Using ICT to improve case management for child protection in emergencies

Sharing the findings and recommendations

health.enabled

2016

mHELP

Photo Credit: United Nations News Centre

Content

1. The Research
2. The Main Findings
3. Recommended Next Steps
4. Link to Ongoing Work

The Research: Background and Research Question

- Different agencies working in the field of child protection case management in emergencies, such as ICRC, UNHCR, UNICEF and several iNGOs are moving away from traditional paper-based systems in favor of digital solutions

- As such, a CRITICAL EXAMINATION of the impact that of the use of ICT was needed

- UNICEF, in partnership with UNHCR and ICRC, through funding from DFID, contracted mHELP/HealthEnabled to undertake a 3 phased research project: desk research, field research (South Sudan and Kenya), analysis and synthesis

- The research study aims to provide an answer to the following broad question: "Does the digitization of child protection case management in emergencies (ICT for CPCME) contribute to improved outcomes in terms of reducing vulnerabilities of children by improving factors such as time-efficiency, work-efficiency, child friendliness and the ability to track children across case management systems?"

The Research : Limitations

- The research did not investigate laws related to child protection and data
 sharing

- The research was not able to examine cross-border situations as originally intended. Furthermore, the research focused specifically on refugee and IDP settings; not included in the scope were other emergency settings such as post-natural disaster environments

- The research relied heavily on qualitative data

The Main Findings

• There is limited evidence in the literature on the impact that the use of ICT for CPCME have on reducing vulnerability and improving child protection outcomes
-- Current evidence did not permit to reach a definitive conclusion on the impact of the digitisation of CPCME, but it did permit us to develop a more robust theory of change for future evaluators and research teams to take a more systematic approach to evaluating ICT for CPCME

• Investments in ICT for CPCME have focused on data management solutions and reducing the time-consuming administration processes

• The systems observed had a strong focus on family tracing and reunification, with particular attention to registration

• Data sharing (when it occurs) enhances coordination and collaboration across agencies
-- Data is transmitted faster than paper

The Main Findings

Major barriers of moving to digital included:

- **Lack of interoperability of agencies' data (leading to time-consuming manual data matchingand follow-up challenges)**
- **Concerns on confidentiality and data management**
- **Speed provided by ICT to CPCME risked sacrificing quality of information collected**
- **Technostructure limitations (e.g., limited connectivity)**
- **High staff turn-over and loss of institutional memory**

Recommended Next Steps

1. Conduct further collaborative/cross-agency research to evaluate the impact of ICT for CPCME on outcomes (including costing studies)

2. Harness the power of cybersecurity measures to secure data storage, retrieval and transmission (encryption-audit etc.)

3. Re-examine work flows and existing systems to see where processes can be augmented through automated ICT mechanisms

4. Use ICT to further engage children

5. Establish (if not already existing) mechanisms for user feedback and updating of existing systems

6. Use the convening power of ICT to enhance interagency collaboration, data sharing and strategic planning.

7. Despite the limitations of the research this formative research could be used to strengthen existing ICT interventions and the quantitative data obtained and analyzed could be used as a baseline for further research.

Link to Ongoing Work (related to the research and Primero/CPIMS+)

- First introduction of the mobile component of Primero for follow-ups. This will be documented and re-evaluated on a regular basis

- Through the Global CM TF looking into the development of a child friendly app

- Primero/CPIMS+ ensures regular feedback from the field and this feedback is taken into account in the development of the system

- Work with UNHCR on joint data protection assessments and and standard tools for data protection protocols and data sharing agreements

THANK YOU!