Child Protection Area of Responsibility

CP AoR Capacity Assessment - Summary

November 2022

SUMMARY REPORT

1. Introduction

To improve the capacity strengthening support provided to CP AoRs, the Global Child Protection Area of Responsibility (CP AoR) intends to develop a Learning and Development (L&D) Strategy. The L&D Strategy will contribute to the effective implementation of the Global CP AoR Strategy (2020-2024). As preparation for the development of the L&D Strategy, an assessment of CP AoR capacity was undertaken which aimed to analyse existing CP AoR capacity, assess CP AoR Coordinator and Information Management Officer (IMO) competencies and map the existing learning landscape.

To inform the assessment, data was collected from a range of sources including people working in CP coordination and information management, people managing coordination team members and people with relevant knowledge and expertise working at a global level. The assessment comprised:

- A desk review of over 50 existing documents and sources,
- Analysis of existing data on CP AoR staffing gathered from four sources,
- Data collection through three online surveys from 65 respondents,
- Interviews and discussion groups with 43 people at global and field level.

The main findings of the three components of the assessment are presented below along with a summary of conclusions and recommendations for the Global CP AoR L&D Strategy.

2. CP AoR staffing landscape

To improve the capacity strengthening support provided to CP AoRs, the Global Child Protection

The first component of the assessment comprised an exploration of existing capacity and career pathways to identify any challenges and opportunities arising.

Current CP AoR capacity

Analysis of current CP AoR Capacity highlighted the following key findings:

Distribution of staff by level and role
- There are almost four times as many sub-national as national level coordination groups,
- There are more Coordinators than IMOs and few IMOs working at sub-national level indicating a gap in information management capacity.

Employing organization
- CP AoRs are mostly staffed by UNICEF employees, although a significant proportion of Coordinators are employed by INGOs and NNGOs. There are a small number of SBP deployees in coordination and information management roles,
- CP AoRs work with government counterparts in coordination roles in two out of every five contexts. IMO roles are not commonly filled by government counterparts although the function of information management may be undertaken within Government in different ways and to a greater or lesser extent depending on the circumstances.

Lines of supervision
- Amongst CP AoR staff employed by UNICEF, more are managed by a Chief of Section than by people in other roles in contrast to increasingly strong guidance from the GCCS,
- The exception is staff working as lead Coordinators at sub-national level who are most frequently managed by a Chief of Field Office.
- Coordinators in lead roles at national level are mostly managed by a Chief of Section, followed by a Chief of Emergency; a proportion are managed by the Representative (4%) or the Deputy Representative (4%).

Seniority of posts
- Most CP AoR staff are in National Officer (NO) posts,
- The most senior people in CP AoRs are Coordinators in lead roles, one in five of whom are in posts requiring seven or more years of professional experience on entry. The most senior Co-coordinators were in posts requiring five years or more professional experience at entry.
- IMOs are generally in more junior positions than those in coordination roles with a third in positions requiring five years of experience, a third in positions requiring two years of experience and a third in positions requiring no experience on entry,
- The majority of staff working at sub-national level are in posts requiring two years of professional experience at entry,

- Comparing levels of seniority of posts with guidance from the UNICEF-led/co-led clusters and AoR indicates that levels of seniority of posts in CP AoRs are lower than recommended at national level and for IMOs at sub-national level.

Dedicated capacity
- A high proportion of posts are filled by people who are double-hatting,
- Double-hatting affects both Coordinators and IMOs although there is a lower rate of double-hatting amongst Coordinators than IMOs,
- There are lower rates of double-hatting at national level than at sub-national level,
- Double-hatting was raised as a challenge in primary data collected in the assessment as well as in research conducted by the Global Cluster Coordination Section (GCCS) and ALNAP.

Vacancy rates
- At national level, in almost half of contexts where there is a CP AoR, there are capacity gaps with either the Coordinator or the IMO being part-time or missing.
- Vacancy rates are higher amongst IMOs than Coordinators at both national level and sub-national level where there are few IMOs.

Many of the challenges affecting CP AoR capacity also affect other UNICEF-led/co-led clusters and activities to address these have been identified in the GCCS Talent Management Strategy. The Global CP AoR has an opportunity to work collaboratively with the GCCS and other clusters to ensure CP AoRs have sufficient staff in dedicated posts, with reporting lines and levels of seniority that reflect current guidance and recommendations. In addition, considerations for the Global CP AoR to address through the L&D Strategy include the need to define how to effectively and efficiently provide and target capacity strengthening support to CP AoR staff and government counterparts working at all coordination levels and how to support staff working in double-hatting positions with the specific challenges they face.

CP AoR Coordinator and IMO career pathways

Analysis of typical career pathways for Coordinators and IMOs highlighted the following key findings:

Coordinator career pathways
- The majority of Coordinators have a Child Protection background,
- A primary route into coordination is through double-hatting,
- Some Coordinators reported challenges in progressing from sub-national to national level CP AoRs and from national to international postings and in moving back into CP roles after having worked in coordination.

IMO career pathways
- IMOs tend to have backgrounds related to functional competencies,
- IMOs commonly move into CP AoR roles without any CP experience,
- Some IMOs reported challenges in progressing from national postings to international postings or from information management roles to coordination roles.

Exploration of career pathways has highlighted the need for the Global CP AoR to define in the L&D Strategy how to ensure there are sufficient entry routes into coordination that are alternatives to double-hatting and how to support career progression for Coordinators and IMOs within CP AoRs, as well as onward progression, to increase retention of talent within CP AoRs.

3. CP AoR Coordinator and IMO competencies

The second component of the assessment was CP AoR Coordinators' and IMOs' perception of their competencies and effectiveness in role, their learning preferences and the effectiveness of the support they receive from their managers.

CP AoR Coordinator and IMO competencies
Analysis of Coordinators' and IMOs' confidence in their competencies, and the support provided by their Managers, highlighted the following key findings:

- Overall, Coordinators and IMOs were confident they had the competencies, skills and knowledge to do their jobs effectively,
- The competencies which Coordinators felt least confident in were the functional competencies and in particular the ability to apply these competencies in context and in complex situations,
- Competencies that were identified as being most important for Coordinators were being able to provide leadership, work with partners and to deal with challenging situations,
- The competencies IMOs felt least confident in were the sectoral competencies and in particular knowledge of CP principles, standards, concepts and tools,
- Competencies identified as being particularly important for IMOs were working with partners and providing leadership.

Role effectiveness
When asked to consider factors that would increase their role effectiveness, most Coordinators identified the need for having more resources as the most important factor for increasing their effectiveness. Other factors identified included having increased access to a network of peers, to learning materials and resources and to expert advice or support through a help desk.

When asked the same question, IMOs identified the need for increased access to learning materials, improved underlying knowledge and skills, increased access to a network of peers and increased access to expert advice or support through a help desk.

Coordinator and IMO learning preferences
Analysis of Coordinators' and IMO's learning preferences and practices highlighted the following:

- The preferred mode of delivery for learning opportunities amongst Coordinators and IMOs was face-to-face training followed by online learning (both facilitated and self-paced learning) and personalised one-to-one support (in the form of coaching or mentoring),

- There was a preference for learning in one's primary language,
- A key challenge in accessing learning was finding and protecting learning time without distractions or interruptions, with online learning being particularly affected,
- Coordinators and IMO were motivated to complete training by social factors of learning, such as discussions with peers, and by training that was convenient to complete,
- Amongst IMOs, there was also a preference for training that provided a certificate,
- Most Coordinators indicated they were aware of and used key resources for CP Coordination including the CPIE Coordination Handbook, the CPMS e-course and the CP AoR Starter pack.
- CP specific learning resources were less frequently used by IMOs than by Coordinators.

Manager support

Analysis of the support provided by a Manager highlighted the following findings:

Management of Coordinators
- The majority of Coordinators positively rated support provided by their manager although some noted there was a need for increased competence in management competencies,
- Some Managers noted that when managing Coordinators they faced challenges including lack of time and resources and having too many competing priorities,
- Lack of available funding was identified as a key issue impacting support for CP coordination,
- The majority of Managers showed an interest in materials to support their learning including more information about a Coordinators' tasks and responsibilities.

Management of IMOs by Coordinators
- Overall, IMOs were less positive about the management support they received from their Managers, than Coordinators were about the support they received from their Managers,
- Furthermore, Coordinators who managed IMOs were more positive about the support they provided than IMOs about the support they received,
- A particular issue highlighted by IMOs was lack of ability by the Coordinator who managed them to provide technical support related to the tasks and responsibilities of an IMO,
- Coordinators who managed IMOs noted lack of time and resources and competing priorities as challenges they faced.

While it may be appropriate to include some learning support for Managers in the L&D Strategy, for example, around Coordinator and IMO tasks and responsibilities, not all of the issues raised can be addressed through learning interventions. Some of the issues are highlighted in the Global CP AoR Strategy, such as the need for advocacy and fundraising for CP AoRs, as well as in the GCCS 'Talent Management Strategy' on which the Global CP AoR can collaborate.

4. Learning landscape

The final component of the assessment was an identification of existing capacity building initiatives and materials to identify relevant materials, key learning and opportunities for collaboration.

Global CP AoR learning and development offering
Capacity strengthening is an important component of the Global CP AoR strategy and the Global CP AoR works in collaboration with a number of other stakeholders to ensure that the capacity strengthening opportunities it offers are complementary in order to maximise effectiveness and avoid unnecessary duplication. Current learning support provided by the Global CP AoR includes:

- Induction for new Coordinators and IMOs,
- Face-to-face CPHA Coordination and IM training,
- Annual CP coordination retreat,
- Specialised Programme in Protection Coordination (SPPC),
- Humanitarian Coordination Learning Channel on Agora,
- CPiE course for Standby Partners led by UNICEF and UNHCR,
- Training on thematic areas in collaboration with the Alliance for CPHA and other partners (e.g. MHPSS, localization, case management coordination, coordination in mixed-settings, CP Minimum Standards, etc.)
- Semi-structured coaching and mentoring,
- Remote support for coordination teams including:
    - Helpdesks, regional focal points and thematic specialists,
    - Communities of practice,
    - Quarterly calls with Coordinators and IMOs,
    - HRP clinics,
    - On demand and periodic webinars and calls as required,
- In-country deployments (Field Support Team (including RRTs) and technical thematic specialists),
- Support for capacity strengthening of governments and partners at country level,
- CPiE Coordination Resources.

During the assessment, Coordinators and IMOs spoke highly of interventions they had participated in, and evaluations of different learning opportunities show positive responses from participants.

Learning resources, strategies and initiatives from actors relevant to the Global CP AoR
As the Global CP AoR has close linkages with a number of actors, the assessment explored key, relevant learning resources, strategies and talent management initiatives from these actors in order to inform the development of the Global CP AoR L&D Strategy.

Multiple possibilities for new or continued collaboration were identified in the assessment including:
- Close collaboration with the GCCS, Global Education Cluster (GEC), Global Nutrition Cluster (GNC) and Global WASH Cluster (GWC), for example, on the development of self-paced modules for Coordinators,
- Collaboration with Division of Human Resources and Humanitarian Evidence and Learning Section (HELS) on the provision of leadership and humanitarian leadership in coordination with the GCCS

and other clusters,

- Collaboration with the Alliance CPHA on learning materials around technical CPHA areas of importance to Coordinators and IMOs in CP AoRs,
- Collaboration with the GBV AoR as they develop their capacity building strategy, and continued collaboration with the GPC on the SPPC training.

In addition, interesting models for learning provision are offered by the short courses offered by GEC and GNC, the blended learning model used by Save the Children in their Child Protection in Emergencies training and the mentoring programmes offered by GNC and GWC.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The assessment identified ways in which the Global CP AoR can strengthen the learning support provided. These include opportunities for collaboration such as working with the GCCS and other UNICEF-led/co-led clusters on activities identified in the 'Talent Management Strategy', working closely with other actors including DHR and HELS, the GPC and AoRs and the Alliance for CPHA. In addition, there are issues which the Global CP AoR can address through the L&D Strategy.

Based on the assessment, it is recommended that the L&D Strategy should:
- Articulate how, and the extent to which, the Global CP AoR will engage with and provide capacity strengthening support to CP AoR staff of different profiles, employed by different organisations and at different coordination levels,
- Evaluate the effectiveness of learning interventions based on evidence of impact by creating a robust M&E framework,
- Empower staff to evaluate and strengthen their competencies by creating an online tool for self-assessment and linking L&D provision with existing appraisal mechanisms,
- Strengthen competency levels of Coordinators and IMOs in identified priority areas by offering a progressive suite of courses linked to the competency frameworks, incorporating online modules, blended learning programmes and on-the-job interventions, and by facilitating access to additional resources outside the core curriculum,
- Support career progression into and within CP AoRs by providing and facilitating learning support and opportunities for staff who want to enter and progress within CP AoRs,
- Address the challenges to CP AoRs posed by the high rates of double-hatting by providing learning support for people in double-hatting roles and their managers on challenges arising,
- Support national level Coordinators and coordination teams to strengthen the capacity of CP AoR teams and national and local coordination actors by developing a training package for use in-country and strengthening the facilitation skills of national level coordinators.

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Capacity Assessment Report