Using the PIM Principles in Trainings with Sectoral Staff

Data Policy Officer in UNHCR's Global Data Service, Rachelle Cloutier explains how she used the PIM Principles in trainings with sectoral staff.

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.

Data Webinar series for Education staff

As part of her work on capacity building, Rachelle designed and delivered a training for education officers on data and information management, in collaboration with HQ colleagues in the Global Data Service and in the Education Unit.

Due to the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the training was held as a webinar series, with three 90-minute webinars for UNHCR staff and partner organisations. The training was designed to focus on three key topics in data work: data collection, data analysis, and data sharing (one webinar per topic).

As explained by Rachelle,

This was not a PIM training for education staff, but I still brought in PIM because it is always useful!

Image from UNHCR, Refugee Education 2030: A Strategy for Refugee Education, ©UNHCR/Ariadne Kypriadi

Referencing the PIM Process

Rachelle started each webinar by referencing the PIM Process:

We were looking at data collection, data analysis, and data sharing, so we started each webinar with the PIM Process to anchor those moments in the broader sequence of the information management process. For example, data collection only makes sense if it is framed within a wider discussion that starts with purpose and information needs, as this is what guides decisions about how to approach analysis and which analytical outputs are needed.

PIM Protection Information Management

PIM Principles as a common thread in all webinars

Rachelle also used the PIM Principles as a common thread in each webinar to highlight how the PIM Principles guide these data activities in practical ways:

Each webinar had a section on PIM Principles in order to create a moment of reflection on what it would look like in practice to do, for example, data collection with a 'do no harm' approach.

We worked with the education colleagues in HQ with whom we were delivering the webinars to prepare some practical examples ahead of time, so these could be shared with participants.

For example, for the webinar on data sharing, the case study was about the sensitivities of sharing exam results of refugee children in a host country with the Department of Education in the country of origin, and how information could be shared in a protection sensitive way, with a 'do no harm' approach. So each webinar had a few examples of what it means in practice to do data collection, data analysis, and data sharing in a principled way.

The 'PIM Principles in Action' [guidance note] also provided good examples to get the conversation going, and participants were then able to identify more specific examples from their work in education.

Image from UNHCR, Refugee Education 2030: A Strategy for Refugee Education, ©UNHCR/Ariadne Kypriadi

I really wanted this training to emphasise principled approaches. It is so important to bring the ethics of humanitarian principles into our work on data. These not only apply in our approach to how we provide assistance and how we find solutions; they are also part and parcel of our data work. PIM Principles are a way to articulate this in a practical and non-technical way that is easily accessible.

Having the PIM Principles as a constant in all three webinars allowed us to keep them at the forefront of discussions on data and to prompt active reflection about how they need to guide our everyday practice: not just what we do, but also why we should do it (or not), how we do it, and who we do it with.

PIM Highlights

- Used the PIM Principles and the resource 'PIM Principles in Action' to encourage and guide discussion on principled approaches to data work by sectoral colleagues (PIM Principles)
- Used PIM Process to anchor trainings on data collection, data analysis, and data sharing in the broader information management process (PIM Process).

PIM Protection Information Management