

CHAPTER 8 / PART H / SECTOR OVERVIEW

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

1. DRC Definition of Information Management & Coordination

Information Management and Coordination is one of three DRC Support Sectors. It reflects the fact that DRC quite often is involved in collecting, managing and distributing information with the aim of facilitating efficient coordination and planning of assistance within the assistance community as a whole. Furthermore, DRC is an active participant in coordination fora, both within the NGO community, and also with regard to UN agencies and donors. At times, we even take upon ourselves the task of driving coordination when this is deemed to be too weak in a given setting.

DRC's strong engagement in cooperation, partnerships and networks is described in detail in Chapter 2.4 in this Handbook, the present section will focus on information management as a key input to overall coordination efforts.

1.1. DRC Specific Objectives

The overall objective of information management and coordination activities is to ensure that the humanitarian interventions targeting conflict-affected people are appropriate and relevant by building these upon reliable information about the target group and the situation.

DRC's role is to ensure that relevant and reliable data is being collected, analysed, disseminated and shared with relevant stakeholders, either through direct implementation or by facilitation of and collaboration with partner agencies.

The specific objective of information management and coordination activities is the collection, analysis, maintenance, and dissemination of data about the needs, priorities, aspirations and situation of a given population/group of people in order to facilitate planning and coordination of humanitarian assistance.

1.2. DRC Types of Activities Implemented

Information management and coordination activities cover a broad range of different methodologies quantitative as well as qualitative, and are concerned about collecting data at individual, group, community level or from a larger geographical area.

Speaking broadly about different information gathering activities, a distinction can be made between monitoring & reporting activities and profiling activities. The latter covers both registration, socio-economic surveys etc. as detailed below.

1.2.1. Profiling

Profiling is a broad concept covering a wealth of different methodologies whereby data on individuals or groups is collected with the purpose of informing advocacy, improving protection and assistance interventions and ultimately finding a durable solution to displacement.

The concept of profiling really gained ground with the focus on IDPs and IDP protection coming out of the humanitarian reform process and the resulting cluster approach.

As the word “profile” indicates it is “... a process that assesses the demographic, family, or individual economic or social characteristics, particular individual attributes, skills, professional background, family conditions, etc...”

Profiling is a process of identifying the people of concern through data collection (including counting) and analysis, in order to take action to advocate on their behalf, to protect and assist them and, eventually, to help bring about a solution to their displacement.

The national authorities in a given setting have the primary responsibility to collect and manage information on displaced and conflict-affected people within their jurisdiction. As such, wherever appropriate, the national authorities should lead a profiling exercise, with international agencies playing a supporting role, if necessary.

Where the national government is unable or unwilling to assume this responsibility, it is the role of the assistance community to fill in, in a collaborative manner, and initiate and manage the collection of data.

In profiling, a distinction is made between core data and additional information. Hence, an IDP profile, for example, is an overview of an IDP population that shows, as a minimum:

1. Number of displaced persons, disaggregated by age and sex (even if only estimates)
2. Location/s

This is understood to be ‘core data’. Wherever possible and relevant, additional information could include, but not be limited to:

3. Cause(s) of displacement
4. Patterns of displacement
5. Protection concerns
6. Humanitarian needs
7. Potential solutions for the group / individual, if available

Although an IDP profiling exercise is not the same as a needs assessment, the two are complementary: they can be conducted simultaneously to optimise resources, or one exercise can incorporate the methodologies necessary to obtain data for the other.

Profiling covers various methodologies of counting and analysing, including area surveys (using aerial or satellite images); flow monitoring which is useful in e.g. acute crisis to monitor larger population movements; and dwelling/”tukul” and head count. These methodologies are useful to collect the aforementioned core data. However, profiling also covers registration as well as household and community surveys, all of which are approaches that DRC is very familiar with and often uses.

- » For further details, please consult *Guidance on Profiling Internally Displaced Persons, Provisional Release*, IDMC and OCHA, in Annex H17.

1.2.2. Registration

The primary goal of registration is to establish the identities of a defined group of people through detailed data collection at the individual or household level. The level of detail and scope of use of ‘registration’ data will differ depending on the purpose of registration. For example, gathering data for human rights monitoring or protection activities typically requires more detailed information on the individual and situation. On the other hand, registration for the purpose of assistance delivery programmes requires data in lesser detail and for a more limited purpose .


Registration of Beneficiaries in North Caucasus


In North Caucasus, DRC has substantive experience with collection of data and management of comprehensive data bases that includes the following information:

In Ingushetia, the focus is on: Personal data, address (prior and after the displacement), demographic data, vulnerability category in Ingushetia.

In Chechnya and Dagestan, the above information is supplemented with data on income, kind of housing, and types of ownership. In some of the data bases, the focus is exclusively on IDPs whereas other bases include information on returnees and/or the host population.

Generally, the data is collected with the objectives of:

- » Ensuring accurate targeting of humanitarian assistance at household level
 - » Gathering information for UNHCR protection projects
 - » Using the information for coordination between stakeholders in the region
- 

- 
- » ensuring systematic IDP and beneficiary participation in relief and recovery programmes
 - » ensuring transparency in the beneficiary selection process
 - » ensuring accountability to IDPs and local populations

In the registration, individual forms are being used, in one case to establish a database to facilitate humanitarian aid distribution, and in another case (in Ingushetia and on behalf of UNHCR) individual forms are being used to collect data on protection issues in relation to the question of return.

In North Caucasus, DRC information centres are responsible for the registration. The data is entered, processed and analysed by DRC and the outcome is subsequently distributed to a wide range of assistance agencies, in formats that suit their individual purposes.

1.2.3. Household Survey

The household survey consists of selecting a sample of part of the general population, collecting detailed information among these and generalising the results. It is suitable for data collection at the household and individual level. The method is applicable when the population and ground conditions are relatively stable and it allows for a wider collection of additional information

IDP Profiling in Somalia

In Somalia, DRC led a profiling exercise in five different locations using a socio-economic household survey methodology. The data collected comprised household information (housing, number, age, gender), clan affiliation, displacement history, access to basic services (food, water, sanitation, education, health), livelihoods data, protection data, property data, intentions for the future, and access to information. Focus group discussions, as initial data gathering exercise and as door opener to the community, as well as household interviews using a questionnaire were convened with IDPs living in identified settlements generally considered as IDP settlements. The profiling helped DRC and the assistance community at large understand the different strata of vulnerable war affected populations. The data and information collected and analysed has been used for preparation of local interventions as well as to inform the great international community about the problems and situations of the IDPs.

1.2.4. *DRC Internal Displacement Profiling Tool Box*

As is evident from the above, DRC has considerable experiences with profiling – both one-off profiling exercises and continuous profiling and mapping projects. These experiences have been collated and documented in the DRC Internal Displacement Profiling Tool Box. The DRC Profiling Tool Box builds upon DRC experiences from Somalia, North Caucasus, Darfur and elsewhere. The DRC Profiling Tool Box complements the NRC IDMC Guidance on Profiling of IDPs by providing specific examples and best practices from DRC’s rather varied profiling experiences ranging from the comprehensive on-going individual/household registration databases in North Caucasus, over the one-off profiling experiences in 5 very different locations in Somalia to the on-going community profiling in West Darfur using rather sophisticated software. With the Tool Box is a comprehensive collection of useful documents and templates, comprising examples of forms, questionnaires etc. that have been used in different DRC operations for profiling and that may serve as points of departure for development of similar tools in new projects.

» The DRC IDP Profiling Tool Box is available in Annex B16

1.2.5. *Monitoring & Reporting*

Monitoring and reporting is an active process of collection, verification and immediate use of information primarily to address human rights and protection problems. It is important to emphasise that monitoring is not only about observing and collecting data. It is about using the data and information actively in the planning, targeting and coordination of interventions, for advocacy purposes and mobilisation of other actors, for referral and follow-up activities etc. – all with the aim of ensuring that the target group’s rights are being respected and protected and their needs addressed.

Often DRC will be involved in monitoring activities not only informing DRC’s assessment of and response to a given situation but also that of other key stakeholders. In this situation, DRC will play the role as facilitator by sharing information, supporting, and sometimes even driving coordination of interventions to address the issues at stake.

Depending on whether it is an acute crisis scenario, a displacement or durable solutions scenario, the monitoring and reporting outcomes will be used for different purposes.

Protection Monitoring in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka – in 2008 an acute crisis scenario, DRC works in close co-operation with UNHCR and other stakeholders on a DRC Emergency Protection Response, collecting data and information to ensure that protection issues in different locations are identified and appropriately prioritised.

DRC's Emergency Protection Monitoring includes:

- » Gathering information about incidents and situations
 - » Visiting sites;
 - » Interviewing individuals;
 - » Holding discussions with communities (IDPs, returnees, host);
 - » Holding discussions with and making referral to authorities and other actors to pursue remedies;
 - » Reporting; and
 - » Follow-up
- » **Annex B18 includes examples of the Monitoring, Referral and Follow-Up guidelines and forms used in Sri Lanka.**

In the Western Balkans – more of a durable solutions scenario, return monitoring, i.e. monitoring the situation in the areas of return, is part of DRC's broader involvement in return facilitation (please refer to the sector overview on Displacement-Related Law and Information for more details).

1.2.6. *Protection Monitoring*

The above case from Sri Lanka is an example of protection monitoring and reporting. Used appropriately, protection monitoring and reporting can be a very powerful protection tool. The protection monitoring is operational and action-oriented with the objective of protecting human rights. Hence, protection monitors should not only observe developments, collect information and perceive patterns. Protection monitors should identify problems and their causes, consider potential solutions and assist in problem solving. Reference is made to the sector overview on Displacement-Related Law and Information for more details on protection monitoring, including the relevance and importance of referral and follow-up actions.

1.2.7. *Monitoring of the Humanitarian Situation*

DRC is also involved in broader monitoring initiatives, i.e. monitoring of the humanitarian situation as such. This was for example the case in West Timor where DRC was operating a Rapid Assessment Unit.

The DRC Rapid Assessment Unit in West Timor

The objective of the Rapid Assessment Unit was to improve the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of essential base line data in order to support the planning and co-ordination of assistance by and between UN agencies, NGOs and local authorities. The comprehensive data base established and managed by DRC served to monitor the humanitarian situation and inform decisions on appropriate response to the situation in West Timor at a time when West Timor was hosting some 250,000 internally displaced.

2. Principles

2.1. Collaboration and Partnership

A collaborative approach to information management has a number of advantages and may actually be regarded as an absolute necessity in most settings. There are a number of reasons for this, including:

- » by ensuring a coordinated approach to planning of surveys and other information collection activities, there is a possibility of minimising the risk of survey fatigue and other negative implications;
- » it allows for the pooling of available resources and capacities in response to the common needs of participating agencies, thus making information gathering and management more effective and inclusive;
- » it strengthens common ownership of design and formats and thereby enhanced relevance of data for all participating agencies; and
- » it creates space for joint analysis of data and thereby provides a stronger basis for subsequent collaboration among stakeholders with regard to implementation of specific interventions, thus limiting the risk of duplication of activities.

2.2. Complementarity

The operational principle of complementarity is closely related to that of collaboration and partnership. It is essential that efforts are made to ensure that we as agen-

cies complement rather than duplicate each others work. Hence, it is important to make sure that the collection of data and information is done in a coordinated and complementary manner so as to ensure the direct usability of the information for all relevant users.

2.3. Participation

Data collection is often the first activity in a community, and it is important that this is done in a way that builds up a positive rapport with the community. Communities should be consulted and involved to the extent possible and the purpose and the process of the data collection be shared and discussed with the community.

Participatory survey methods may be applied but the experience also suggests that this can be complicated, partly due to time constraints. Instead, emphasis could be on bringing on board the community in other ways. Community participation can be increased by sharing the results of the data collection with the community and thereby get a deeper understanding of what interventions they would subsequently like to see. In this way, the community may develop an element of ownership over its own information.

2.4. Do-No-Harm

Ensuring consent and confidentiality is of crucial importance given the principle of Do No Harm. To ensure that no harm is done, permission and consent should always be sought prior to an interview or other methods of collecting information from an individual, group or community. Likewise, systems and mechanisms to ensure the confidentiality and security of the data should be in place and be clearly explained to the target group. To ensure confidentiality, sensitive data and personal details like names or ID numbers should be handled separately and only shared with trusted selected partners based on the consent of the persons concerned.

» Please refer to the DRC Internal Displacement Profiling Tool Box in Annex B16 for further details.

2.5. Advocacy

Advocacy is often the very purpose for which information is being collected. Hence, information is being collected, shared, disseminated and used for advocacy purposes both by DRC and the assistance community at large. This is particularly so in the case of monitoring and reporting activities where the data collected and reported can be a very strong advocacy tool. The mere fact that data collection in a particular area or on a particular problem is taking place can send a strong advocacy message.

2.6. Gender

For the information to be as precise as possible and for agencies to be able to use the information in the most efficient and effective manner, it is important to ensure that the data is sufficiently disaggregated, taking in to consideration differences in gender roles, responsibilities, resources and capacities, and vulnerabilities.

» Please refer to the DRC Gender Tool in Annex B15 for further details.

Selected Reference Material

- » The UNHCR Checklist for Protection in Emergencies, UNHCR
 - » Guidance on Profiling Internally Displaced Persons, Provisional Release, IDMC and OCHA, Geneva, April 2008 (See Annex H17)
 - » UNHCR Handbook for Registration, UNHCR, 2003 (See Annex D7)
 - » Protection Monitoring & Indicators. Protection monitoring in return areas during transition phase. A compilation of international standards and indicators, UNHCR
-