Working to Strengthen UNHCR Operations

DPSM works to provide the knowledge, guidance and tools necessary to design and deliver UNHCR programmes that demonstrate quality, technical integrity and innovation.

The Division leads efforts to strengthen Results-Based Management (RBM) within UNHCR and to ensure that planning, implementation and key management decisions are based on evidence and sound analysis. DPSM sets strategies, policies and standards, and develops practical guidance and tools across a wide range of technical areas, from public health to food security and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter and settlements, durable solutions, livelihoods and self-reliance, domestic energy, environmental management, registration, information management and statistics.

DPSM Structure

The Division manages its diverse and challenging agenda through a structure consisting of three pillars responsible, respectively, for programme and operational data management, analysis and technical support.

DPSM in Emergencies

Major emergencies with an important refugee dimension have erupted in a continuing series since 2011. While humanitarian needs created by these emergencies have outpaced the growth in resources available to meet them, DPSM strives to maintain high levels of readiness in order to provide rapid, efficient and effective technical support, including through:

• Emergency missions and technical expert deployments
• Technical advice and support for strategic, contingency and operational planning
• Development of strong, global technical specialist networks
• Training and capacity-building for UNHCR and partner staff
• Cluster leadership, coordination and information management support
• Support in identifying and recruiting skilled technical experts
DPSM’s work has value when refugees and other persons of concern see their lives change for the better and when colleagues in the field see the Division as a source of support, expertise and innovation. DPSM places the highest priority on providing direct support to field operations particularly in emergencies. During 2015, DPSM staff and affiliated workforce were deployed on emergency, technical support and capacity-building missions in over 60 operations, including Yemen, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Tanzania, Burundi, Djibouti, Nepal and Special Mediterranean Initiative (SMI) operations.

DEVELOPING CAPACITY
During 2015 the Training for Information Management in Emergencies (TIME) was held twice, providing a pool of trained information management (IM) specialists who are deployable to emergency operations worldwide. FICCS also increased the regional GIS and Information Management capacity by training field staff in Dakar, Nairobi and Amman, and enhanced the skills of further 65 staff members through Operational Data Management Learning Programme (ODMLP).

CHANGING OPERATIONAL APPROACHES
DPSM is coordinating efforts to expand the use of cash-based interventions in UNHCR operations, working closely with WFP and other strategic partners. The increasing urbanization of displacement and new technologies have opened up possibilities for the delivery of cash-based assistance, which is having a transformative impact on humanitarian assistance. The agency is developing up-to-date systems, tools and capacities to ensure that cash-based interventions enhance protection and achieve impact, while ensuring integrity and visibility for donor contributions.

MANAGING FOR RESULTS
UNHCR is building a culture of Results-Based Management (RBM) where strategic and operational decisions at all levels are data-driven and evidence-based. DPSM plays a key role in developing and maintaining the comprehensive UNHCR Results Framework; Focus and Global Focus, UNHCR’s RBM and business intelligence tools; Twin, UNHCR’s Health Information System; proDres, UNHCR’s registration tool; and other related systems and tools for operational and population data management. RBM depends entirely on data quality, which DPSM seeks to enhance through guidance, training and capacity building, including the Operational Data Management Learning Programme, together with UNHCR’s Global Learning Centre.

What comes next?
DPSM’s efforts focus on the implementation of four global strategies.

- The UNHCR Global Strategy for Public Health 2014-2018 encompasses public health, HIV and reproductive health, food security and nutrition, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). The Strategy aims to decrease morbidity and mortality and improve the health of refugees, with a focus on increasing access to quality services, primary health care and integrating refugees into national service structures.

- The UNHCR Global Strategy for Livelihoods 2014-2018 takes forward the vision of ensuring that refugees and other persons of concern are able to earn a safe and sustainable living that allows them to meet basic needs, live with dignity and achieve the full enjoyment of their human rights. The Strategy promotes the right to work, the protection of productive assets and innovative programmes that facilitate the transition to self-reliance.

- The UNHCR Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter 2014-2018 promotes settlements that reduce protection risks and link refugees to surrounding communities, taking into account socio-economic dynamics, environmental considerations and local resources. The Strategy also seeks to increase the access of refugees and other displaced to effective and innovative shelter solutions that provide privacy, a sense of home and protection from the elements.

- The UNHCR Global Strategy for Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE) 2014-2018 moves UNHCR toward a future in which all refugees are able to satisfy their energy needs for cooking and lighting in a safe and sustainable manner, without fear or risk to their health, well-being and personal security. The Strategy focuses on integrating energy requirements into all aspects of programming and promotes innovative fuel-efficient and renewable energy technologies.

DPSM supports the implementation of the Policy on Alternatives to Camps and the UNHCR Policy on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas. DPSM launched the Alternatives to Camps – Making It Work: Good Practice and Guidance Series and UNHCR Diagnostic Tool for Alternatives to Camps to assist field operations in pursuing alternatives to camps.

Effective implementation of the UNHCR Information & Data Management Strategy 2012-2014 has significantly strengthened UNHCR’s IM capacity. UNHCR is now recognized as a leader in the field and a reliable partner for humanitarian IM services. The Information Management Sustainability Plan 2015-2016 allows UNHCR to consolidate these achievements, which include enhanced web portals, updated IM toolkit, training workshops and field mission support.

DPSM Structure
Please contact any one of our sections for more information on the support available through DPSM and the new initiatives described in the DPSM Key Initiatives series updates.

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