



Information and Data Management



South Sudan

Information and Data Management is not its own separate cluster, but is a crucial aspect mainstreamed throughout all clusters of any humanitarian or long-term development operation. Information and Data Management is key in the tracking and gathering of best practices and in making evidence-based decisions.

The decision to focus on Information and Data Management was made as the humanitarian community recognizes the importance of gathering reliable data on the locations of people in need, the types of urgent needs, the identification of those best placed to provide assistance, and the value of this information for effective and timely humanitarian assistance.¹⁸

GENDER EQUALITY IN DATA MANAGEMENT

Sex, age, and disability-disaggregated data is a fundamental requirement to establishing the differentiated needs of affected populations. If we are striving for dignity in humanitarian responses, we must recognize the wholeness of each survivor, that they have a complex and intersectional identity deeply connected to their lived experiences, and that there is a certain individuality, even in massive emergencies. Effective information and data management can help to track and identify gaps in humanitarian programming, especially if a gender analysis is applied to this data collection, as well as to determine trends. Gender-responsive information products can be developed and implemented that capture the differential impacts of women and men of all ages and backgrounds.¹⁹ Information Management is also fundamental to engaging in evidence-based advocacy on behalf of women and girls as data can be used to inform advocacy to influence for better conditions for those affected.

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE INFORMATION AND DATA MANAGEMENT CLUSTER

- The importance of employing data collectors who are representative of the population that we are serving in all its diversity. Better information is collected when data collectors are from the local community;
- Open data-sharing networks in portal form have been very successful, but there needs to be a balance between sharing of data and confidentiality/data protection;
- The importance of asking context-specific questions and practicing culturally appropriate methods of data collection. Emphasis on analyzing the information in the field instead of at headquarters, which is much more detached; and
- An emphasis on being creative and inclusive with methods of information collection to ensure that everyone has a voice. Data collection can be pictorial. (e.g. Bangladesh).

RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

- The sector needs to strive for more collaboration and coordination between agencies in data collection and information sharing in order to avoid duplication of work. This can avoid data fatigue and over-surveying of the people we serve;
- The humanitarian community should not only train its own implementers to use information and communications technology (ICT), but also impacted populations (especially women and girls) to collect data as part of the humanitarian response. Building women's and girl's digital literacy enables women to access digital markets as part of economic

empowerment efforts, use electronic registration services, access life-saving information distributed by humanitarian actors through mobile phones, and inform and guide humanitarian services that may be developed or monitored through ICT-based data collection processes;

- Recognize that even civil registration and vital statistics are not neutral: individuals and groups may be fearful and have important reasons for not wanting to be counted or registered. In some contexts, one's place of birth or family name may lead to vulnerabilities and persecution. Understanding the context in which all data are collected is essential;
- Humanitarian organizations should take accessibility of ICT into account when designing a response. For example, in mobile phone data collecting circumstances, access to mobile phones, internet connectivity (if necessary), and digital skills must exist to obtain information and to provide an opportunity for at-risk groups to provide data;
- Humanitarian organizations should be communicating informed consent risks, should ensure privacy standards and accountability mechanisms are in place to collect data to protect impacted groups receiving services, and should include asking participants how they identify rather than providing binary 'male' and 'female' options; and
- Gender-sensitive Minimum Standards for Information Collection should be developed across the humanitarian sector, with an emphasis on privacy, sensitive communications on topics such as SGBV, inclusion of women enumerators and/or data collectors for women and girl respondents and vice versa for men and boys, and free and prior informed consent (background of research and risks are communicated to participants in a way they will comprehend).

18. <https://www.unocha.org/our-work/information-management>

19. <https://www.unocha.org/themes/gender-equality-programming>