Evaluation Brief

**Evaluation of UNHCR’s Data Use and Information Management Approaches: Executive Summary**

What have we learned?

1. *Challenge 1: Inconsistent data collection practices across different programmatic areas.* The evaluation identified inconsistencies in data collection methods, which hinder the ability to compare and consolidate data for strategic decision-making. For example, in one operation, inconsistent protection data collection made it difficult to identify trends and allocate resources effectively.

2. *Challenge 2: Limited data literacy among staff.* The evaluation found that many UNHCR staff members lack the necessary skills to analyze and interpret data for informed decision-making. In one field office, a lack of understanding of basic data analysis techniques led to poor strategic planning and ineffective interventions.

3. *Challenge 3: Insufficient coordination between departments.* The evaluation identified silos within UNHCR operations, where different departments collect and manage data independently, leading to duplication and inconsistencies. For instance, in one country operation, the lack of collaboration between the protection and education sectors resulted in discrepancies in data on refugee children's access to education.

4. *Challenge 4: Weaknesses in data quality management.* The evaluation found that there is a lack of standardized quality control measures for data collection, resulting in potential errors and unreliable data. In one case study, poor-quality data on the number of displaced persons led to incorrect strategic decisions and resource allocation.

5. *Challenge 5: Limited use of technology for data management.* The evaluation revealed that some operations are not utilizing available technology to manage and analyze data efficiently. For example, in a field office with manual data entry processes, delays in reporting and increased risk of errors were observed.

How did we get there?

The common root causes include:

- Insufficient training and capacity building for staff on data literacy and management;

- Lack of clear guidelines and standard operating procedures for data collection, analysis, and reporting;

- Limited coordination between departments and teams within UNHCR operations.

What is working well?

The evaluation identified several good practices:

- The use of process mapping to understand organizational systems, structures, and incentives related to data management;

- Conducting key informant interviews and document reviews to gather insights from various perspectives;

- Hypothesis-driven strategic evaluations that provide valuable learning across different contexts.

Now What to do?

Recommendations are classified into three levels:

*Operational Level:*

- Implement standardized data collection and quality control measures (discontinue non-standard practices);

- Provide regular training on data literacy and management for staff;

- Encourage interdepartmental collaboration to streamline data processes.

*Organizational Level:*

- Develop clear guidelines and standard operating procedures for data collection, analysis, and reporting;

- Build capacity in technology use for efficient data management.

*Strategic Level:*

- Establish a centralized data management system to ensure consistency and comparability across operations;

- Integrate data-driven decision-making into UNHCR's strategic planning processes.

Conclusion

The evaluation highlights the need for a more integrated, systematic approach to data management within UNHCR operations, emphasizing the importance of data literacy, coordination, and quality control in improving strategic decision-making and resource allocation for forcibly displaced populations.

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