

STAFF AND IMPLEMENTING PARTNER DEVELOPMENT

BACKGROUND

In 1999, just under two per cent of staff costs or USD 4.32 million was budgeted for staff development activities, a figure which compares favourably with other United Nations agencies. UNHCR places high importance on staff development activities and has integrated

personal learning plans into the Career Management System (CMS). The Office has also made efforts to provide training to implementing partners, in key areas such as protection, emergency management, programme management and security awareness.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives set for 1999 included:

- The development of an integrated approach to core learning activities including the development of five learning programmes;
- Greater outreach to all staff, particularly in field locations;
- A diversification in learning methodologies;
- Improved needs assessment and impact evaluations;
- Enhanced co-ordination for greater effectiveness and efficiency in training delivery; and

- The integration of training into the Human Resources Strategy.

All these objectives are intended to ensure that all staff has access to learning opportunities when they need it, in support of current competency requirements and future career goals. Recognising that the majority of staff is dispersed in field locations, new forms of training delivery using open and flexible learning techniques need to be developed.

PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Central to UNHCR's strategic approach to learning and the consolidation of ad-hoc training activities is the new Learning Programme approach. The key competency areas of Protection, Operations, Administration and Management are being redesigned into nine-month learning programmes using distance-learning techniques. In 1999, the Middle Management Learning Programme was designed, developed and piloted with 84 staff in East Africa, South-Eastern Europe and Headquarters with some success. Planning began on the Protection and Senior Management Learning Programmes. A novel and flexible approach to induction and orientation for new and reassigned staff was conceptualised and will, once developed, have the advantage over classroom-based induction programmes in that it will reach all staff at all levels as they need it. Distance-learning options for such subjects as Effective Writing and Emergency Management were developed. If these experiments are successful, they will be repli-

cated. CD Rom technology was used for the first time for training and plans are underway to increasingly use this medium of instruction.

Twenty per cent of the training budget was decentralised to offices in the field, to allow them to manage their own local learning initiatives. To complement this, the field-training network was actively supported. The training strategy is dependant on the staff member taking active responsibility for initiating his/her own training and taking advantage of the opportunities available. At the same time, and of equal importance, is the role of managers in encouraging staff learning and providing the opportunities for this to take place in the work environment. The table in this chapter provides statistics on workshop training in 1999, but may not reflect the full range of training activities initiated locally or in association with implementing partners.

IMPACT

It is encouraging to note an enthusiastic acceptance of the Learning Programme strategy. Most staff feel that short workshops do not always have the required personal and organisational impact and the flexible learning approach of these programmes is likely to show tangible results. The real impact, however, is unlikely to

be recognised until the end of 2000 at the earliest. Staff development is clearly placed high on the UNHCR staff support agenda and becoming an increasingly integrated element in the Human Resources Policy and the Career Management System.

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

UNHCR implementing partners often benefit from the Office's training initiatives, especially where these focus on protection, programme management and emergency management. Training partners on

protection-related issues was given higher priority during the year. Throughout 1999, some 2,300 staff attended UNHCR-organised workshops.

WORKSHOP TRAINING 1999¹

Topic	Number of Workshops	UNHCR Staff	Implementing Partners ²
Action for the Rights of Children	14	54	127
Administration/Personnel	12	116	6
Career Management System (CMS)	26	366	0
Communication Skills	17	193	6
Computer Applications	56	283	0
Durable Solutions	17	43	278
Emergency Management	10	86	184
Environment	8	61	173
Finance	22	403	26
General Management	12	240	0
Induction/Orientation	10	53	23
Language	N/A	575	0
Logistics, Supplies & Transport	5	27	30
People Oriented Planning (POP)	16	127	308
Programme Management	18	325	60
Protection ³	42	507	254
Public Information/Media	7	24	93
RefWorld	5	37	23
Security/Staff Safety	13	105	51
Social/Counselling/Education/Health	31	63	502
Stress Management	6	140	6
Technical Training/Sectoral	13	22	143
Telecommunications	2	13	1
TOTAL	362	3,863	2,294

¹ This table provides statistics on workshop training in 1999, but may not reflect the full range of training activities initiated locally or in association with implementing partners. It does not include external courses attended by UNHCR staff.

² Includes NGOs, Governments, UN.

³ Including resettlement training, but not a large number of activities related to the Promotion of Refugee Law.