Using the PIM Matrix to identify and understand challenges in a Protection Monitoring System

Data Policy Officer in UNHCR's Global Data Service, Rachelle Cloutier, explains how she used the PIM Matrix to identify and understand challenges in a Protection Monitoring System.

Rachelle Cloutier is a Data Policy Officer in UNHCR's Global Data Service. Prior to her current role, she was Information Management Officer (Protection) in UNHCR HQ's Field Information and Coordination Support Section (FICSS), a role in which she provided technical field support and training on information management.

Diagnosing challenges with the existing protection monitoring system

One of Rachelle's first field support missions was to respond to a request from a country operation whose protection monitoring system was not sufficiently generating useful and useable information. The country team was collecting a wide range of information, but this was not producing the analytical trends reports that were needed to inform programming decisions and advocacy. According to Rachelle,

Although I was on mission to support on protection monitoring, it became apparent that many different types of information were being collected as part of 'protection monitoring'. There was a mixing of systems where [different information was] being put together under the rubric of protection monitoring, and therefore could not be teased apart.

Rachelle explains that this can sometimes result from different understandings of protection monitoring:

This is something we often come across. The assumption is often made that everyone knows what protection monitoring is and therefore, that we don't need to define it. Well, I find that this is often not the case. In my experience, if you get ten people in a room, you might get seven definitions of protection monitoring. So there is a need to be clear on what protection monitoring is and how it connects to, but is different from, other types of systems.

This situation was further complicated by the practical considerations associated with the context, which had significant access constraints:

There was a practical operational issue to explain why this was happening. Because access was limited, staff were rarely able to visit an area and they had to do everything at once, as part of the same field visit. So they would do protection monitoring, monitor programmes, conduct GBV awareness-raising, disseminate pamphlets, engage with communities, check on population figures, etc. Through that 'protection monitoring visit', they would do all these things. This made sense given the access restrictions, but the risk was that everything would

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get muddled and it would no longer be possible to connect the data and information back to its system. If you're going to do everything at once, you need to keep the different activities straight in your mind and straight in the data structure so you know, [for example that], 'this is what I'm doing for population data management' and 'that is what I'm doing for protection monitoring'.

Otherwise all the data comes together and it is just not possible to start sifting through it to identify the data points that belong to protection monitoring, i.e., those that need to [be] analysed on a regular basis to generate trends information that is to be reported in a product. I really did understand why and how they ended up doing all these activities during their visits, but as a result, protection monitoring was not really generating any tangible, actionable outputs. The protection monitoring data was being lost in the barrage of all the other information and activities that were being done during 'protection monitoring' visits.

Use of the PIM Matrix

With her country-level Information Management colleague, Rachelle organised day-long workshops with colleagues from the organisation's national and field offices. Discussions aimed to unpack and understand the challenges with the protection monitoring system and to identify the way forward to redesign it so it could generate the information they needed, based on a shared understanding of protection monitoring and its purpose. Rachelle used the PIM Matrix as the foundation for these discussions.

PROTECTION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT MATRIX

	POPULATION DATA	PROTECTION NEEDS ASSESSMENTS	PROTECTION MONITORING	CASE MANAGEMENT	PROTECTION RESPONSE MONITORING AND EVALUATION	SECURITY & SITUATIONAL AWARENESS	SECTORAL SYSTEMS / OTHER	COMMUNICATING WITH (in) AFFECTED COMMUNITIES
DEFINI-TION *Row can not be modified*	Population data systems record the number and characteristics, disaggregated by sex, age, demographics and diversity, of a population in a specific place and time period, for the purpose of programming effective prevention and response.	A data -collection exercise usually conducted at a single point in time to gain an understanding of the protection issues, availability of resources, sources of problems and their impact on the affected population ('snapshot'). This is done in order to identify protection needs, risks, and solutions, and to inform programme interventions and response activities that are complementary with positive community coping mechanisms. Protection needs assessment should be carried out periodically and after substantial changes in the context.	Protection monitoring is defined as 'systematically and regularly collecting, verifying and analyzing information over an extended period of time in order to identify violations of rights and protection risks for populations of concern for the purpose of informing effective responses.	Protection case management information systems support the provision of protection and/or targeted interventions to identified individuals or groups through the management of data – from case identification to case closure – related to a specific case.	Continuous and coordinated review of implementation of response to measure whether planned activities deliver the expected outputs and protection outcomes and impact, both positive and negative. Evaluation is distinct, but complements monitoring by asking questions around causal linkages, looking at intended and unintended results. Evaluation is not continuous, but rather periodic and targeted.	Security and incident systems that monitor both the affected population and the ability of humanitarian actors to physically and securely reach people affected by crisis. Such systems would make available information on the overall security situation, issues of humanitarian space and access (including the safety of staff), and other concerns. A key difference between these systems and protection monitoring is in this aspect of humanitarian access.	Sectoral IM Systems/ Other are information management systems that support assessment, monitoring and reporting on services, infrastructure, material, and physical support that enable legal and physical protection outcomes, but are not managed directly or solely by protection actors.	Communicating with(in) communities refers to communication between, among, and with communities and/or community members with the aim of supporting participation, decision-making, access to services, feedback/com-plaints, transparency, monitoring and evaluation, and leadership/com-munity capacities.
SUB-CATEGORY EXAMPLES	There are no sub-categories for this, there is only one system in this category - 'population data management'	• Rapid protection assessments • In-depth protection assessments • Specialized protection assessments • Coordinated needs assessments (joint, harmonized) • Uncoordinated assessments	• Legal, Material and Physical Protection Needs Monitoring • Detention Monitoring • Durable Solutions Monitoring • Housing, Land and Property Rights Monitoring • Return Monitoring • Border Monitoring • Child Protection Monitoring • Gender Based Violence Monitoring • Situation Monitoring	• Incident management • Assistance and service management • Registration and status determination case management • Provision of solutions (return, integration, resettlement) • Tracing and family reunification • Support for vulnerable individuals (children, women, persons with physical or mental disabilities, survivors of torture and gender based violence) • Fraud management systems • Human rights case management (includes urgent action requests) • Legal case management (includes HLP)	• Programme / Response/ Results monitoring • Process monitoring • Evaluation (summative, formative)	• Conflict analysis & assessments (eg./SitReps) • Situational monitoring & contextual analysis (social, political, economic analysis, incl. scenario building & contingency planning) • Security risk assessment & security incident reporting / updates, incl. hotspot mapping and mine and UXO surveys / assessments • Small arms & light weapons (SALW) assessment • Actor mapping (incl. parties to the conflict), areas of control of armed elements, locations, movements, numbers, configurations, clashes and other security incidents • Staff safety (attacks on or threats against staff) • Analysis / update on status of humanitarian or community infrastructure and physical access of humanitarian actors and/ or peacekeeping forces • Community safety assessment	• Health • WASH • Core Relief Items / Material Assistance • Food Security • Shelter • Education • Livelihoods • Camp Coordination and Camp Management	**a. Humanitarian systems (owned and operated by humanitarians)** • Accountability humanitarian activities: complaints and feedback, services, activities • Fraud reporting and tracking systems (humanitarians' or community members') • General information systems (on humanitarian objectives or activities) • Security & safety systems (operated by humanitarians or governments) **b. Community systems (owned and operated by the community)** • Facebook, Twitter, etc. • Misc. apps developed by the community, for community or individual decision-making

Extract from the PIM Matrix

The PIM Matrix was a useful way to understand protection monitoring, but also to situate it within the context of other systems, which perhaps in other contexts would have been really distinct. I did a presentation on the PIM Matrix to explain the different analytical outputs of each PIM category and used that as a way to build a shared understanding of protection monitoring. With that hook, I was able to explain the root causes of some of the challenges that colleagues had raised regarding their protection monitoring system.

With the PIM Matrix, we could see that one problem was that many different systems had been subsumed under the rubric of 'protection monitoring'. As a result, the "protection monitoring" system was actually a mix of protection monitoring, CwC [Communicating with Communities], response monitoring, and population data management. There was a lot of data, but no one could sort, organise and analyse it because there was no clarity about which data belonged where (to which system), who was meant to use it, and for which purpose. It was therefore unsurprising that the small sub-set of protection data that was being collected could not be analysed on a regular basis to generate trends information about the protection environment.

I think that one of the great things with the PIM Matrix is that it provides clarity about which system does what and the outputs it generates. For example, if you don't need trends information, you don't need to do protection monitoring. If you want to monitor your programmes, protection monitoring can be one of the information sources, but this is not its main purpose.

Defining the purpose of the protection monitoring system

The work with the PIM Conceptual Framework helped the operation define the purpose of the protection monitoring system. Rachelle explains:

The work with the PIM Matrix helped colleagues understand that each system has a defined purpose and generates specific information outputs. We were then able to start untangling the systems and defining the purposes and information needs for each. On this basis, the redesigned protection monitoring system was more likely to be fit-for-purpose and generate useful information to support evidence-informed decisions about programmes and advocacy.

One of the things that really comes clear in my mind with this [experience] is how PIM helps colleagues to think through why they are collecting data, thanks to that first step [in the PIM Process] of defining the purpose and information needs.

A few months after my mission, the operation shared the new SOPs for the redesigned protection monitoring system. They had done a great job in systematically documenting all the design elements. The document became an example of good practice that I was [then able to share] with others.

PIM Highlights

- Used the PIM Matrix to diagnose the root causes of challenges in an existing PMS (PIM Matrix)

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