

2017 Survey on UNHCR-NGO Partnerships

**A shared effort of InterAction, HIAS, and the UNHCR Implementing Partner Management Service (IPMS).
The state of UNHCR-NGO partnership is strong, continues to improve, but has room for more improvement**

Executive Summary

In order to better track partnership dynamics and develop a body of evidence on perceptions of UNHCR-NGO partnership, since 2014 UNHCR's Implementing Partner Management Service (IPMS) alongside HIAS, and, in 2017, InterAction, have been systematically soliciting UNHCR and partner feedback via an annual survey on the state of UNHCR-NGO partnership.

The 2017 survey represented **277 NGO offices** from 73 countries, with national and local NGOs just under half (48%) of respondents.¹ 60 UNHCR Field offices in 45 countries participated.

Overall Relationship

Generally, both UNHCR and NGO partners report a favorable and positive overall relationship. Results continue a four-year trend of increasingly favorable assessments of the UNCHR-NGO partnership by NGOs. Although UNHCR reported similar levels of satisfaction with their partnership with local NGO/CBOs and INGOs, INGOs were less positive about their partnership with UNHCR than national NGOs. NGOs report improved communication between UNHCR and their office, with a greater proportion of respondents rating communication as 'excellent' than 'good' for the first time.

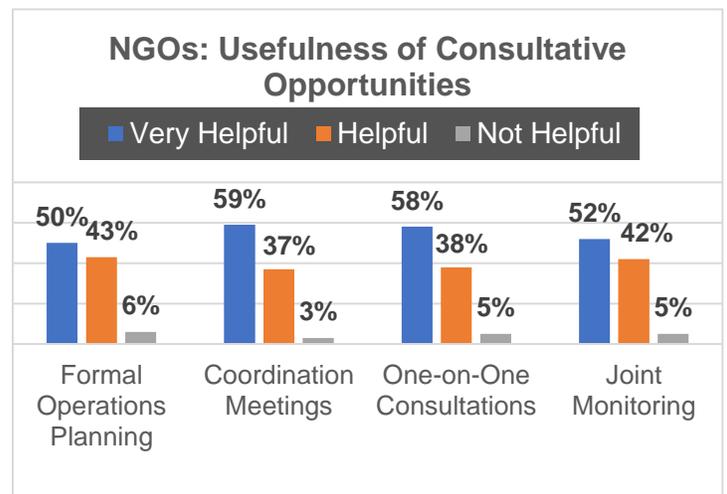
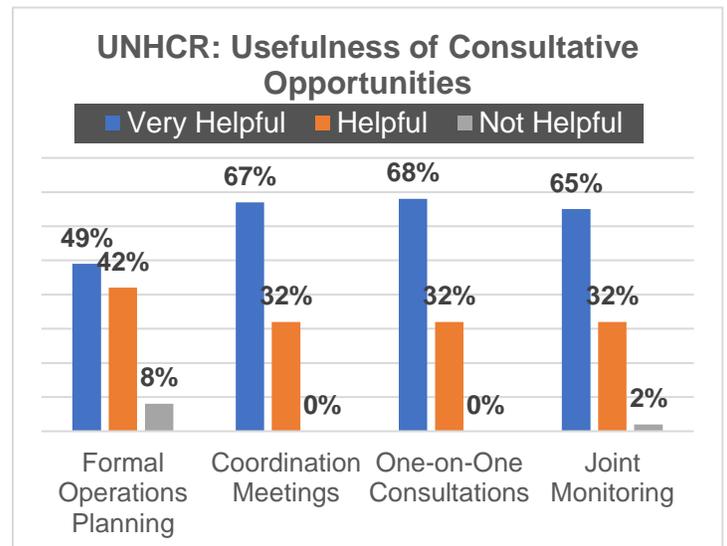
Key recommended actions for further improvement

Global

- UNHCR should continue its progress in systems improvement (Framework for Implementing with Partners) and culture/behavior change.
- NGOs would appreciate more consistent use of the partner portal by UNHCR.
- More trainings/learning opportunities for NGO and UNHCR staff alike on the Partner Portal would be appreciated.
- The findings of the survey should be shared and discussed at the annual UNHCR country representatives meeting in Geneva.

Country Level

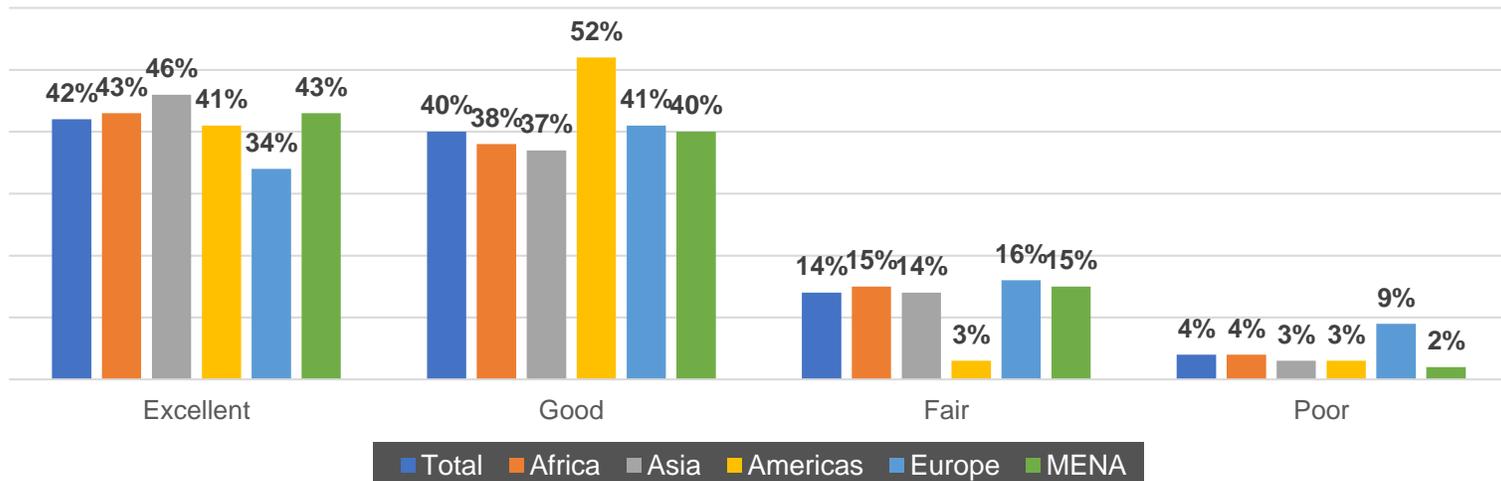
- Local Capacity Building should no longer be left to chance – UNHCR, international and national NGOs must be more deliberative, planned, and proactive in incentivizing and building sustainable local capacity building.



¹ Within the [2017 UNHCR-NGO Partnership Survey General Report](#) national/local NGO and regional data was disaggregated when its findings unique.

- Senior UNHCR staff should work with senior NGO leadership to develop a contextually appropriate strategy and plan for their country program based on the most relevant modalities, share their experience and learning on an ongoing basis through next year’s consultation. NGO partners should introduce UNHCR into their annual planning meetings.
- UNHCR Country Offices and Sub-Offices should have a meeting with partners (funded and operational) to discuss the response envelope priorities for fundraising.
- Finalizing agreements at the very end of the year when many staff are on leave results in less than optimal agreements. Both UNHCR and NGO respondents agreed that project proposals should be prepared in October, with clear guidance and a timeline for preparation and signing the PPA.

NGO assessment of communication between UNHCR and their office



Planning

Engagement by NGOs in UNHCR’s formal Country Operations Plan (COP) stakeholder meetings was higher than in previous years. Feedback from these meetings was generally positive, with most NGOs reporting that their feedback had been somewhat or well reflected in the COP. Engagement by UNHCR in NGO Partner’s annual planning meetings, however, was lower than in previous years.

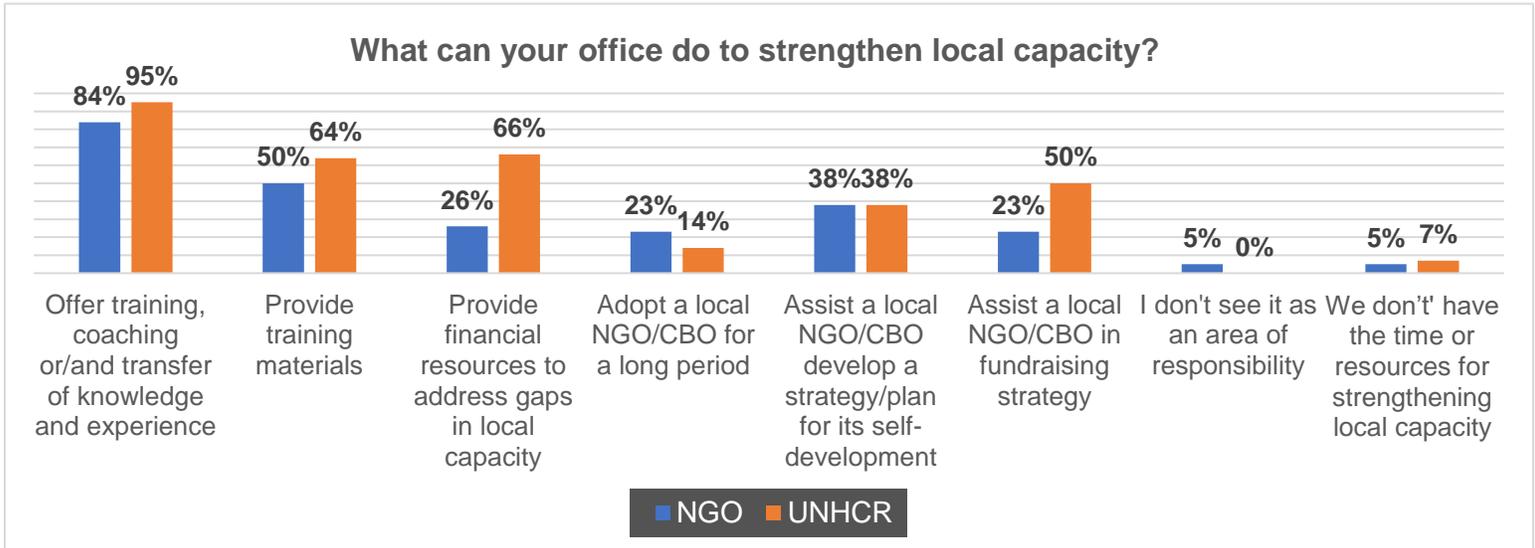
Selection

Feedback for non-selection of partners remains an area in need of improvement as approximately a quarter of NGO respondents stated that they did not receive a satisfactory reason for their non-selection. UNHCR and NGO respondents generally agreed that a sufficient time between a call for expression of interest and the deadline for concept notes should be two weeks in emergency environments and one month in stable environments. Regarding the Partner Portal, both UNHCR and NGO respondents agreed that more training by UNHCR on how to use the Partner Portal are needed. However, NGO respondents were significantly more likely than UNHCR to assert that all aspects of grant management should be stored on the Partner Portal.

Implementation

Both NGO Partners and UNHCR agree that training, coaching or/and transfer of knowledge and experience is needed to strengthen local capacity, as well as providing local NGOs/CBOs training materials. However, UNHCR respondents were more likely to view providing financial resources and assisting local NGOs/CBOs in fundraising strategy as means of strengthening local capacity than NGOs were. With regard to how UNHCR is working towards its WHS commitment to transfer 25% of its program expenditures to national partners by 2020, UNHCR

respondents report that they would primarily achieving this goal by either reducing funds provided to international partners or reducing direct UNHCR implementation of programs.



Most UNHCR and NGO partners report that they had conducted a satisfactory formal joint monitoring, review, or project evaluation with each other. This marked a significant increase over results from last year.

Most NGO Partners reported that their Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) had been delayed, with over half of NGO Partners attributing this delay in part to negotiations over the project budget. In order to expedite the signing of the PPA on time, both UNHCR and NGO respondents agree that the project proposal should be prepared earlier (in October) and that UNHCR should provide NGO partners with a timeline for preparation and agreement signature as well as proactive and clear guidance on expected realistic budget and terms of negotiation. Most respondents agreed that persons of concern were involved in the design and implementation of projects but a significant percentage cited time constraints as the reason for why persons of concern were insufficiently involved in the design phase.

As UNHCR continues to create new partnerships and build upon the existing relationships with NGOs in service to refugees, we hope that the results of this survey will help improve the communication, productively, efficiency, and overall impact of UNHCR-NGO networks.

