ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOs
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Background Paper
The multi functional team & results based management:
Make it work!

Wednesday 29 June 2011, 09:00 - 13:00, Room 3
(also available are Rooms 5 & 6 for breakout discussions)

Greater accountability for outcomes through improved partnership

Brief description of the issue

For some time now, the trend in humanitarian action and protection work has been towards increased accountability, and part of that discussion has been about how we better measure the impact of the work we do. Practically, this implies a greater results- and impact-orientation in the planning, design, and monitoring of implementation of activities, as well as in their presentation and reporting.

As part of this effort, UNHCR has introduced a new results framework and made use of new software in order to better organize planning and management of operations along Results Based Management (RBM) principles. Challenges in introducing a distinct results oriented focus into operations, both internally within UNHCR and externally with partners, include: the use of different terminologies, different articulation of results, and broad and diverse sets of indicators. Disproportionate resources may be spent on collecting and preparing data while essential indicators may still be missed or lost. Even when a restricted set of indicators is pursued, the establishment of proper data management systems or the liaison of existing ones governing collection, processing and analysis of key data for indicators presents its own set of hazards and possible pitfalls.

It can be particularly challenging to make RBM work in situations that involve remote management of projects. Where access to the respective persons of concern is hampered by either logistical (extremely remote) or security considerations, organizations have to find creative ways to access and engage with communities to determine the appropriate type of interventions and subsequently monitor their impact. A recent UNHCR-led review of operations in insecure environments suggests to put emphasis not on distance from persons of concern ("Remote programming") but on intended closeness and the means to bring it about ("proximity through partnership").

UNHCR's implementing partners are invited to exchange experience on best practice in applying UNHCR's result based management and on ways to jointly improve our work and overcome obstacles.

UNHCR Policy framework background

In 2009, UNHCR released the RBM-software *Focus,* capturing a results framework featuring nine rights groups, 64 objectives, 696 outputs 166 impact and some 830

performance indicators. At the same time, a new resource allocation framework was brought in, featuring four distinct budget pillars. Each budget Pillar refers to one distinct type of persons of concern or situation: Refugees (and asylum seekers), Stateless, Returnees (beyond repatriation movements), and IDPs. While the first two pillars are funded through core-contributions, the latter two rely on earmarked funding. Adjunct, UNHCR issued a first set of seven Global Strategic Priorities (GSP), with 38 specific targets. Both the framework and GSP have since been revised. UNHCR is now working to include in 2012 the implementing instruments into an improved version of the RBM-software.

Format of the discussions

This session will initially consist of short panel presentations in a plenary format, with time for discussion, followed by breakout sessions designed to enable participants to interact freely and in greater depth, exchange examples of good practice, and contribute recommendations on how to improve the RBM practice in the field.

Key questions for the breakout discussions

For *Standards, Indicators, Targets* discussion:

1. What types of indicators are relevant? How many are needed? How to balance the need for data with the expertise required to collect, prepare and analyse it?

2. What helps? Relying on NGOs established monitoring plans? Set(s) of core indicators?

3. What about analysis and follow up? Do we have the time, money, adequate length of contracts, and expertise to even do this?

4. At what point does the increasing focus on numbers and reporting become an end in itself? How to balance data collection and follow up?

For *Proximity through Partnership* (formally known as "remote management") discussion:

1. What is the role of partnership between the NGO/s and UNHCR? What works and what doesn't and how can that be addressed?

2. How can proximity to persons of concern be fostered? What are our roles as partners, what does it involve?

3. How well do we understand the context and the challenge? What tools and processes are out there?

4. Do we develop programmes that fit the situation? Additionally, is the way in which we are carrying out monitoring appropriate?

5. How are we ensuring transparency and accountability in these challenging settings?

6. Is there an increased/helpful role that new technology can play in better remote monitoring of programs?

7. In light of the challenges you have experienced when working in remote or dangerous situations with persons of concern, what are approaches have you used to address them and to what extent were these models successful? Who *is* working in remote or dangerous situations and what are the important considerations (e.g. language, cultural or religious affinity)?

For both sessions:

1. What are the lessons that you learned in your context that could be applied to either your own programs or those of others in the future?

2. Are the numbers and reports being generated actually feeding back into better programming on the ground?

3. Who should do what to render the challenges manageable?

4. How does the issue of capacity building and sustainability of interventions fit into these discussions? Given the complexity and resource constraints, are we asking too much?

Suggested reading:

1. A Quick update on Results Based Management, the Global Needs Assessment and *Focus*

2. UNHCR Results Framework (2011- revised version)

3. UNHCR-GSPs (2009 and 2011)

4. To Stay and Deliver – Good practice for humanitarians in complex security environments, OCHA Policy and Studies Series 2011-06-10 http://unocha.romenaca.org/Portals/0/Docs/KeyMessages/Stay_and_Deliver_Mar_11.pdf

5. The Big Push Back! A blog post by Rosalind Eyben, questioning whether donor expectations and demands for measuring performance are realistic and helpful: http://hausercenter.org/iha/2010/10/11/the-big-push-back/

6. Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP) Principles of Partnership (PoP): http://www.icva.ch/pop.html