

EVALUATION BRIEF

UNHCR'S APPROACH TO LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR WORKFORCE AND PARTNERS

OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

To assess UNHCR's policies and practices in relation to workforce learning and development, with a view to optimize the learning system and strengthen the organisation's ability to meet current and future operational needs.

SCOPE

The evaluation looks at UNHCR's learning system as a whole (2015-2019) – to assess how the organization helped or hindered GLDC in fulfilling its objectives and those of the 2012 Learning Policy.

KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. To what extent is the learning system functioning effectively and appropriately as framed by the 2012 Learning policy—that is contributing to the development of staff and the organisation to meet evolving operational needs?
2. How relevant and useful to the UNHCR learning strategy are the structures, approaches, values and processes in other organisations and the private sector?
3. What are the implications of findings for the values, approaches, structures and processes necessary for a strategic approach to learning and development within UNHCR?

DOCUMENT REVIEW: More than **1,000** UNHCR and partner documents reviewed

QUALITY ASSESSMENT: **10** formal learning offers reviewed against HPASS quality standards.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS: **108** interviews with HQ and Bureau staff, as well as partner organizations .

ONLINE SURVEY: a total of **1,207** responses of which: **572** UNHCR workforce, **535** implementing partners, **100** from UN agencies

COUNTRY CASE STUDIES: a total of **149** interviews (21 with partners) in five countries: Nigeria, Greece, Djibouti, Morocco, and Peru.

EXTERNAL MAPPING STUDY: In-depth literature review of approaches to learning and development in five agencies: WFP, UNICEF, OCHA, IOM, Save the Children, and consultations with ICRC, UNSCC, Geneva Learning Foundation, Humanitarian Leadership Academy, and the HPASS quality Standard.

METHODS

The implementation of the 2012 Learning Policy has been undermined due to the lack of strategic importance placed on learning and development for the well-being and future health of UNHCR

The top-down learning structure lacks the nimbleness, adaptability and contextual relevance necessary to support HCR's transformations (R&D, RBM, Risk Mgmt 2.0, Data & Digital Identity, etc.), and efforts to build a whole-of-society approach through partnerships in complex protracted and emergency settings

KEY CONCLUSIONS

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KEY FINDINGS

LEARNING IS STRATEGIC

Learning not being seen as a strategic priority: learning investment is disconnected and not sufficiently tracked in relation to business goals

LEARNING IS EFFECTIVE

Little evidence of the impact of learning on organisational performance. Learning offers are too general and resource intensive (not suited to needs of emergency org)

LEARNING IS ACCESSIBLE

L&D opportunities are rationed in favour of P staff. Restricted access to L&C for partners (cost) and majority of programmes available in English only

LEARNING IS MORE THAN TRAINING

Informal learning and 'in the flow of work' learning is a long way from being embedded in UNHCR

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility for learning is not yet shared equally between individuals, supervisors and the organisation. L&D removed from performance appraisal process (2014)

LEARNING IS PART OF THE CULTURE

Poor culture of reflection and applying learning, amplifying learning to other contexts. Fear of failure and sharing experiences



MAKE LEARNING CRITICAL TO THE MISSION

Update the 2012 Learning Policy and develop an accompanying implementation strategy



DISTRIBUTE OWNERSHIP OF LEARNING

Decentralization of L&D capacity and financial resources in support of wider organizational ownership of learning closer to the field



LEARNING SYSTEMS BOARD

Establish a time-bound Learning Systems Board w/ representation from Bureaux, COs, Divisions to guide L&D decisions in development of new learning strategy



DATA-INFORMED DECISIONS

Establish metrics for success and develop a robust learning M&E system



FACILITATION OF LEARNING

GLDC moves from being a 'provider of training' to a 'facilitator and an enabler of learning'.



PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

L&D is placed at the center of workforce development, appointment and performance appraisals.



CHAMPIONING LEARNING

Vibrant learning culture is adopted through 'in the flow-of-work' approaches. Identify learning leaders and promote learning activities by senior managers.



AGILE LEARNING DESIGN

UNHCR moves away from the traditional resource intensive design approaches to agile and simplified design processes

RECOMMENDATIONS

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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

ACTIONS AGREED (SUMMARY)

