

Humanitarian Coordination and Information Management Sector Update

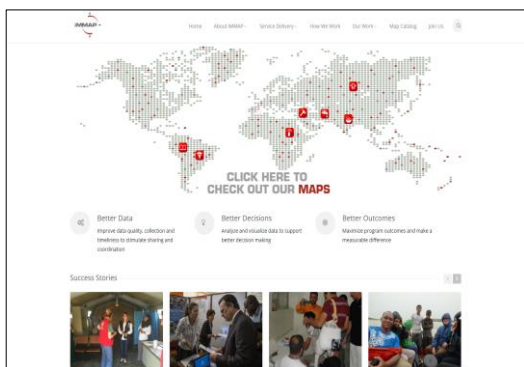
OCTOBER 2015

SECTOR OVERVIEW

Humanitarian coordination and information management are crucial elements of a cohesive and effective disaster response. Humanitarian coordination brings together relevant national, regional, and international actors and ensures common understanding of urgent needs and response gaps, while information management enables data and information to be collected, processed, analyzed, and packaged in a form that is useful for emergency responders. Activities include assessing situations and needs, developing common response strategies, performing gap analysis, and monitoring the impact and outcomes of activities—all with the aim of ensuring greater predictability and accountability among humanitarian actors.

USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) engages with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the UN, and other donors and actors to support humanitarian coordination and information management during emergencies and participates in the humanitarian cluster system, which facilitates the coordination of humanitarian activities in emergency settings. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$107.5 million for humanitarian coordination and information management programs worldwide.

STRENGTHENING INFORMATION MANAGEMENT IN GUINEA AND SIERRA LEONE



With USAID/OFDA support, iMMAP develops a range of maps that visualize response activities.

By developing common methods of sharing and organizing information in emergencies, Information Management and Mine Action Programs (iMMAP) is helping implementing partners, the humanitarian cluster system, and other stakeholders better coordinate relief efforts across the globe. With nearly \$386,000 in FY 2015 funding, USAID/OFDA supported the rapid deployment of iMMAP information management officers (IMOs) to Guinea and Sierra Leone as part of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) response. Through USAID/OFDA support and the UN Standby Partnership Program, which provides targeted, short-term support to humanitarian field operations, iMMAP IMOs produced hundreds of information products, such as infographics, maps, and web applications, and provided direct information management support—including promoting data standards,

encouraging information sharing, and processing data—to the education, health, and water, sanitation, and hygiene clusters during the EVD response. By supporting emergency information management staffing needs, USAID/OFDA and iMMAP are building the capacity of relief agencies to identify response gaps and more effectively respond to the needs of vulnerable populations.

ENHANCING HUMANITARIAN COORDINATION EFFORTS

In the aftermath of a natural disaster or in the midst of a conflict, coordination among relief actors is crucial for ensuring an effective humanitarian response. In FY 2015, USAID/OFDA supported the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Inter-Cluster Coordination (ICC) Section to coordinate response activities among global cluster lead agencies, inter-cluster coordinators, and partners within the UN cluster system. The ICC also supported UN humanitarian coordinators (HCs) and humanitarian country teams (HCTs) in developing strategic response plans.

Additionally, USAID/OFDA supported OCHA's Humanitarian Coordination Leadership Strengthening Unit (HLSU) in FY 2015 to strengthen the leadership skills of HCs, resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinators, and other high-level humanitarian leaders within the UN system through targeted leadership development opportunities. With USAID/OFDA support, the HLSU also identified and trained new humanitarian coordination leaders and managed the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) HC Pool—a roster of more than 100 humanitarian professionals qualified to perform humanitarian leadership roles.

In partnership with the IASC, whose members include key operational humanitarian organizations and is led by the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, USAID/OFDA also supported field-level implementation of the IASC's Transformative Agenda (TA) through its support to the Senior Transformative Agenda Implementation Team (STAIT). The TA is a second wave of humanitarian reform focused specifically on improving three essential and interrelated elements of collective humanitarian responses: leadership, coordination, and accountability. In FY 2015, the STAIT led missions to several crisis countries to assist HCTs in becoming stronger and more strategic leadership teams. The STAIT also provided guidance and support to HCTs remotely and utilized field feedback to revise global humanitarian coordination policy, ensuring the TA is fit-for-purpose and tailored to specific humanitarian contexts.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION SHARING THROUGH OCHA

When a disaster occurs, easily accessible and up-to-date information is key to implementing an effective and well-coordinated response. With nearly \$450,000 in FY 2015 assistance, USAID/OFDA supported OCHA's Information Services Branch—which provides services, standards, and tools to better enable sharing of critical data and information during a response—to develop web-based platforms to help humanitarian organizations collect, organize, and share critical information during an emergency.

With USAID/OFDA assistance, OCHA is improving information sharing and humanitarian data management through its Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) and Humanitarian ID projects. Through HDX, relief agencies are able to upload and download humanitarian data—such as displacement patterns, settlement locations, and assessment results—to better plan activities according to humanitarian needs. Using the Humanitarian ID service, emergency responders can share updated contact details with colleagues and more easily connect with key contacts, such as cluster coordinators or agency leaders. Learn more about HDX and Humanitarian ID at: <https://data.hdx.rwllabs.org/> and <http://humanitarian.id/>.



Partners can share and access operational data, such as information about transporting emergency relief commodities, through OCHA's information sharing platforms. (Photo by Kelly Bradley/USAID)

In FY 2015, USAID/OFDA also continued to support OCHA's Humanitarian Response website, an online resource for global and country-specific information during an emergency. At the macro level, Humanitarian Response hosts information that supports timely and appropriate humanitarian interventions, including sector-specific technical guidance, training materials, and strategic response planning tools. For specific disasters, the website serves as a platform for sharing situational and operational information—such as maps, situation reports, and funding figures—among implementing partners, clusters, and other members of the humanitarian community. As relief agencies can tailor the core platform to meet the needs of a specific country or disaster, Humanitarian Response improves the availability and accessibility of information during an emergency. More information about Humanitarian Response is available at: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info>.

USAID/OFDA CONTACT

Rhonda Stewart, *Humanitarian Information Management Advisor*, rstewart@usaid.gov