Humanitarian Issues Newsletter
Update on HQ Support, December 2012

This newsletter covers HQ support from EMOPS and Programme Division on humanitarian action and post-crisis recovery. It aims to inform field staff of global developments and promote exchange of ideas and good practices across different levels of the organisation. We welcome feedback to: James Hedges in Programme Division and Mari Denby in EMOPS. For more information, please see the intranet’s emergencies portal.

Update on the Syria Crisis Response

An estimated 2.5 million people in Syria, including over 1.15 million children, are currently affected by the ongoing conflict. More than 525,000 Syrians have fled to neighbouring countries and North Africa. Refugee flow from the conflict has surged in recent months, with 50,000 people leaving Syria during the first two weeks of November alone.

While the formal organizational simplified standard operating procedures (SSOPs) for Level 2 emergencies remain under development, the response has been organized as a de facto Level 2. In March, the Office of the Executive Director approved simplified procedures for the response, including fast track recruitment, and a sub-regional management structure to be led by the Regional Director with the participation country offices and headquarters. In parallel, discussions are ongoing to further enhance the response including through possible activation of a Level 3 emergency for the crisis.

UNICEF continues to contribute to interagency planning for the response. The latest inter-agency Regional Response and Syrian Humanitarian Assistance Response Plans were released on 19 December.

In Syria and neighbouring countries, the total UNICEF appeal of $121 million is currently 27 per cent funded. Contact Francois Ducharme.

Integrated Programme Approach Support

UNICEF’s Core Commitments to Children in humanitarian action (CCCs) call for integrated programmatic approaches to humanitarian action, yet recent evaluations and lessons including from the Horn of Africa and Sahel food and nutrition response programmes have shown that this strategy requires strengthening for more effective and efficient response and greater accountability.

An integrated response in humanitarian action must include:

a) A coordinated ‘convergence’ of two or more pertinent sectors and cross-cutting areas including innovative use of cash and vouchers to part-cover gaps in, and across services:
   1. on a specific problem (the ‘entry point’)
   2. in a given geographic location (e.g. district, or at a lower level, a feeding centre)
   3. targeting the same crisis affected population
   4. using information across sectors to inform the emergency response

b) Cross-sector intervention linkages (e.g. through referrals between services) for optimal impact on addressing that problem.

Programme Division’s emergency focal point group (covering all the CCC sectors and cross-cutting issues) has been providing support to countries in adopting integrated approaches through a number of initiatives:

- A technical advisory has been developed for Angola, but could also be applicable for other country offices, to strengthen inter-sectoral elements in assessment, planning, coordination, implementation, monitoring and reporting. The advisory includes examples of integrated programmatic approaches according to community entry points. Contact Brendan Doyle.
- The WHO/UNICEF Care for Child Development Intervention (CCDI) is an evidence-based training package designed to prepare service providers and caregivers of young children to promote the healthy growth and psychosocial development of children. Contact Vijaya Singh.
- The Cholera Toolkit has been developed by the Health, WASH and Nutrition sectors to strengthen inter-sectoral action for optimal impact in response to cholera outbreaks. The Toolkit is being translated into French and will be available online by the end of the year. It is a living document and will be updated as new material is produced and based on field experience on its use. Contact Heather Papowitz and Jesus Trelles.
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New & Updated Humanitarian Resources

**Top Tools for First Response**: key guidance and tools, including good practice examples.

**CCC E-Resource**: Prioritized guidance for all areas of the CCCs, including existing policies, standards, guidelines and tools. Serves as an update of all humanitarian action content on the intranet and replaces the Emergency Field Handbook.

**www.UNICEFinEmergencies.com**: A publically accessible site which replicates the Emergencies Intranet to share UNICEF’s approach to humanitarian action and key resources with partners and donors.

**Emergency Deployment Kit**: Orientation to must-know resources on emergency response for UNICEF staff, consultants and standby partners.

**CCC e-Learning**: A course to inform staff and partners on the CCCs and how they can be fulfilled. The e-Learning delves into each area of the CCCs, allowing the learner to understand and apply fundamental elements of the CCCs.

**MoRES in Humanitarian Action at the Country Level**

UNICEF Mali is currently responding to a complex humanitarian situation caused by internal conflict, compounded by the Sahel food and nutrition crisis, flooding and cholera. In this challenging humanitarian context, ‘MoRES in Humanitarian Situations’ (an approach to strengthening results monitoring based on UNICEF humanitarian performance monitoring) is being applied to ensure higher frequency progress reporting against key programme results.

This approach is being used by UNICEF as well as the wider cluster/sectors that UNICEF leads at the country level. The country office (CO) monitors progress and develops monthly updates on progress and gaps – including standardized qualitative third party field monitoring in regions of northern Mali that remain inaccessible to UN staff. In the volatile and changing context, this monitoring allows UNICEF to engage with affected populations that would otherwise remain out of reach. Monthly reporting and analysis through situation reports allow real-time adjustment of programmes and interventions as challenges arise. This progress analysis serves as a management tool, allowing the CO to identify barriers and bottlenecks in implementation. It is also used to support CO, regional office and headquarters resource mobilization and advocacy efforts where barriers to programme results are due to lack of resources, humanitarian access or partnerships.

Support for introducing MoRES in Humanitarian Situations (HPM) can be found in the MoRES in Humanitarian Situations toolkit, the Community of Practice, country-specific or regional WebEx sessions, and a roster of suitable internal and external staff available for surge and/or short-term assignments. Strengthened CO planning and monitoring guidance is also available in the 2013 HAC Field Guidance. Contact Martin Porter.

**What is the IRT?**

UNICEF’s Immediate Response Team (IRT) was established in 2011 to provide rapid surge support to country and regional offices in situations where the corporate Level 3 emergency procedure has been activated. In accordance with the Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure (CF/EXD/2011-001) and Level 3 Simplified Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs) (CF/EXD/2012-001), the role of the IRT is to support the UNICEF Representative and his/her team in the emergency response. IRT members are deployed according to the ‘no regrets’ principle, mobilizing more capacity and resources than may be necessary in order to err on the side of caution.

Thirty-nine UNICEF staff members and retirees currently serve on three IRTs made up of 13 functional areas. Team members are nominated by Regional Directors and Division Directors and approved by the Executive Director in coordination with Division of Human Resources and the Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS). Once selected, IRT members are trained and appointed for an 18-month term of service. On a rotating basis, thirteen team members are ‘on call’ for emergency deployment within 48 hours for up to three months.

The composition and size of the team sent to a humanitarian situation is determined by the nature of the emergency and recommendation of the Global Emergency Coordinator (GEC), but the Level 3 SSOPs require a minimum deployment of an IRT team leader as well as team members to cover supply/logistics, human resources, planning/M&E, communications, operations, plus relevant programme staff depending on nature of emergency.

This November, UNICEF renewed the membership of the IRT and new members were trained in a week-long emergency simulation exercise in Brindisi, Italy. Contact Katarina Herneryd.

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Update on the Transformative Agenda

The IASC Transformative Agenda is a set of concrete actions aimed at transforming the way in which the humanitarian community responds to emergencies. It focuses on improving the timeliness and effectiveness of the collective response through stronger leadership, more effective coordination structures, and improved accountability for performance and to affected people. Over the past year, the Transformative Agenda has progressed from a focus on Level 3 (L3) emergencies to system-wide improvements in humanitarian action. A framework for the full Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) has been endorsed by the IASC Principals to reinforce logical sequencing across preparedness, assessment, strategic planning, resource mobilization and performance monitoring, to guide the HCT and ensure the phases inform each other seamlessly. Reference documents for each step of the programme cycle are currently being developed.

The Principals will issue the package of L3 guidance as it currently stands before the end of the year, but there is still much to be done and the IASC will now focus on how this will be rolled out in field operations next year. UNICEF made significant contributions to the IASC guidance, especially activation criteria and performance monitoring. The current criteria for L3 activation mirror UNICEF’s own criteria of scale, urgency, complexity, capacity and reputational risk.

A key component of the system-wide L3 activation is the deployment of the Inter-Agency Rapid Response Mechanism (IARRM) to ensure that inter-agency coordination functions are immediately well staffed. The IARRM includes a senior Humanitarian Coordinator; sufficient OCHA staff to support the HC/HCT, inter-cluster coordination and activities; and cluster coordinators capable of operating in an L3 environment. UNICEF’s L3 activation procedure remains distinct and autonomous of the system-wide L3 activation but the organization has committed to deploying global cluster coordinators and information management specialists through the IARRM, and to complement this through deployment of the IRT. How an IARRM deployment will interact with existing UNCT or HCT is being tested in a series of table top exercises at the country level, beginning with Senegal and Pakistan this year.

More information and guidance on the Transformative Agenda can be found here on the EMOPS intranet pages. Contact: Christine Knudsen.

Humanitarian Action for Children Appeal

UNICEF is changing the way it mobilizes resources for humanitarian situations. To reflect the fluid nature of humanitarian situations and the resources required for to UNICEF respond, and based on feedback from donors and National Committees, the Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal is shifting to a rolling, online format. Unlike previous years when the HAC was issued in print and supplemented with a mid-year update, the 2013 appeal will be largely electronic and online with a short overview document for launch and regularly updated throughout the year with the most recent information about funding requirements and results. In lieu of a full printed report, a short summary document will printed for limited distribution.

HAC countries will be expected to update their appeal at least once a year for a mid-year review, or more frequently if the situation requires. Updates to the content will load directly to refresh the country and regional webpages, while shifting previous information into an archive. The new webpages will provide links to previous years’ appeals, situation reports, external country pages, as well as web stories.

The 2013 HAC is currently under production for a mid-January launch. Contact Rafael Hermoso.

Independent Evaluations of UNICEF Humanitarian Action

An evaluation of UNICEF’s emergency preparedness systems (or “EmPrep”) is currently underway, and is due for completion in April 2013. By assessing the effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of UNICEF’s preparedness systems across global operations, the evaluation’s goal is to help UNICEF become better braced for the wide range of emergencies it faces, and thus help it save more lives and reduce human suffering in ever-better ways.

An evaluation of UNICEF’s cluster lead agency role in humanitarian action (or “CLARE”) will kick off in January 2013. Its objective is to generate credible evidence for results achieved or not achieved by UNICEF in its (co-) cluster lead agency role. In the context of the Transformative Agenda, the evaluation is aimed at helping UNICEF management make concrete improvements in the challenging area of multi-partner coordination.

Contact Robert McCouch
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### Update on HQ Support

#### Key Cluster, Programme and Cross-cutting Strategy Updates/Events

**Global Cluster Coordination**

The Child Protection Working Group launched the long-awaited inter-agency Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action developed as common guidelines for the global humanitarian community. Over 400 individuals were involved in the drafting process, from 30 agencies in over 40 countries. Contact: Katy Barnett. UNICEF led and co-led Clusters/AORs held a multi cluster training event for field coordinators and practitioners in November. A review of this and other 2012 trainings, highlights the need for an integrated approach to capacity development, adding a valuable “inter-cluster” dimension. An initiative to develop a multi cluster capacity development strategy and to strengthen future coordination trainings is underway. Contact: Gwyn Lewis. The Clusters/Areas of Responsibility (AORs) continue to work to strengthen direct surge support to the field. The Rapid Response Team (RRT) is expanding to 26 partner personnel immediately deployable to provide support to in-country inter agency coordination and cluster response. A new standby agreement with IMMAP to increase IM surge capacity to support emergency response, particularly to support UNICEF led clusters, is also being finalized. Contact: Julien Temple

**Nutrition**

The Nutrition in Emergencies (NIE) Unit has rolled out a package to strengthen severe acute malnutrition (SAM)-related information collection, reporting and supply planning: the SAM Management Global Update is an online tool to support country level reporting and in-depth analysis; there is accompanying guidance on SAM-related information terminology and calculation modes; and the Supply Forecasting Tool to aid in supply planning. Regional Webinars will be conducted in January 2013 to support the roll-out. Contact Erin Boyd and James Hedges. A task force on integration of nutrition into government systems is being established to support tool and guidance development for country roll-out. Contact Dolores Rio.

**Health**

A WHO policy brief on integrating sexual and reproductive health into health emergency and disaster risk management has been released, for which UNICEF was a key partner. A checklist for use at country office is in draft to be field tested and completed in 2013. A short article on UNICEF’s engagement with oral cholina vaccines (OCVs) through an integrated approach with other key cholina control interventions has been recently published which has a link to the UNICEF guidance note on use of OCVs. A meeting on newborn care in emergencies was held in the US in July at Save the children website. A draft kit based on priority causes of newborn death has been produced as a technical brief on newborn care in emergencies for use in the Syria crisis but which can be adapted to other contexts. Contact and Cecilia Sanchez and Heather Papowitz.

**WASH**

In the last quarter, WIE training courses were held in Ghana and Afghanistan. Participants included UNICEF, NGO and Government colleagues. Contact Andrew Parker if you would like to participate in future courses. The Menstrual Hygiene Management in Emergencies review was concluded and the findings shared with interested stakeholders during a day-long MHH webinar hosted by UNICEF with participation of NGOs, donors and academia. The Focus Group Discussions were carried out in Somalia, Kenya, Haiti and the Philippines. See blog and contact Andrew Parker. PD-WASH supported Angola CO to draft a context specific strategy for including WASH within the overall nutrition response. Contact Andrew Parker or Jesus Trelles.

**Child Protection**

In December 2012, the 5th Ministerial Follow-up Forum to the Paris Commitments and Paris Principles on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups was hosted, with Bolivia, Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Kuwait and Yemen officially endorsing the Paris Commitments. In November, Yemen UN Resident Coordinator and UNICEF (Pernille Ironside) hosted a mission of the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG-CAAC) to take stock of the situation of conflict affected children. As an outcome, the President issued a decree banning all children from all armed forces and the Prime Minister and Cabinet signed the Paris Commitments and Paris Principles on children associated with armed forces or armed groups. In the annual Global Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) meeting in Geneva the inter agency Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action were launched (http://cpwg.net/minimum-standards). To strengthen CP section’s engagement with peacebuilding initiatives, especially linked to the Education programmes, CP Section has developed a framework for collaboration, which can be a useful tool for any country office seeking greater engagement on peacebuilding processes in their countries. For those interested contact Saji Thomas.

**Education**

Under the Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme [PBEA], 13 Country Offices are conducting analyses of conflict drivers that threaten fragile states’ efforts to cope with or recover from conflict. The analyses will be used to design education-for-peacebuilding interventions related to advocacy, capacity development, equitable distribution of education services, as well as research and knowledge generation. Over the next three years, UNICEF will explore, document and demonstrate how social services such as education contribute to conflict reduction and social cohesion in conflict and post-conflict contexts. Contact Anna Azaryeva.

**HIV/AIDS**

In August the Inter-Agency Working Group on GBV and HIV in east and southern Africa organized a workshop on lessons learned from the Horn of Africa food crisis. Country delegations came from Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia and South Sudan (as an observer). The workshop focused on sharing successes and barriers in integrating HIV into humanitarian action as well as ensuring that HIV is mainstreamed across sectors and clusters. Draft preparedness plans were developed by each delegation and presented to the larger group. The plans will be developed with additional inputs from partners and stakeholders. Contact Sarah Karmin or Katie Richey (KM).

**Early Childhood Development**

The ECD Unit and WCARO organized A Care for Child Development training (training of trainers) held in Dakar in June 2012, with UNICEF, government and NGO participants from Sahel countries ( Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso and Niger) – see a PDF version of the CCD training report, or access a MS Word version on the CCD main page on the Intranet (scroll to the bottom). INEE and the Education Cluster launched the first installment of Education Cluster Thematic Case Study Series in April 2012. The Thematic Case Study Series - a collaborative effort between INEE and the Global Education Cluster - seeks to capture lessons learned and examples of good practices from country-level Education Clusters. ECD is one of the five themes included in this initial report. Contact Vijaya Singh.

**Disability**

In September, UNICEF hosted the first major gathering of the Global Partnership on Children with Disabilities (GPCWd). Participants included governments, UN Agencies, youth representatives, civil society organizations and 100+ GPCWd partners. GPCWd aims to influence the child rights agenda for greater inclusion of children with disabilities, and to influence the disability rights agenda to focus more on children’s issues. Inclusive humanitarian action, nutrition and education are the three thematic pillars of the GPCWd and a task force on each has been established. The first year plan of action of the GPCWd Inclusive Humanitarian Task Force includes creating a web-based platform on disability-inclusive emergency preparedness and response, to disseminate information and share good practices, facilitating access to resources as well as supporting inclusive humanitarian response. Contact Amy Farkas and Gopal Mitra.