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Inter-Agency Coordination Course

Module 1:
Fundamentals of Coordination

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2021

LEGEND

💡 **CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

🦉 **SELF-REFLECTION**

 TAKE INTERACTIVE ACTIONS

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📋 **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS MODULE**

CONTENTS

Welcome to Module 1 of the Inter-Agency Coordination Course. In this module we will discuss the fundamentals of coordination. First, we will introduce the two main coordination approaches in forced displacement situations and look at the Centrality of Protection in a response. We then turn to a discussion on partnership and principles of engagement with partners within and outside of UNHCR's own operational response.

By the end of this module you should be able to:

✓ Describe the basic difference between the coordination modalities in which UNHCR is engaged;
✓ Describe the overall framework within which coordination is taking place;
✓ Advocate for the Centrality of Protection and the principles of partnership and humanitarian coordination;
✓ Understand the need to coordinate with partners beyond UNHCR's own operational footprint and what kind of partners are key for a successful response.

INTRODUCTION

Coordination is a joint undertaking involving stakeholders engaged in the various phases of a response to forced displacement. It is based on a shared set of principles and goals and uses deliberations and discussions to consolidate a common situational understanding and response.

Coordination is central to any initiative undertaken with partners to support individuals forcibly displaced by slow or sudden-onset disasters: from asylum seekers and refugees, to IDPs and stateless communities. For UNHCR, the pursuit of effective coordination is not an end in itself but a means to maximise the positive impact that UNHCR and partners have on protection, assistance and solutions. Coordination enhances programmatic responses to displacement and ultimately maximises their impact for forcably displaced, while minimising the resources required.

In 2021, UNHCR works in 137 countries and 546 Offices. In 2021, the UNHCR-led Refugee Response Plans again feature prominently in the 2021 Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO) alongside the Humanitarian Response Plans. Of the USD 35 billion total humanitarian needs in the 2021 GHO, USD 10.2 billion are for the needs of over 12.5 million refugees as well as migrants and returnees, and 8.5 million host community members in five regional refugee response plans (Syria, Venezuela, DRC, South Sudan, Afghanistan) and the Bangladesh Joint Response Plan.

For IDP responses UNHCR leads 32 field protection clusters and cluster-like mechanisms; 31 for shelter and 22 for CCCM.

Hence, UNHCR is active in a large variety of coordination settings. In some settings, UNHCR leads the coordination of the overall response, while in others the Office coordinates only a part of the response or contributes in an inter-agency response coordinated by another actor.

In this Course, the focus is on the coordination and UNHR role undertaken in Refugees, IDP, and Refugee and IDP mixed situations.

Flexible   Inclusive   Predictable   Transparent
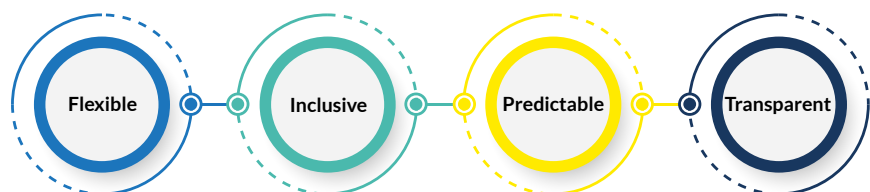
A coherent response meets immediate and long-term needs through the efforts of national authorities/host governments, supported by national civil society, host communities, the private sector, and the international humanitarian, development and peace communities. Success depends on coordinated action that is flexible, inclusive, predictable, and transparent.

Successful coordination simplifies and improves the response of the participating agencies through ensuring access to information, reducing duplication of efforts, pooling costs, and facilitating partnerships. The coordination mechanisms should be open and easily accessible to anyone wishing to contribute. This implies that special attention may have to be paid to local actors, such as volunteers, or to actors whose primary operations are not geared towards improving lives of forcibly displaced, such as the private sector. These actors may require tailored approaches to ensure that the overall response fully benefits from their important contributions.

Effective coordination takes place when stakeholders are and feel genuinely involved, seeing their most valued initiatives benefitting from the support and resources of partners, and seeing how they themselves can contribute to good initiatives of others within a system of shared goals and wins. From this perspective the coordinator is more of a facilitator than a leader, enabling one common response.

Coordination is an action performed by all participating partners. In an effective coordination environment it exists only as an active verb: we all coordinate, and no-one is (passively) coordinated.

Set-ups where all partners actively coordinate are predictable systems that partners know and can include in their planning processes. Coordination should not be seen as an additional task or as a wild-card that come in to force changes to pre-existing plans. To avoid this the direction of the response should be predictable and known to all involved.

This all depends on a transparent and open process where all parties to the coordination are genuinely involved and smaller actors can have their voice heard and appreciated. Good ideas and initiatives can come from any actor and successful coordination is transparent and open. It does not involve larger or better funded partners deciding in secret amongst themselves.

Coordination, like many such support functions, can at times be taken for granted, and are most easily noticed when improvements are needed. Some question the continued priority of investments in coordination structures where information flows effectively, operational initiatives are jointly planned and implemented, where the various actors share a common situational and operational understanding of needs and priorities. Yet such investments are often the very reason why the overall response is successful and such a situation is likely to speak to the competencies of the coordinators.

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TOPIC 1: FUNDAMENTALS OF COORDINATION*

There is a fundamental differentiation in the coordination landscape between refugee and non-refugee situations. These are coordinated using the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM), and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Cluster Approach, respectively. Module 3 will explore the coordination landscape in more detail, including mixed situations involving both refugees and IDPs. Both the RCM and the Cluster Approach required close coordination with the United Nations Development System and Peace actors to ensure full complementarity.

1.1 UNHCR and Coordination

While both refugees and IDPs are forced to flee their homes, there are important differences between the legal rights of these two groups of persons, and this translates into two separate coordination systems. Below are key drivers for why the international community has recognised refugees as a category requiring dedicated approaches.

- International law and practice address refugee and internal displacement emergencies differently.

- Refugees are not citizens of the country of asylum and therefore, have specific protection needs. They often have no or very limited access to services, material assistance, adequate housing, health care, education and employment opportunities and are sometimes restricted in movement (for example, confined to a camp), hence the status of being a refugee is a vulnerability in itself.

- The outflow of refugees across international borders creates an emergency situation with regional dimensions, specific political sensitivities and obligations of governments under international law, and important long-term implications.

- In times of national emergency, such as situations where persons are displaced both within a country and across borders it is a tendency for the natural authorities to prioritize their own citizens. It has been found necessary to have an international structure complementing the focus on nationals to uphold the rights and solutions for refugees.

* The different coordination models will be discussed in depth in later modules.

UNHCR's mandate puts the Agency at the centre of the system for refugee response, with leading and coordinating relief efforts for refugees a core responsibility. The Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) ensures predictable and transparent inter-agency protection and assistance under the leadership of UNHCR. The RCM can be adopted to the specific situation on the ground and supports international protection through advocacy and access to basic services that meet global humanitarian standards. It facilitates inclusive strategic planning, information sharing, and emergency preparedness, and supports fundraising and resource mobilisation – where appropriate leading to dedicated appeals.

The UNHCR Statutes stipulate that the High Commissioner, through his Office, shall provide for the protection of refugees by:

- keeping in close touch with the Governments and inter-governmental organizations concerned (para. 8 (g)),

- establishing contact in such manner as he may think best with private organizations dealing with refugee questions (para. 8 (h)),

- facilitating the co-ordination of the efforts of private organizations concerned with the welfare of refugees (para. 8 (i)),

- the High Commissioner may invite the co-operation of the various specialized agencies (para. 12), and

- the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General shall make appropriate arrangements for liaison and consultation on matters of mutual interest (para. 17).

In contrast, other forms of displacement, from conflict-induced internally displaced persons to persons forced to flee natural disasters and other forms of displacement (IDPs) as well as non-displacement related humanitarian crises have not been mandated to one specific organisation. These situations are hence discussed and coordinated through the IASC under leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC). UNHCR is a full member of the IASC, contributes to the response alongside partners and is responsible for leading the coordination of the Global Protection Cluster and co-leads the Global Shelter Cluster, and the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster in conflict-induced emergencies. UNHCR remains committed to protection and solutions for persons of concern across the spectrum of forced displacement, regardless of coordination structure or the primacy of UNHCR in the response. In the context of mixed situations which involve refugees, the mandate, responsibilities and accountability of the High Commissioner and his Office remain unchanged.

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1.2 Centrality of Protection

Since the 1990s, protection has evolved from being the concern of a handful of specialised agencies – including UNHCR – to being a key component of humanitarian action. After the tragedies in Rwanda and the Balkans, humanitarian actors understood that it is not enough to simply deliver assistance: it is also important to promote the safety, dignity and rights of individuals and groups of people affected by conflict, crisis and displacement.

Since 2005, with the Humanitarian Reform process, and through the subsequent implementation of the Transformative Agenda in 2011, humanitarian action has become increasingly professionalised. This is matched by trends in the overall protection environment. Displacement is at unprecedented levels, yet solutions are elusive for most persons who are forced to flee. In the meantime, the complexity of emergencies increased with a variety of actors partaking in conflicts. Actors whose behaviour goes against basic human rights and humanitarian principles pose significant problems for humanitarian response in terms of access, engagement, and safety.

In addition, access to safe asylum has decreased in many regions. Some borders have been closed to those seeking protection from violence and abuse. For many refugees, there is no guarantee that their right to have an asylum claim processed in line with international law will be respected.

Linked to this are increases in mixed movements of people in which refugees and economic migrants are increasingly difficult to distinguish from one another. This creates challenges for governments, which must balance border management and humanitarian concerns. Yet it is crucial to differentiate between economic migrants and refugees or asylum-seekers.

These trends make it more difficult – but even more necessary – to ensure that protection remains at the centre of any humanitarian action.

Making protection central

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) has repeatedly emphasized the Centrality of Protection in humanitarian action, including the responsibility that Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) and Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) have for ensuring that protection is at the heart of humanitarian response. The IASC also set out some direction for how the Centrality of Protection should be put into practice and places the responsibility for doing so at field level with Humanitarian Coordinators, Humanitarian Country Teams, and Cluster Coordinators.

"Protection of all persons affected and at risk must inform humanitarian decision-making and response. It must be central to our preparedness efforts, as part of immediate and life-saving activities, and throughout the duration of humanitarian response and beyond.

In practical terms [the Centrality of Protection] means identifying who is at risk, how and why at the very outset of a crisis and thereafter, taking into account the specific vulnerabilities that underlie these risks, including those experienced by men, women, girls and boys, and groups such as internally displaced persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, and persons belonging to sexual and other minorities.

It means that HCs, HCTs and Clusters need to develop and implement a comprehensive protection strategy to address these risks and to prevent and stop the recurrence of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law – a strategy that clearly articulates and identifies the complementary roles and responsibilities among humanitarian actors to contribute to protection outcomes; that identifies and makes use of all available tools to effectively protect those affected by humanitarian crises; that takes into account the role and contribution of other relevant actors, such as peacekeeping and political missions and development actors, to achieve protection goals and develop durable solutions. These strategies must be regularly revised to reflect changing ircumstances, priorities and needs. Resources commensurate to the realization of these efforts must be mobilised.

It also means that HCs, HCTs and Clusters need to strengthen the collection, management and analysis of information to inform and adjust early warning, preparedness, response, recovery and policy efforts, and support strategic and coordinated advocacy, dialogue and humanitarian negotiations on behalf of persons affected and at risk, and in a manner that addresses the risks they face in conflict, violence and natural disasters. In this regard, the complementary roles, mandates and means of action of all relevant actors need to be recognized and reinforced.

In all undertakings, primary consideration will be given to our accountability to affected populations, to identify, understand and support their own protection measures. Different segments of affected populations need to be meaningfully engaged in all decisions and actions that have a direct impact on their well-being. A commitment to support national and local civil society in their important role to enhance the protection of persons affected and at risk is central to this endeavor.

At the field level, the responsibility for placing protection at the centre of international humanitarian action rests with Humanitarian Coordinators, Humanitarian Country Teams, and all Cluster Coordinators. Protection Clusters play a crucial role in supporting humanitarian actors to develop protection strategies, including to mainstream protection throughout all sectors and to coordinate specialised protection services for affected populations.

The Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action, Statement by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals, 2013 "

UNHCR, as the mandated agency for the protection of refugees and stateless people and a lead agency in conflict induced situations for three Clusters in situation involving internally displaced people, is obligated to work to ensure that protection is at the centre of the humanitarian response. This includes supporting the work of governments, assisting senior humanitarian leaders in field operations, and advocating for protection as a member of the HCT. Working jointly with and building capacity among our partners and engaging in discussions to ensure that the integration with development actors maintain a strong protection focus are also included here.

In refugee situations the responsibility of coordination and mainstreaming of protection in the response lies with UNHCR. The following model illustrates the responsibility for operationalising the Centrality of Protection at the various levels of coordination in a response to internal displacement.

Ensuring that a protection purpose runs through all stages of programming is not just a question of respecting international principles. It is also a way to maximise the overall impact and efficiency of our work. By understanding the risks people of concern face and the vulnerabilities and capacities that can exacerbate or mitigate these risks, we can make sure that activities target the right individuals and communities, improving prioritisation and ensuring it having the intended impact.

THE PROTECTION PYRAMID
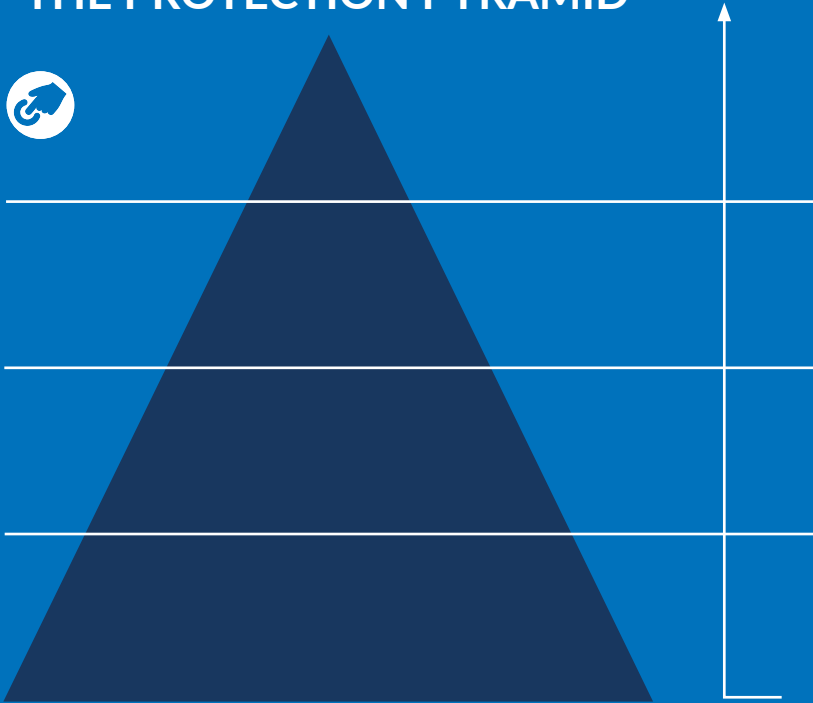
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1.3 The HC/HCT collective protection responsibilities

The HC/HCT is responsible for collective leadership and advocacy on protection in all crises of internal displacement, including natural disasters. Whilst the HC/HCT should be guided by the analysis of the Protection Cluster, as the top strategic body within an inter-agency response they have responsibilities that cannot be delegated to the cluster or a single agency.

The importance of HCTs fulfilling their responsibilities on protection was highlighted during the Sri Lanka crisis in 2009, which led to the Secretary General's 2012 Internal Review Panel and the agenda UN Human Rights up Front.
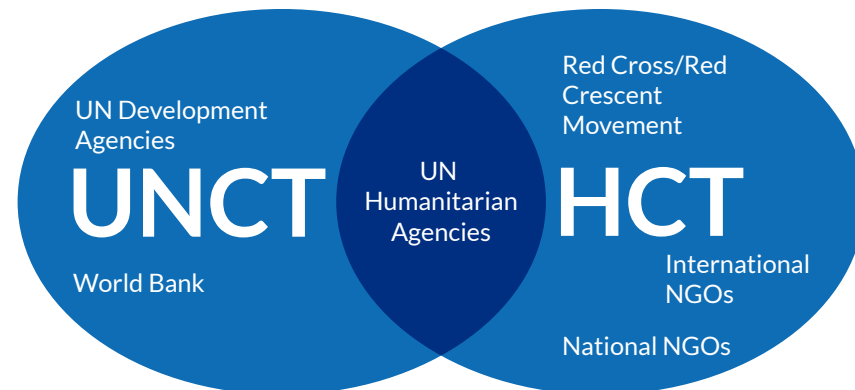
The HC/HCT has a particularly important role to provide clear direction across the response when faced with protection dilemmas. For example, in the Central African Republic, humanitarians faced the dilemma of whether to support relocation of a group of persons that was being attacked by another group trying to drive them out of a specific location.

If humanitarians supported evacuations, they risked inadvertently incentivising further attacks, thereby creating longer term challenges. If they did not support relocation, the group would likely face escalating attacks and atrocities. In such situations an agreed HC/HCT position is required.

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What's the difference between the HCT and UNCT?
The HCT addresses strategic humanitarian issues of the broader humanitarian community (UN and non-UN), while the UN Country Team (UNCT) encompasses all UN entities in the country. The HCT comprises the heads of select UN humanitarian agencies, and non-UN humanitarian organisations; the UNCT includes the heads of all UN Agencies. It should not be assumed that all members of the UNCT are HCT members. The UNCT and HCT coexist; they do not replace each other. The Resident Coordinator (RC) is responsible for ensuring complementarity between the two entities. The RC may also be designated as HC – in all countries with an assigned humanitarian coordinator the HC is the same person as the RC.

UN Development Agencies

UNCT

World Bank

UN Humanitarian Agencies

Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement

HCT

International NGOs

National NGOs

The Global Protection Cluster has issued a guidance note with practical steps expected from humanitarian coordinators and humanitarian country teams. This note emphasizes three obligatory actions related to the Centrality of Protection. Please read the three obligatory actions in the box below and match these with their corresponding description.

1. Put in place a Humanitarian Country Team Strategy and advocate on protection
2. Ensure that protection is prioritized in operations and mainstreamed
3. Work together to enhance protection of civilians

	1	2	3
The HC/HCT is responsible for ensuring that protection is prioritised in operations, mainstreamed across the clusters and that decisions are informed by strong protection analysis. Whilst it is not the role of the HCT to directly undertake these activities, it is responsible for ensuring that they happen.			
Based on the IASC Principals Statement, HCs and members of HCTs are expected to work together – as senior leaders – to address the 2 or 3 most critical protection concerns in-country. Simple and flexible HCT Protection Strategies can facilitate this process by clearly articulating the main priorities and responsibilities of HCT members. Regular engagement by the HCT in the implementation of the strategy is required to bring it to life. As the HC and HCT members often have access to influential stakeholders they are also well placed to engage in public and private advocacy on the critical protection issues.			
How to address concerns relating to the protection of civilians can be challenging for humanitarians. Proactive leadership and advocacy by HCs/HCTs is required with influential stakeholders, including the parties to the conflict. Humanitarians will also face dilemmas that can undermine the protection of civilians and fundamental principles. It is the responsibility of the HC/HCT to provide clear direction on how to address these issues..			

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
Question 1: Which of the below responsibilities are set out in the UNHCR Statutes? (Select all correct answers.)

a. Keeping in close touch with the Governments and inter-governmental organizations concerned.

b. Act as spokesperson for internally displaced persons and national organizations working in their interest.

c. Establishing contact in such manner as [the High Commissioner] may think best with private organizations dealing with refugee questions.

d. The High Commissioner may invite the co-operation of the various specialized agencies.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
Question 2: Which one is a formulation of the practical implementation of the Centrality of Protection?

a. Identify who is at risk, how, and why and considering the specific vulnerabilities that underlie these risks when developing and implementing any programming.

b. Ensure that the protection sector/cluster vets all programming at the planning stage.

c. Improve access to mobile legal clinics and other forms of legal counselling.

d. Identify the perpetrators of acts against persons of concern and reporting these to the appropriate authorities, paired with stringent follow-up to ensure action is being taken.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
Question 3: Why are refugees and internally displaced persons coordinated using different models?

a. There is a fundamental difference between citizens of a country and foreigners forced to seek asylum.

b. International law and practice cuts a clear distinction between the two.

c. Refugee situations have stronger regional implications.

d. All the above.

TOPIC 2: PARTNERSHIPS

Governments have a recognised central role and should be in the lead of addressing issues of forced displacement on their territory with the support of actors such as UNHCR. UNHCR's approach to coordination must be partner-inclusive and be based upon the Principles of Partnership, and lessons learnt from forums such as ExCom, the Annual Consultations with NGOs and global Cluster meetings. Important for UNHCR staff is to expand one's horizon beyond the partners engaged in UNHCR's implementation of its Operational Plan, looking how to make sure there is complementary to activities of operational partners.

2.1 Partnership and Principles

Global consultations and discussions on partnership have underscored the need for joint assessments, planning and analysis, as well as effective information-sharing, including a transparent dialogue at all levels. The specific areas of advocacy, capacity development for local actors, and partnership have been identified as providing opportunities for closer and more strategic collaboration. Any problems should be addressed at the field level, where regular and frank dialogue between UNHCR and partners is necessary to facilitate it.

The engagement of actors beyond those associated with the traditional humanitarian sphere is critical to mobilising an effective response and pursuing solutions to displacement and statelessness today. States, development and peace actors, the private sector, financial institutions, NGOs, academics, diasporas and civil society can all contribute to humanitarian responses by driving policy, influencing public opinion, or providing financial and material support.

The adoption by all United Nations Member States of the September 2016 New York Declaration recognised the profound contribution of host countries and communities and the contribution persons of concern can make given the right policies and support through global burden and responsibility sharing. The New York Declaration, and with it Annex I on the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) is an integral part of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). These fundamental documents underline the importance of expanding the range of partnerships and UNHCR's catalytic role underline the importance of national leadership wherever feasible, the expanded range of partnerships and UNHCR´s catalytic role.

> " A "whole-of-society" engagement: a comprehensive refugee response should involve a multi-stakeholder approach, including national and local authorities, international organizations, international financial institutions, regional organizations, regional coordination and partnership mechanisms, civil society partners, including faith-based organizations and academia, the private sector, media and refugees themselves. "
>
> — New York Declaration, Annex 1, paragraph 2

This has resulted in the range of partnerships broadening and put new demands on coordination. However, the basic premises for effective partnerships remain also in this renewed coordination landscape. Partnering with a broader range of actors allows us as a humanitarian community to improve our collective ability for strategic assessment, analysis, planning, and prioritisation. We strive to deliver together as this generates better results and allows for better accountability to persons of concern. Working with a broader range of partners also brings creativity and allows for innovative forms of partnership.

For parts of UNHCR this approach may require an adjustment of an outdated institutional-cultural view of coordination. In the past, the organisation has struggled to go beyond the transactional/funded perspective on partnership. This has especially been the case in some refugee operations where UNHCR has been the main holder of funds and many of the partners partaking in coordination have had partnership agreements.

The Global Humanitarian Platform, a forum bringing together the UN family, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, and NGOs, has identified five principles to guide partnership. These principles are applicable also in coordination and as a coordinator they should guide your approach to your partners and fellow sector/cluster members.

principles
of
partnership
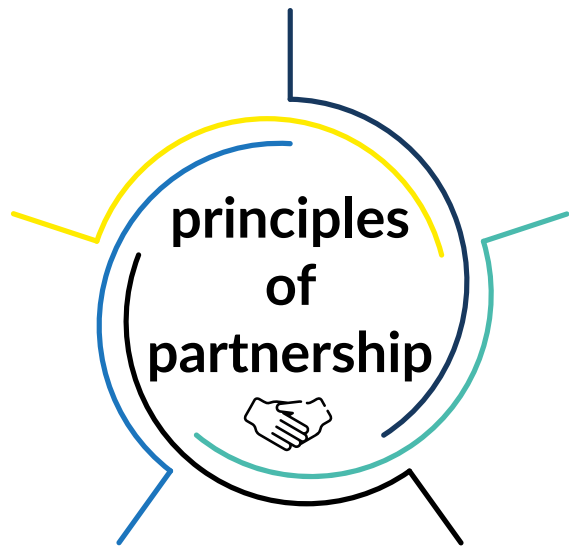
Nine fundamental principles of coordination

Building on the principles for partnership we can identify fundamental principles in which effective coordination is grounded. These can come in various formulations and the number of principles may vary. UNHCR has classically operated with the following nine principles.

9 fundamental principles of coordination

- The State's Primary Responsibility
- Centrality of Protection
- Partnership, inclusivity, and transparency
- Leadership
- A quality response, a prioritised strategy, and results
- Decentralized coordination
- Efficiency
- Flexible and dynamic mechanisms
- Professional coordination standards, quality assessment, and support

2.2 Responsibilities for Mainstreaming Partnership

Common approaches to coordinated assessment, planning and monitoring of performance require strengthening of our interaction and our coordination with all humanitarian, development and peace actors on the ground, including NGOs, in particular National NGOs.

Expansion of Partnership opportunities

As a coordinator you should map all the actors in the response and their expertise, resources, geographical and thematic coverage. This includes i.a. forcibly displaced communities, international NGOs, National NGOs, national and sub-regional governmental authorities, host communities, faith based actors, CBOs, universities, UN Agencies and the private sector.

It may at times be necessary for a coordinator to proactively engage partners to include them in the coordination. This may be national partners who either do not have the interest, capacity, or experience required to engage with the standard coordination structures. One example can be volunteer organisations created in response to an emergency, another is organisations that may be part of national civil society and who have pivoted (or should pivot) to contribute to the response. The volunteer and/ or national focus of these organisations may contribute to a feeling of being out of place in a coordination system perceived as designed to cater to international agencies and UN Agencies.

Often, the response is centred on capacity building and flexible coordination structures. You should explore with International NGOs and National NGOs their approaches to and resources for capacity-development. Sufficient financial resources and expertise should be identified within the coordination framework. Access to capacity building and other resources is a powerful incentive to motivate participation.

Another important step to support inclusiveness is promoting an open-door policy at the senior level and ensure that NGO partners have access to the senior coordinator and senior management. This can take place during or at the margins of scheduled coordination meetings, but when needed it is equally important to signal availability and interest in engaging partners on a bilateral basis. Inclusive coordinators engage and consult formally and informally on specific issues as they emerge. Furthermore, agencies that do not qualify to be full participants can be invited as observers as a capacity building measure in the long term.

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2.3 Resolve problems at the field level

Differences of opinion are natural, and a certain level of contrasting views is a necessary part of any creative process. Sometimes the large number of persons and the often high turnover of staff involved in the initial phase in a humanitarian response may lead to clashing perspectives. Organisations differ in their mandates, priorities, working methods, size, and experience and this is likely to affect how they approach coordination. Different perspectives may also be linked with the personal preferences or approaches of individuals involved in the response. During the course – and in particular during the workshop stage – we will explore the concept of how personality and preference impact on how we as human beings understand the world and other persons we interact with.

It is easier to pre-empt tensions in a group through establishing good and inclusive working methodologies than to resolve a conflict once it has erupted. Some decisions are likely to bring discomfort or to be controversial within the coordination structure. These should be discussed ahead of time, explained using transparent criteria. As much as possible information should be shared in plenary settings, open to all those concerned. However, there may be situations where sensitive information instead should be bilaterally conveyed to partners concerned in a respectful manner. As a coordinator, do not rely on bilateral communication over time and seek to bring the discussions back to plenary where possible. Prolonged bilateral discussions run the risk of being misunderstood by the other partners to the coordination and may in themselves be a cause of tension.

Good and transparent information-sharing and regular, inclusive coordination meetings to keep partners abreast of the situation are essential. The rationale for possible changes in strategies that affect partners must be outlined, discussed, and an effective problem resolution mechanism, open to all partners, should be established.

Issues should be addressed early and locally. This may require a coordinator to step outside his or her personal comfort zone to engage with a particular person or discussion. Supplementing the engagement with partners at formal meetings with regular informal conversations and exchanges is likely to be an important part of pre-empting conflict amongst partners to the coordination.

Such informal engagement also makes it easier to diffuse tensions and to de-escalate once they have arisen. Try to seek out and create informal channels also with partners whom you do not personally have a strong rapport. Doing so is likely to increase your mutual understanding, encourage wider participation, and pre-empt difficult situations. When engaging in informal discussions, remember that these are not decision-making forums. Any agreement of meeting of minds must be discussed and confirmed in a setting accessible to all partners to the coordination.

Once an issue has arisen it should as far as possible be addressed at the local level, i.e. at the sub-national level or within the group itself. Issues should not be escalated prior to exhausting local remedies. Doing so risks increasing the tension as colleagues rally in solidarity along organisational lines, either due to personal bonds or professional outlook. Ideally the coordinator should be able to mediate as a neutral arbiter, when the coordinator is part of the issue it may be useful to seek the assistance of the co-chair. Where the issue cannot be resolved locally the assistance of the national coordination structure should be sought, or alternatively that of the organisations' country representatives. Escalation to higher level, be that national or global, runs a risk of the issue being associated or conflated with other ongoing discussions.

SELF-REFLECTION:
How can the private sector be meaningfully included in coordination structures?

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CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
Question 1: There is an inherent conflict between the principles of equality of members in a partnership, the primary responsibility of states, and UNHCR as the lead agency for a refugee response. True or False?

TRUE

FALSE

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
Question 2: The coordinator has done his or her due diligence to expand partnerships if coordination meetings and documents are open and available to all actors who may want to participate.

a. True – All have equal access

b. True – Actors who cannot relate to the internationally agreed-to coordination structures do not have the necessary capacity to contribute.

c. False – Some partners may need targeted support in order to be able to participate and contribute

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
Question 3: What role could a coordinator play in preventing conflict within a group or team? (Select all correct answers.)

a. By clearly expressing his or her opinion on the contentious issue, thereby setting a clear direction for the group

b. By facilitating discussions and ensuring all partners have access to information

c. To act as a good office or neutral facilitator of dialogue

d. By addressing any issue early on

You have now completed the introductory Module of the Inter-Agency Coordination Course. We have looked at the difference between coordination in a refugee context and in a situation of internal displacement and discussed the Centrality of Protection in coordination.

The course is focused on attitudes, skills, and knowledge needed for successful coordination. This module has opened the discussion on the knowledge you will need and presented the several key skills. In the next Modules we will present the coordination landscape and look more in-depth at the frameworks guiding the coordination of various scenarios of forced displacement.

Upon having finished this module you should now be able to:

✓ Describe the basic difference between the coordination modalities in which UNHCR is engaged;

✓ Describe the overall framework within which coordination is taking place;

✓ Advocate for the Centrality of Protection and the principles of partnership and humanitarian coordination;

✓ Understand the need to coordinate with partners beyond UNHCR's own operational footprint and what kind of partners are key for a successful response.

FURTHER READING

- Leadership in Humanitarian Action: Handbook for the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, OCHA 2021
- DAC Recommendations on the Humanitarian, Development & Peace Nexus, OECD 2021
- The Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action, IASC 2013
- Briefing Note: Human Rights Up-Front, UN-Habitat 2014
- Centrality of Protection: Practical steps for Humanitarian Coordinators and Humanitarian Country Teams, GPC, STAIT, and IASC 2016
- The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants 2016, A/RES/71/1
- The principles of partnership, Global Humanitarian Platform, July 2007
- Global Compact on Refugees, December 2018

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGDM/AGD	Age, Gender, and Diversity Mainstreaming
CCCM	Camp Coordination, Camp Management
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
MIRA	Multi Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Needs Assessment
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCM	Refugee Coordination Model
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Teams
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees