

Guidelines on Data Issues in Humanitarian Crisis Situations

June 2010



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Acknowledgements

To enhance the implementation of its humanitarian strategy, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) management in early 2007 constituted the Internal Working Group on Data in Crisis Situations made up of in-house experts from all regions, in the domain of data collection and analyses, with a wide experience of crisis situations. During a workshop organized in Dakar, Senegal in April 2007, it was strongly recommended that UNFPA synthesize available information and experiences on data issues during all phases of humanitarian crises in the form of Guidelines for Data Collection in Humanitarian Crisis Situations.

A task force made up of Abdallah Zoubi, Rachelle Djangone, Jason Onsembe and Samson Lamlenn (coordinator) was created to conceive the overall content of this document and prepare the various chapter drafts, under the overall supervision of a steering committee comprised of the other members of the Internal Working Group and coordinated by the then Chief of the Humanitarian Response Unit/Branch (HRB).

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The Guidelines should be considered as an internal working document, which UNFPA is submitting to its various field units, regional research institutions and other stakeholders in the humanitarian community for practical application on the ground. During the course of this roll-out, the need for further revisions may be realized. Subsequent translations into the other official languages of the United Nations system will logically follow after such revisions.

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Foreword

Data issues cut across all activities in all of the humanitarian crisis phases. Each cluster essentially relies on some specific type of data or information for resource mobilization, decision-making of actions to be taken, or measuring the impact of interventions. It is perhaps because of this universal importance of data that no specific cluster, sub-cluster or even working group has thus far been foreseen within the humanitarian community to focus on data issues. Unfortunately, this has resulted in some confusion as to the most reliable sources of data and which approaches to adopt to avail such data. Since there are many sources of data and a multitude of estimation methods of related information, the tendency has been for various humanitarian agencies to go for the most available information without much concern as to its reliability.

UNFPA, as lead agency in the domain of data for development and with lengthy experience and expertise in data issues, has conceived the Guidelines for Data Issues in Humanitarian Crisis Situations to address key data issues related to the preparedness, acute, chronic and post-crisis phases of humanitarian emergencies. This document is not a manual since it does not delve into the technical issues of specific methods used in the field. On the other hand, it provides an overview of the main data needs for each phase, addresses the challenges to obtaining reliable data and information, recommends plausible approaches to data collection, management and use, and highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the methods considered. Where possible, links to various information sources have been provided in the text and relevant references are available either as footnotes or at the end of each chapter.

For each of the phases, the Guidelines provide a list of possible indicators and highlight a set of action points for UNFPA Country Offices according to broad data collection intervention, specifying the main stakeholders with whom they could collaborate to achieve expected deliverables. The essential goal here is to enhance the effective participation of UNFPA Country Offices during each phase of a humanitarian crisis by providing them with some directives on what to do and with whom.

Other stakeholders (humanitarian and development agencies and other NGOs) will find the Guidelines a useful working document to strengthen the capacity of their staff to collaborate with UNFPA in ensuring that timely and good quality data and information is produced, shared and used for decision-making during humanitarian crisis situations around the world. On their part, teaching and research institutions could use this document as a training tool to enhance trainee capacity to more effectively participate in data collection, processing, management and use in crisis situations. It could also serve as a valuable reference document with regards to technical assistance in specific humanitarian contexts.

Feedback from the roll-out and use of the Guidelines in various contexts and by various partners around the world will be very useful in updating the various components to the mutual satisfaction of all stakeholders and, above all, to ensure that humanitarian response is grounded in the use of reliable data and information for more effective interventions.

Acronyms

ALNAP.....	The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CBD	Community-based Delivery
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CERF	Central Emergency Relief Fund
CHAP.....	Common Humanitarian Action Plan
CO	Country Office
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CSO	Central Statistical Office
CST	Country Support Team
CWIQ	Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDR.....	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DPKO.....	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
ECHA.....	Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs
ECHO.....	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Department
EmOC	Emergency Obstetric Care
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GIS.....	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HIV.....	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HMIS.....	Health Management Information Systems
IASC.....	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IDD.....	Internal Displacement Division
IDP.....	Internally Displaced Persons
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IFORD	Institut de Formation et de Recherches Démographiques
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	International Labor Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
IRA.....	Initial Rapid Assessment
LSMS.....	Living Standards Measurement Survey
M&E.....	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MISP	Minimum Initial Service Package

MOH	Ministry of Health
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territory
OSOCC	Virtual Operations Coordination Center
PCNA	Post-crisis Needs Assessment
PDA	Personal Data Assistant
PDNA	Post-disaster Needs Assessment
PDS	Population and Development Strategies Programme
PPM	Policies and Procedures Manual
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
QC	Quick Counts
REDLAC	Risk, Emergency, and Disaster Working Group for Latin America and the Caribbean
RH	Reproductive Health
SADD	Sex and Age Disaggregated Data
STD	Sexually-transmitted Disease
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-based Violence
SWAP	Sector-wide Approach
TBA	Traditional Birth Attendant
TRF	Transitional Results Framework
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

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