work to address them. We sent experts on 543 missions across the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors in 2017.

NORDEM became an integral part of NORCAP in 2017, which has strengthened our overall competencies in human rights, democracy and peacebuilding. We now also work with partners such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union to help foster good governance, democratic institutions and the rule of law. We sent election observers to 15 national and local elections in countries such as Albania, Georgia, Liberia and Nepal. NORDEM's observers evaluated the extent to which these polls complied with international standards and made recommendations to improve the electoral process.

Our experts continued to provide vital assistance in strengthening national climate services across Africa in 2017. Making sure that important weather and climate information reaches the people who need it most is paramount in improving resilience and reducing humanitarian needs. Our new strategy from 2018 includes greater focus on strengthening local and national actors. Building the capacity of those who remain when the international community leaves is key to sustainability. To this end, we are developing a pilot project with civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Lake Chad Basin to strengthen the capacity of frontline responders in a humanitarian crisis of enormous proportions.

We are ever grateful to our deployees for their commitment and professionalism, and to our donors and partners for their contributions in alleviating suffering and working for resilience, protection and respect for human rights. In the years to come we need to work together to find better ways to improve the lives of civilians caught up in conflict, and to make sure humanitarian, peacebuilding and development efforts all pull in the same direction.

JAN EGELAND
Secretary General of
the Norwegian Refugee Council



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SHORING UP PROTECTION COMMITMENTS

The international community has pledged time and again to increase efforts to protect people from serious human rights abuses. Lack of funding, coordination and unified messaging still block effective action in crises.



NORCAP has worked over the years to strengthen the protection capacity of UN agencies, regional inter-governmental bodies and national authorities. We address a broad spectrum of thematic issues, covering humanitarian operations, peacebuilding, development and human rights, and support a range of partners who influence the protection environment.

The difficulty of protecting the people affected by complex crises such as those in Iraq, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen is two-fold. Not only do state and non-state actors disregard international law and restrict humanitarian access, but the international community also tends to prioritise geopolitical

interests over protection concerns and fails to respond coherently.

Toward a more systematic approach

Conflict and disasters invariably compromise the rights of those affected, both in terms of direct threats to their lives, physical security and basic needs, but also by increasing the risk of gender-based violence, trafficking and the loss of documentation and livelihoods. Protection should be at the core of all humanitarian efforts, whether we are providing shelter, food or sanitary facilities. As important, humanitarians and particularly the humanitarian country teams need to ensure that the most critical protection concerns are ad-

dressed systematically and collectively. We need to improve our analysis, agree on common messages and speak up.

In Myanmar, we have just witnessed how the lack of a coordinated effort to document the Rohingya's protection needs hindered effective advocacy and response. Globally, primary assessment data on protection threats tends to be missing and analysis is weak. There is also a shortfall in terms of leadership, commitment and funding. This was pointed out in the 2015 report "Independent whole of system review of protection in the context of humanitarian action".

"In Myanmar, the lack of a coordinated effort to document the Rohingya's protection needs hindered effective advocacy and response."

Our experts supported the UN and national actors in 2017, both in policy development and hands-on work to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of the most vulnerable people affected by crises. We also deployed ProCap experts to help humanitarian country teams develop protection strategies for countries such as Pakistan, DRC and Syria. In the latter, our expert helped the Whole of Syria strategic steering group develop a strategy to mobilise a comprehensive, system-wide and multi-sector effort to address the most serious protection risks for people affected by the ongoing conflict.

Improving coherence

In armed conflicts from DRC to Syria we see widespread sexual violence against women, men, girls and boys. There's a need for improved prevention and response, and not just in the emergency phase. Conflict intensifies factors that can cause gender based violence, and it can also bring about a breakdown of norms and the rule of law. This leads to increased risks of violence even after the conflict has ended. We need to address the factors that make people vulnerable to violence both before crisis hits and in all post-conflict efforts

Overall, we need to ensure interaction and complementary inputs across the humanitarian sector, and between it, and the peacebuilding, human rights and development sectors. The UN's Human Rights Up Front initiative calls for greater efforts across the UN system to identify and respond to human rights violations as early warning signs of crises to come. However, the brutal violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state in 2017, begs the question whether it is able to put its promises into practice and ensure accountability.

In Colombia, NORCAP has supported coherence in the UN's post-conflict work by deploying experts to the resident coordinator's office and the humanitarian country team, who have promoted close coordination across humanitarian, peacebuilding and development action. Forced displacement and the targeted killing of activists and community leaders have continued, despite the peace agreement. Our ProCap expert helped develop a humanitarian protection policy to address these concerns, which have to be dealt with in order for the peace process to succeed. Deployees to the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights have monitored the human rights situation and made recommendations to the state on how best to comply with its international obligations.

Defending human rights

Protection concerns do not only arise during crises. There is increasing disregard for the rule of law globally, including in high-income countries. According to the World Justice Project's index, many countries' score on the protection of fundamental rights such as equality before the law and the right to life and security have declined in recent years. Targeted abuses and violations against human rights defenders take place in many parts of the world, and for journalists, doing their job has become more dangerous. This is why NORCAP has teamed up with UNESCO to work for the safety of journalists. Our NORDEM deployees continued to support human rights and rule of law in 2017, including in Europe and the former Soviet Union.

To improve protection outcomes and ensure the fulfilment of fundamental human rights, long-term investments in local capacities that strengthen the rule of law are a pressing concern. For us, humanitarians and development professionals alike, our challenge is to prioritise serious protection risks, to speak up before it is too late, and act in a coordinated manner to prevent and reduce protection threats before, during and after crisis.

BENEDICTE GIÆVER
Director, NORCAP



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ABOUT NORCAP

NORCAP is a global provider of expertise to the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors. We build partnerships with international organisations and national actors to protect lives, rights and livelihoods.

In today's world, conflict and insecurity increasingly combine with climate change, recurrent disasters and state fragility to create complex crises with dire humanitarian consequences.

The solutions to these challenges are equally complex and lie at the global, national and local level. Weak capacity and lack of coordination impede national and international actors' ability to address problems consistently and effectively. There is often a shortage of personnel with the right experience and skills to implement projects, provide technical expertise, undertake unbiased analysis and coordinate assistance. National and local stakeholders, including governments, do not have the capacity to play a more prominent role in crisis management, or to meet their international obligations in terms of human rights and sustainable governance.



In an effort to address some of these issues, NORCAP provides expert personnel and collaborates with international organisations and national partners to identify capacity needs and to establish common goals and projects. We help strengthen capacity, understood as the ability to perform functions, solve problems and achieve objectives, and help improve coordination and collaboration.

Expertise to strengthen partners' capacity

We have deployed experts on more than 9,000 missions since 1991. By combining specialised recruitment with years of experience, we match the right person to the right mission at the right time. We have built a pool of specialists over the years in areas ranging from education, protection,

human rights, election observation and good governance, to cash programming, climate change adaptation, disaster risk management and peacebuilding.

Our experts' diversity in terms of experience, language, gender and nationality enables us to deploy people with the interpersonal skills and cultural awareness needed on the ground in a wide range of situations and crises. Most deployments last between six and 18 months, which means we also bring more continuity to the response than most other international surge capacities.

Strategic partnerships to reach common goals

We discuss gaps and opportunities within and across the humanitarian, peacebuilding and development sectors with our partners in the UN system and national and regional organisations, institutions and networks. We also bring field partners together with policymakers and communities of expertise to capitalise on their strengths and perspectives.

We have worked with the UN and other partners over the years to develop specialised projects to improve protection, gender mainstreaming, needs assessments and cash and markets, in the form of ProCap, GenCap, ACAPS and CashCap. In the coming period, we will intensify our work with national authorities and local organisations. Together we will ensure that they are better equipped to handle crises and to uphold human rights and sustainable governance.

Toward more effective ways of working

Given their independence from operational and sector agendas and interests, our experts are well positioned to promote change and more effective ways of working. They help to increase coordination between agencies and sectors, and to encourage new and innovative approaches. We work, for example, to improve analytical and programming skills to make cash transfers an effective tool in humanitarian and development responses.

Our deployments and partnerships also seek to overcome the barriers between the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors. We believe working effectively together in a sustainable manner is the best way to reduce needs, risks and vulnerability over time.

OUR EXPERTISE

NORCAP has a pool of more than 1,000 professionals recruited to meet the changing demands of a wide range of partners, situations and crises.

CRISIS RESPONSE

Developing and strengthening crisis responses has been a main focus area since the NORCAP roster was established after the 1991 Gulf war. Today we provide a range of expertise, from protection, coordination, education, health and nutrition to communication with affected populations, camp management and resilience.

PROTECTION

We recruit and deploy senior specialists to field, regional and global operations to strengthen humanitarian responses via our Protection Standby Capacity Project (**ProCap**). ProCap is a UN inter-agency initiative led by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Our Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS) helps to improve coordinated humanitarian needs assessments. ACAPS is led by a consortium made up of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Action Against Hunger (until end 2017) and Save the Children International.

RESILIENCE

We support national authorities and regional institutions with expertise in disaster risk management and climate change adaptation.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

The Norwegian Resource Bank for Human Rights and Democratisation (NORDEM) became part of NORCAP in 2017. This has furthered our ability to provide experts to civilian monitoring mechanisms, election observation missions and support partners in human rights, rule of law and governance issues.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

We deploy senior gender expertise via our Gender Standby Capacity Project (**GenCap**). Our experts work with a number of agencies at a time to promote gender equality programming. GenCap is also a UN inter-agency project led by OCHA.

CASH PROGRAMMING

Our Cash and Markets Capacity Development Roster (CashCap) deploys specialists to increase the use and effectiveness of cash and markets programming in humanitarian aid. It is governed by a steering committee of UN and NGO members.

PEACEBUILDING

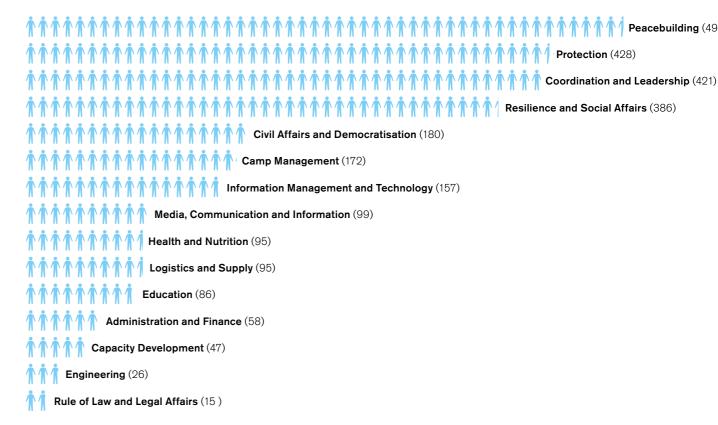
NORCAP provides experts to support peacebuilding initiatives including efforts to resolve conflict and prevent conflict escalation.

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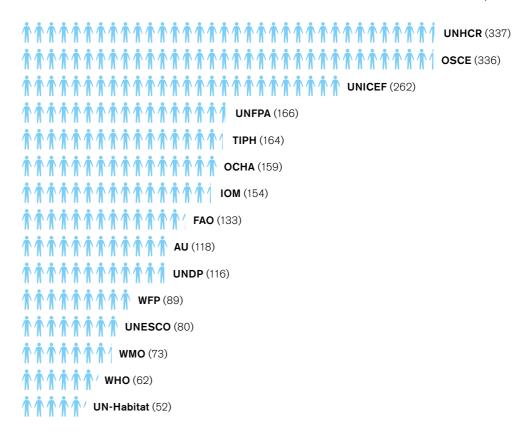
IN 2017 NORCAP SUPPORTED 40 PARTNERS IN 77 COUNTRIES WITH 543 EXPERT DEPLOYMENTS CONTRIBUTING 2755 PERSONMONTHS OF WORK

WE RECRUITED 126 NEW EXPERTS,
63 MEN AND 63 WOMEN. A TOTAL
OF 101 NATIONALITIES ARE
REPRESENTED IN OUR
ROSTERS

CONTRIBUTIONS BY CATEGORY (in person-months)

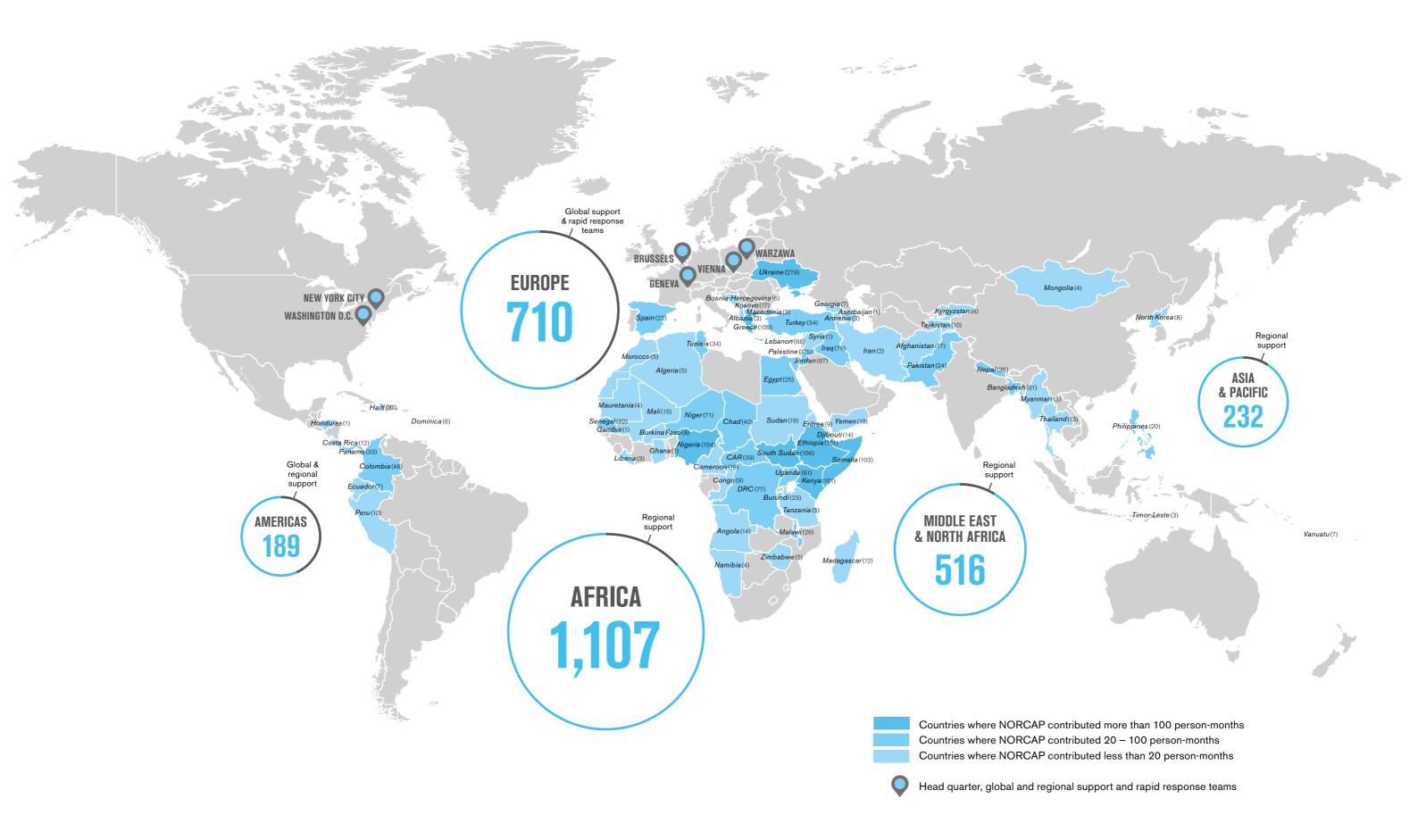


LARGEST RECEIVING ORGANISATIONS (in person-months)



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NORCAP GLOBAL OVERVIEW 2017



ENSURING EDUCATION FOR ALL

Quality education provides protection, a sense of normality, a way of healing trauma and hope for the future. NORCAP experts work hard to ensure that children can go to school even during an emergency.



The most recent figures suggest that 264 million children are out of school around the world. Displacement, conflicts and disasters put pressure on already vulnerable education systems, but relatively few countries have plans in place to ensure that children and young people are able to continue their schooling in the event of an emergency. We support national authorities and local communities in reaching the global goal of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all by 2030.

Strengthening the state's role in preparing for and responding to emergencies, and improving collaboration between the humanitarian and development sectors are key to making education systems, and with it countries as a whole, more resilient. Our experts coordinate education responses and provide programming assistance. They help to improve system-wide preparedness by training field colleagues and building national capacity, including by helping to develop national education policies.

Iraq

"The education situation for internally displaced people in Iraq is challenging. My concern is that many children who have lived in ISIL-ruled areas have large gaps in their education. It will take time to rebuild the schools in Mosul and as a result, education will suffer," says Fredrik Telle, an experienced NORCAP education expert with many previous missions under his belt. "The teachers go for long periods without any salary from the central authorities, and families are afraid of returning to their homes in the insecure environment in and around Mosul."

Telle was deployed to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Erbil in 2017 to support the education cluster in finding ways to improve the schooling of girls and boys affected by conflict in Mosul. Education is a fundamental human right and key to countering extremism and rebuilding the country. Telle arranged capacity-building workshops for programme managers, teachers and others involved with organising

education activities in camps for internally displaced people. He also visited the camps to identify spaces to set up temporary schools and to ensure they were open and running.

"Education can create a sense of normality in a sea of chaos. Many children and teachers are in need of psychosocial support, and students of all ages need to catch up after several years without schooling," he says.



Pakistan

"Education can have a great impact on the lives of those who seem to have lost all hope," says Mary Ombaka, who has worked with education in emergencies for nearly twenty years.

Ombaka was deployed to the UN Refugee Agency (UN-HCR) in Pakistan, where more than 22 million children are thought to be out of school, in 2016 and 2017. "In a country with so many children out-of-school, it is difficult to advocate for refugees' right to education," she says. "So our solution is to include refugee children in the national education programmes. This way, both refugees and children from local communities can benefit from our support."

UNHCR has established primary schools in 54 villages in provinces that host refugees, and has advocated successfully for more than 500,000 Afghan children to attend government-run schools. Ombaka focused on an accelerated education programme for girls in home-based schools. These provide educational opportunities for Afghan girls who would not otherwise receive any primary schooling. The programme was designed by NRC and enables the girls to enter formal secondary schools after only three years of primary education.

"Identifying the specific needs of various groups of children and youth, such as boys, girls and disabled children, is important to me as this enables us to design an inclusive education programme," she says.



East Africa

"For the region as a whole, the surge of refugees from South Sudan, Somalia and Yemen creates huge challenges, also for education. Whether the reasons are drought, political instability or violence, the refugees need quality education," says NORCAP expert Gry Ulverud. "Building robust education systems is the only long-term solution to ensure children and adults the right to quality education," she says.

Ulverud has worked in education since 2003, and took part in the negotiations that led to the Sustainable Development Goal for education. She was deployed to the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in east Africa in 2017.

"My most important task is to coordinate UNESCO's regional education in emergencies work in east Africa," she says. "This includes advising member states on how to include emergency preparedness in education planning, and initiating training for ministry staff. I also work with partners to mobilise resources for education in emergencies."

"I have met many officials from ministries of education in the region who impress me with their dedication to build good education systems. They tell me that they lack resources and qualified personnel, so they are very motivated to participate in training and workshops."



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COLLABORATING TO PROTECT ROHINGYA REFUGEES

More than 655,000 Rohingya fled violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state and sought safety in neighbouring Bangladesh between late August and early November 2017. Despite concerted humanitarian efforts and a recent repatriation deal, their future is highly uncertain.



Humanitarian agencies in Cox's Bazar and Bangladeshi authorities scrambled to cope when thousands of people in need fled across the border late last year. In a short period of time, what was once a vast shrub-land was transformed into the world's most densely populated refugee camp. Because of the crowded living conditions, it has been difficult to find room for much-needed services such as water and sanitation, health centres, schools and safe spaces for women and children.

"The scale and intensity of the humanitarian challenges remind me of the situation in Rwanda, and the mass exodus to neighbouring countries such as DRC in 1994," says NORCAP's director, Benedicte Giæver, who visited Bangladesh and Myanmar in November. Despite the Bangladeshi government's great efforts to help, there is a substantial lack of humanitarian expertise, capacity and resources to deal with such a vast refugee population.

Giæver is particularly worried about the shortage of capac-

ity to address protection risks and needs, because basic life-saving assistance necessarily took priority. The high number of female-headed households and unaccompanied minors means agencies have to consider a complex protection response, including psychosocial support, assistance to child survivors of sexual violence, trafficking victims and the prevention of gender-based violence.

Substantial contribution

Prior to the current crisis, NORCAP had deployees in Cox's Bazar working to assist the 300,000 refugees already in Bangladesh. In the weeks following the new influx, we scaled up our presence to meet UN agencies' need for support, deploying 24 experts in all, making it one of our biggest operations of the year.

"The greatest contribution of the NORCAP deployees is that for the most part they are older and more experienced staff and not only contribute in their day-to-day work, but several have taken on the unofficial role of mentoring some of the younger internal staff," says John McCue, Emergency Coordinator for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Cox's Bazar.

We have helped to improve collaboration between agencies and enhance the sector response. Deployees to IOM, UNHCR and UNICEF have worked closely together to ensure a common approach on the information refugees receive and their opportunities to provide feedback. Deployees to UNHCR and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) have collaborated to ensure that refugee health centres have trained midwives. They have also trained community workers to deliver important health messages to the refugees.

Return is not an option

Officials from Bangladesh and Myanmar signed a repatriation deal in November, opening up the possibility of return to a country from which many Rohingya are still trying to escape. The aim is for most of the refugees to return within two years, but neither the UNHCR nor the Rohingya themselves have been consulted about the process.

"It is practically impossible to repatriate a population that is still fleeing and highly traumatised. Most refugees don't feel secure and don't want to go back until their full Myanmar citizenship is assured," says Abdifatah Ahmed, a NORCAP communication with communities expert. He is deployed to UNHCR, which has said no refugees can be expected to go back until the authorities are able to guarantee safe, dignified and voluntary returns.

Refugees themselves also have clear views about the prospect of going back home. "If the Rohingya can get equality in Myanmar, I will go back. If not, it is better to stay in Bangladesh," says Sultan, a man who fled across the border with his family.

Planning for the long term

Humanitarian agencies are preparing for a long stay in Cox's Bazar. The monsoon rains will begin in June, creating hazardous conditions in the camps. The rains have the potential to cause floods and landslides, and sewers may well overflow, increasing the risk of cholera and other deadly diseases.

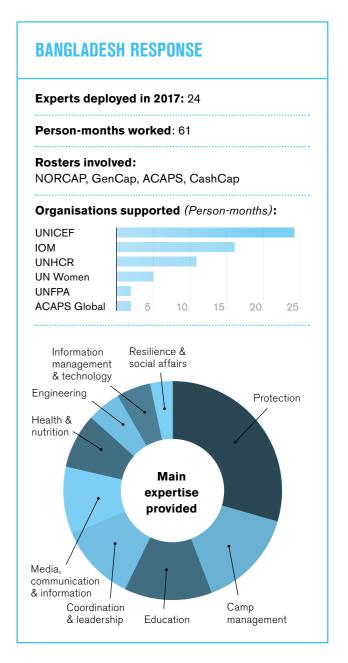
NORCAP deployees are mapping potential flood areas in the camps and finding ways to reduce the impact of the rains. They are helping people relocate to safer areas, improving sanitary facilities and building footpaths and bridges to ease movement.

Across the border in Myanmar, the international community is concerned that every time there is an outbreak of violence in Rakhine, the humanitarian space shrinks and never fully reopens. Agencies struggle to direct life-saving aid to the most vulnerable groups and the restrictions make it difficult to get sufficient information on the humanitarian situation.

"The Rohingya are a minority which has not been granted full citizenship in Myanmar. Even prior to the increased violence, many struggled to make a living and especially among the children there were high rates of malnutrition," says Ingvill Håkås Tveite, who was deployed from NORCAP to UN OCHA in Myanmar.

Lack of proper communication with the authorities and other ethnic groups in Rakhine who believe they are equally entitled to aid also make it difficult for humanitarians to prioritise the Rohingya.

"The authorities in Myanmar have a monumental task ahead of them in order to make sure the Rohingya are accepted as citizens in the country. The international community should keep the pressure up and offer assistance to make sure the needs and rights of the Rohingya are addressed in the best way possible," Benedicte Giæver says.



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CHALLENGES OF A CROSS-BORDER RESPONSE

The response to the crisis in Syria is one of the most complex and challenging in the world.

NORCAP has deployed experts to improve protection and strengthen coordination.



After seven years of civil war, more than 13 million people are in need of assistance. Still, humanitarian agencies trying to work in Syria face ongoing conflict and arbitrary restrictions on the movement of personnel and relief supplies.

Limited implementation capacity and funding gaps also impede the response, and the fact that some of the response is organised cross-border from neighbouring Turkey and Jordan makes coordination difficult. Some NGOs also operate from Lebanon and Iraq, crossing into Syria.

Access has remained a continuous challenge for humanitarian agencies. NORCAP has received a number of requests for experts to work inside Syria, but we have struggled to obtain visas for humanitarian workers and only managed to get one deployee in during 2017. To work around the access challenges, we sent six experts to work on the cross-border response from Gaziantep in Turkey and Amman in Jordan.

Different perspectives

Many Syrians have had to flee several times and live in fear

of mortar bombardments, airstrikes, chemical attacks and gunfire. Grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law have been perpetrated in many areas, giving rise to a range of protection concerns. Exposure to one risk increases vulnerability to others. The long-running conflict has also weakened usual protection mechanisms such as social and family networks and community-based structures. Ultimately Syria needs a political solution to end its conflict, until then protecting civilians will remain a key challenge.

ProCap expert Michelle Berg was deployed to OCHA in Amman in 2017 to draft a protection strategy for the Whole of Syria response's Strategic Steering Group (SSG). The main purpose of the SSG protection strategy was to mobilise a comprehensive, system-wide and multi-sector effort to respond to the most serious protection risks facing affected populations. This was a challenging task for Berg.

"The different locations from which the response is delivered (Jordan, Turkey, Syria) have very different perspectives of the situation, problems and protection issues, depending

on which side of the conflict they operate in, and which parties to the conflict control the territory in which they operate. This means there were very different ideas about the focus of the strategy."

Berg worked to merge these considerations and agree on protection priorities for the humanitarian response, a complicated task given the over-arching political issues that inhibit humanitarian response in the region. The SSG adopted the final strategy in August.

Improving child protection

Child protection expert Gunn Mariann Aase was deployed to UNICEF's regional office in Jordan to support the Whole of Syria child protection area of responsibility. She contributed to strengthening monitoring practices and generating regular and reliable data in Syria, Turkey and Jordan.

"This will give us a better picture and evidence base of what the main needs of girls and boys are, so we can adjust our activities. It will also look at the impact of psychosocial support interventions, as psychosocial distress remains a major issue for both children and caregivers in Syria," says Aase. Children and adolescents make up more than 40 per cent of the people in need in Syria. The conflict continues to take a huge toll on the lives of children, who experience serious risks and violations of their rights on a daily basis.

"One of the main challenges was to work with partner staff remotely. The development of tools and procedures has taken much longer than anticipated, because the actors were based in different countries, communicating through email and Skype. The few times we managed to meet face-to face helped to create trust and kept focus on the process," Aase says.

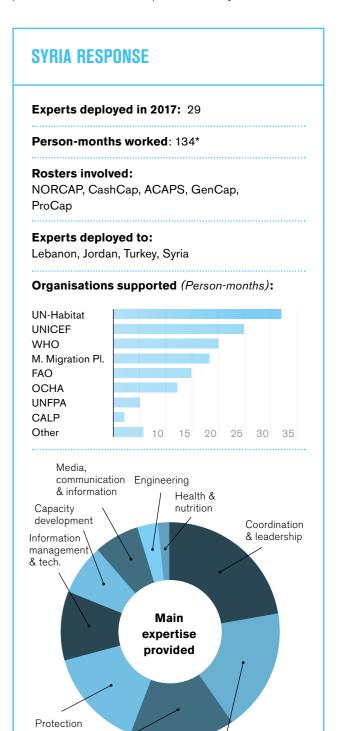
Empowering field staff in cash programming

Despite the increasing use of cash transfer programming globally, the Grand Bargain commitment to scale up such interventions has yet to become a reality in Syria. Implementing partners inside the country do not have the skills and experience to develop and implement cash programming, and training them from abroad is difficult.

According to CashCap expert Fe Kagahastian, even UN staff had limited capacity to manage cash programmes remotely despite four years of cross-border response. She was told it would be impossible to bring field workers out of Syria for training, but with the help of her colleagues at OCHA and the technical working group, she brought 19 Syrian staff to Turkey. "This is the first event that has brought together field and remote programme staff face-to-face since the cross-border response kicked off in 2014," she says.

The training led to the establishment of a field coordination group and a communication platform. The field staff also committed to train other colleagues in Syria. However, it remains challenging to ensure that the knowledge is passed on to key field staff.

Kagahastian also advocated to highlight the potential use of cash transfers in reports on humanitarian needs. "This is a work in progress, but has made people more aware of how cash needs to be more systematically considered in all phases of humanitarian response," she says.



Camp

management

* In addition we provided support to UNRWA in Lebanon and Jordan

Resilience &

social affairs

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SCALING UP IN DRC

DRC's conflict escalated and spread in 2017, creating one of the world's largest displacement crisis. To reduce needs and vulnerabilities in the long run, the humanitarian response plan recommends stronger synergies between humanitarian and development work.



After the killing of a traditional chief in August 2016, violence between armed groups and government forces broke out in Greater Kasai. A region that had previously been relatively calm compared with the east of the country was suddenly cast into turmoil. At the peak of the crisis in Greater Kasai, 1.4 million people had fled their homes and the conflict left 3.2 million people severely food insecure. Protection concerns were high, including rampant violence, rape and child recruitment.

To support the scaling up of humanitarian response, NOR-CAP deployed nine experts to UN agencies in 2017, including senior protection expert Anne Davies. "The humanitarian community reacted slowly to the emerging crisis for several reasons. Humanitarians were not granted access to the area for a long time and, and for many, there were challenges in mobilising staff and funding," she says.

The UN declared a level-three emergency in Greater Kasai, Tanganyika and South Kivu in October 2017. The scale and complexity of DRC's humanitarian crisis is growing, but the funding gap for the response widens by the year.

Linking the work of the

humanitarian and development sectors

ProCap expert Anne Davies was deployed to develop a protection strategy for the humanitarian country team in June 2017. In her view, Greater Kasai provides a unique opportunity for humanitarians to work alongside their counterparts in the development sector, who were present in the region before the conflict broke out.

Davies advocated strongly to include initiatives in the strategy that would bring the humanitarian, peace and development sectors closer across the country, while acknowledging humanitarian agencies' need to maintain neutrality.



"I ensured references to the need to coordinate with these sectors, and importantly, to support host communities and the displaced people who are living there," she says. "Unfortunately, there is still a big divide between the sectors." Chronic underfunding means opportunities to focus on longer-term issues have been limited, and she believes donors have a key role to play by prioritising funding for multi-sector programmes.

Her efforts to create a more collaborative environment resonates with UNICEF's senior emergency coordinator for Greater Kasai, Oscar Butragueño. "We are excited about the opportunity to strengthen resilience by integrating emergency response and early recovery in a traditional development setting, and to find durable solutions to the crises that plague the region," he says.

Schools as a protection space

Some 550 schools were damaged during the recent conflict in Greater Kasaï, and getting children back to school was an important protection measure. "Not only can the school building itself provide protection, but what children learn at school empowers them to protect themselves and their families for life," NORCAP deployee Sarah Bellotti

As an education in emergencies specialist with UNICEF in Greater Kasai, Bellotti helped communities access education in a safe and protected environment. "Our team established over 20 temporary learning spaces in just four days, possibly a record. I am also proud that the education and

protection sectors work closely together, and already have a joint strategy and operational guidelines for all partners working across Kasai," she says.

Combatting cholera

Access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities in Greater Kasai was poor even before conflict broke out, and between October and December 2017 almost 10,000 cholera cases were reported, the first outbreak of the disease in the region in a decade. Some 220 health facilities were also attacked across the country during the year, according to UNICEF, particularly in Greater Kasai and the east of the

Freddie Mantchombe, an emergency water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) specialist was deployed to work with UNICEF on cholera control in Kasai province, where now two of the five affected areas have reported no further

Butragueño is grateful for our deployees' contributions to UNICEF's work in Kasai. "The specialists have worked closely together to reinforce cross-sector collaboration, for example in ensuring temporary learning spaces have adequate hygiene facilities, and mainstreaming protection into the work of all education partners. Our local staff is very impressed with their work," he says.



* We refer to the Greater Kasai region as the provinces of Kasai, Kasai Central, Kasai Oriental, Lomami and Sankuru

"Some of the main protection issues in DR Congo is the continued violence against women, children and men. Some use rape as weapon of war, and others recruit children. We see people basically kidnapped to work as slaves in the occupied mines, many of them children."

ANNE DAVIES Senior protection officer (ProCap)

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ESCAPING THE CONFLICT CYCLE

NORDEM experts in DRC are helping to find new ways to address the causes of conflict.



"For almost 20 years, the parties to the conflict have used military force to end violence in DRC. Now, it's fair to say that the military strategy has its limitations and it's time to try new approaches," says François Van Lierde, deployed as a conflict and political advisor to the stabilisation support unit (SSU) of the UN mission to the country (MONUSCO).

NORDEM has supported stabilisation efforts in the east of the country since 2010, providing personnel who have been important in developing SSU. Van Lierde was one of four deployees working with the unit in 2017.

MONUSCO previously aimed to defeat armed groups and then support infrastructure and some government functions. "This approach did not succeed in stabilising the troubled areas," says SSU's deputy team leader, Soetkin Meertens. "Now we link stabilisation to the community level to ensure that we are able to address root causes of the conflicts in eastern DRC both from the bottom up and the top down."

A comprehensive and participatory approach

"We try to achieve stabilisation by encouraging dialogue between the local communities and authorities in conflict affected areas. Together we identify the causes of violent and armed conflict and decide on political and programmatic responses to these conflict drivers," says Van Lierde.

"Non-governmental organisations have used similar approaches in some areas of the country, however the collaboration with MONUSCO offers new opportunities in terms of access to the highest level of government. It facilitates engagement of political and security actors and the possibility to better coordinate the programmatic, the political and the military response to conflicts and armed groups."

MONUSCO finalised its first joint civilian-military strategy to demobilise an armed group in eastern DRC in 2017. The armed group has been active in the province for several years, and is responsible for most of the human rights violations in the area, and neutralising it has long been a

MONUSCO priority. SSU played a central role in setting up a coordinated approach between the military and civilian actors. Together with its civil society partner organisations, they met all key parties to the conflict and local communities to discuss solutions.

"The joint strategy means that the military peacekeepers and the army on the one side and civilian actors on the other side plan when and how to use political and programmatic means and when to use military means in order to demobilise an armed group," Van Lierde says.



"Military force alone might weaken a group, only to have it reorganise or return with a new name and new alliances. Our approach to stabilisation is focused on addressing why the group is there in the first place."

Relationships key to solutions

Stabilisation officer Ingebjørg Finnbakk was deployed to SSU's regional office, where her most important task has been to maintain an understanding among local communities and other stakeholders of the importance of stabilisation for long-term peace.

"I have spent a lot of time building relationships with key government and military officials, local communities and development agencies, to make sure everyone involved feels they have a part to play," she says.

"In meetings with parties to the conflict, local communities and other agencies, we are clear about the fact that we don't have the answers, but we have the methodology to facilitate conflict transformation through a participatory and inclusive approach. We must discuss the issues causing this violence together."

Cautious hope for 2018

The strategy, the first of its kind in DRC, is now moving toward its implementation phase and SSU has put itself under pressure to succeed in 2018. Success, however, will depend on the commitment of all of those involved, from high-level politicians to armed groups, in a country with a rapidly changing political landscape and a deepening humanitarian crisis.

"We have established the best possible foundation to continue our work for the next year. However, there is always a fire to be put out that takes attention away from problems that need long-term efforts and a more stable environment," Finnbakk says.

The promising engagement of the stakeholders from 2017 have led SSU to look to apply its strategy to other armed groups in the east of the country. For Meertens, NORDEM's contribution to the unit over the years has been important to its development. "NORDEM experts have significant expertise and have played central roles in our most important achievements," she says.

STABILISATION IN DRC

- The international security and stabilization support strategy (I4S) is the main planning and coordination framework for stabilisation interventions in eastern DRC.
- The Stabilization Support Unit (SSU) coordinates and supports the implementation of I4S.
- The strategy defines stabilisation as a process of enabling state and society to build mutual accountability and capacity to mitigate the drivers of conflict. This, in turn, create conditions for improved governance and longer-term development.



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ON THE FRONTLINE OF EUROPE'S FORGOTTEN CONFLICT

The conflict in eastern Ukraine has cost more than 10,000 lives. Unarmed international observers monitor the ceasefire, but the parties to the conflict continue to disregard it.



In the aftermath of the Ukrainian revolution and Russia's unilateral annexation of Crimea in 2014, political protests in the eastern Donetsk and Luhansk regions soon escalated into armed conflict. An agreement to end the fighting between the self-proclaimed republics and Ukrainian government forces was reached in September 2014, but peace remains elusive

The parties involved mandated the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to monitor the cease-fire and help foster peace, security and stabilisation. The organisation's special monitoring unit (SMM) has been the largest recipient of NORDEM specialists in recent years. Twenty-three deployees with expertise in ceasefire monitoring, human rights and conflict analysis supported the mission in 2017, most of them as monitoring officers and field-level managers on the ground in eastern Ukraine.

Presence along the contact line

The monitoring officers are present along the 500km length

of the contact line between the parties to the conflict, from Luhansk in the north to Mariupol in the south. They monitor and verify the parties' implementation of commitments to withdraw heavy weapons and forces from demobilisation areas. They also visit areas affected by conflict, talk to the civilian population and meet the armed forces to document violations of the Minsk ceasefire agreement and international human rights and humanitarian law.

The parties appear unwilling to comply fully with the measures stipulated in the ceasefire agreement. Many weapons have not been withdrawn and forces have not disengaged. The number of mines and pieces of unexploded ordnance is increasing. OSCE regularly reports that violations of international law are still frequent, with dire implications for civilians in affected areas. The mission recorded more than 400,000 ceasefire violations and the deaths of 478 civilians, including 40 children in 2017. Many thousands of people along the contact line risk daily shelling, intense fighting and other hostilities.

Attacks carried out by all parties have led to civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure. Gas plants, sanitation facilities and water mains are regularly damaged by shelling. Around 1.5 million people are registered as internally displaced, and many communities lack proper access to water, sanitation, shelter, electricity and medical care. For people living close to the contact line, the seemingly never-ending conflict is a source of acute hardship and distress. The UN chief in Ukraine said at the end of 2017 that the humanitarian situation was worse than it had ever been.



Achievements despite political stalemate

In the absence of a political solution to the conflict, the SMM is mandated to facilitate dialogue between the parties as a means of reducing tensions. It also negotiates local ceasefires to allow vital infrastructure to be repaired. It informs the authorities about the presence of mines to facilitate their clearance, and organises simultaneous patrols on each side of the contact line to ensure the safety of the workers and demining teams.

"When more than a million people were without phone coverage in January 2018 because of a damaged cable, family members could not reach each other and elderly people were unable to call for help when needed. Our team established dialogue with companies, authorities and military on both sides of the contact line, and facilitated a local window of silence to allow for repair work and reconnection," says Marte Skogsrud, human dimension officer deployed to SMM.

During their patrols, the observers talk to civilians and pass requests on to authorities or agencies who provide assistance. In many conflict situations, armed peacekeepers tend to carry out many of these duties, but SMM has demonstrated that unarmed civilians can perform them effectively, even in an active conflict zone.

Impossible to get a complete picture

Access and freedom of movement restrictions, insufficient manpower and the high number of ceasefire violations mean it is impossible for the mission to get a complete picture of the situation in eastern Ukraine. A patrol member was killed in April, demonstrating the dangers the teams face while on duty.

Despite this, SMM remains one of few impartial sources of reliable information about the conflict, and many field officers say that local populations are grateful for their presence. They also encounter frustration, however, driven by the lack of improvement in the situation and unrealistic expectations of the change that the mission is able to bring about. Several analysts have suggested SMM's presence has helped to contain the conflict and stabilise the situation at the local level, but fighting still flares up in some areas.



"It is up to the signatories to these agreements to act on the facts that we document.

Our reports are a tool for the sides to take measures to protect civilians. These reports are our contribution to stabilise and normalise the situation on the contact line."

ALEXANDER HUG SMM principal deputy chief monitor

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MAKING MARKETS WORK IN A CRISIS

Yemen has been shattered by three years of civil war, and eight million people are on the brink of famine. In a country devastated by conflict and economic collapse, cash assistance is the best option to reach more people in need.



The longstanding conflict in Yemen worsened after the Arab spring in 2011, and in March 2015 Saudi Arabia launched a military intervention to shore up the country's government. Amidst the violence, people's livelihoods and the economy more broadly have been decimated, and more than 22 million people need assistance. Humanitarian access to those in need has been extremely difficult, but despite the destructions, markets have remained mostly functional, meaning that cash assistance can offer a way to reach more people.

"Cash grants allow families to spend money on what they need the most, be it food, clothes, rent or medicines," says CashCap expert Thomas Byrnes.

The use of cash transfer programming in Yemen was on the increase in 2016, but the humanitarian community did not have the expertise to scale it up. To support the sound and systematic use of cash assistance, we deployed two senior cash and markets experts in 2016 and 2017.

Finding the best way to help those in need

Providing people with money instead of in-kind assistance has many benefits, and global commitments have been made to use more cash in humanitarian responses. There is, however, a lack of knowledge in how to plan and implement cash-based assistance and coordination is generally poor. When Mamta Khanal Basnet, a senior CashCap expert, arrived in Yemen in late 2016, there were no harmonised approaches, risk analyses or proper assessments beyond the food security and agriculture sectors. The situation was potentially detrimental to both markets and the people receiving assistance.

"Many agencies, even beyond the food sector, were doing cash or market-based activities. However, there was no common forum to discuss and coordinate," says Basnet. She established a cash and markets working group as a platform for all clusters, which now plays a key role in supporting the humanitarian response.



The working group realised that the UN and other organisations needed updated information on how to use cash to reach more people in the evolving conflict. Basnet and Byrnes led the process of raising funds, and planning and implementing a joint cash study with the REACH initiative's support.

The study confirmed that the Yemeni market was suitable for cash programming. IDPs, returnees and host communities told the team that inflation, a cash-flow crisis and diminishing purchasing power were affecting both vendors and consumers nationwide. Food and basic goods were available in many parts of the country, but people were unable to afford them. People also said they preferred cash assistance to cover their needs because of the flexibility it provides.

"Due to the increasing prices, local vendors are seeing reduced demand, so by providing cash we are also supporting the local market system," says Byrnes, who took the helm of the cash working group from April 2017.

Cash transfers doubled

"The support from CashCap has significantly improved coordination among humanitarian partners. It has increased the visibility and the understanding of cash programming in general," says Sajjad Mohammad Sajid, OCHA's senior humanitarian affairs officer in Yemen.

OCHA estimates that cash transfers doubled in 2017. More humanitarian partners are considering cash as an option, and many are treating it as a key response option. UNICEF alone reached 1.5 million people with cash assistance during the year.

Our CashCap experts have influenced more than cash programming. Byrnes and his UN colleagues advocated to improve exchange rates for humanitarian agencies, which cut the cost of assistance by up to 30 per cent. In a country where less than half of those who needed assistance last year were reached, such a saving means a lot.

Transforming humanitarian assistance

Our deployees trained humanitarian and government staff to

improve the quality of the cash support and create common standards. They helped to plan for the provision of cash to cover a range of goods, rather than vouchers for a single item such as food. So-called multi-purpose cash gives recipients more choice and flexibility, and tends to be a more cost-effective way of meeting needs. Supporting agencies in analysing risks and coming up with mitigation measures was also important for the cash experts.

"All types of humanitarian assistance have risks, and one has to work to mitigate them. Finding a solution for cash distribution to happen locally so families won't have to pay for travel and be at risk on the road is a clear recommendation from the study," says Byrnes.

He hopes that the high level of engagement from donors and the humanitarian coordinator in Yemen in 2017 continues so that cash programming is prioritised and further developed. "The facts on the ground facilitate cash transfers, but there is a need to overcome some conservatism in the system. Cash has the potential to transform the humanitarian response in Yemen," he says.

CashCap

- Deploys senior experts to increase the use and effectiveness of cash and markets programming in humanitarian aid.
- Aims to ensure that people affected by crises are empowered and receive dignified assistance.
- Provides multi-agency support, helping to improve competence, coordination and cooperation.
- Is managed by NORCAP and governed by a steering committee of UN and NGO members.
- Has deployed cash and market experts to 19 countries and to three global clusters since January 2016.



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PAIRING UP FOR CAPACITY AT THE GLOBAL LEVEL

We aim to ensure our rosters are able to respond to complex emergencies and the evolving demands of the humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors.

To this end, we send our deployees on training courses with partner agencies, and host annual seminars, training workshops and online learning programmes. One approach to develop the right capacity within NORCAP has been twinning deployments.

These deployments facilitate on-the-job training of roster members by leveraging the experience of more senior experts, who function as mentors during the deployment.

How do twinning deployments evolve?

Twinning deployments take personnel requests from our partner agencies as a starting point. They are considered when funding is available for a second deployee and the senior expert has the capacity and qualities needed to take on a mentoring role. The assignment, context and working environment also need to be appropriate. The mentee may be a thematic expert with only limited field experience or an experienced humanitarian looking to specialise in a new thematic area.

The mentee establishes a work plan with their mentor before deployment to set goals, activities, timelines and deliverables. During the assignment, they obtain vital knowledge about a new technical field, and experience the challenges of humanitarian coordination, the cluster system and of working with local and national authorities and organisations.

In response to the increasing demand, we prioritised twinning deployments in cash and markets programming in 2017. In addition, twinning deployments were also used in areas of food security, urban planning, gender-based violence and education. The experts said the arrangement brought mutual benefits for professional growth and personal resilience, providing a space for reflections on challenging situations and work dilemmas.

Tailor-made solutions

To increase technical cash and markets expertise, NOR-CAP and CashCap collaborated with the Cash Learning Partnership to develop a pilot capacity-building scheme.

Designed for mid-level to senior humanitarians across a range of organisations and sectors including WASH, shelter and logistics, it involved training seminars, one-to-one-mentoring and on-the-job training.

The participants said on-the-job training was key to increasing their knowledge and skills, and that the learning environment their host organisations provided was vital. The project provided NORCAP and the broader cash community with important learning opportunities. For initiatives such as twinning missions and capacity-building schemes to work, all of those involved need to engage before, during and after the event to establish commitment and mutually agreed goals.

IMPROVING EDUCATION RESPONSE



"My mentor has been very supportive and takes his role seriously, respecting my previous experience and assigning me tasks that are contributing to the development of my professional skills," says David Reyes Florez who is on a twinning deployment together with Emile Ntampera to UNHCR in Arua, Uganda. They are working to improve access to and quality of education for the refugee population. 64% of the refugees are under the age of 18.

"I can say that we are working as real "twins". As his mentor, I sometimes challenge him. We communicate honestly and frankly, and talk about how to improve the education response. We are collaborating in a way that allows us to benefit from each other's expertise," says Emile Ntampera.

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PRACTICAL INFORMATION

HOW TO REQUEST EXPERT PERSONNEL

NORCAP deploys experts on demand to the UN, regional organsations and national governments. If your country office or organisation believe experts from the NORCAP roster or thematic rosters would improve the delivery of humanitarian aid and services to affected populations, please identify your needs and personnel gaps and consult your organisation's standby partner focal point at headquarters.

HOW TO JOIN NORCAP

The recruitment of highly qualified and motivated roster members is vital for NORCAP to maintain our position as a responsive and trustworthy strategic partner to key stakeholders.

NORCAP recruits experts in areas of high demand to achieve our goal of strengthening prevention, prepardness, response and recovery in a crisis. Our rosters are diverse in the erms of nationalities, language skills and gender.

Would you like to be part of our team? NORCAP is constantly looking for people with the right professional background, personal skills and motivation. We recruit new members to the NORCAP and thematic rosters several times a year.

More information about requirement for requests and opportunities with NORCAP can be found on our web

NORCAP DONORS

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA) and NORCAP have worked closely to strengthen the capacities of humanitarian response since the standby roster was established in 1991. Financial support from the NMFA has included framework partnership agreements from 2009 to 2017 and additional funds in emergency situations. The NORDEM roster also benefits from a framework agreement with the NMFA.

The Department for International Development (DFID) has supported NORCAP since 2012. In 2017 DFID funded initiatives such as ACAPS and CashCap capacity-building activities.

The European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) has been supporting NORCAP since 2012, and has been a key partner for the CashCap roster together with the NMFA, SIDA, the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and OFDA.

NORCAP also receives resources from UN agencies, Norad, OFDA, EEA Grants, SIDA and various other donors. Some deployments are cost shared or fully funded by the hosting organisation. Canada, Norway, Switzerland, the UK, the US and ECHO provided funds for ACAPS in 2017, while OCHA funds the operation of ProCap and GenCap.

