**Minutes of IM Network Meeting: 6th February 2019**

Chair: Shon Campbell, MIMU Manager.

Participants: PSF, Mercy Corps, EWMI, WWF, HPA, IPA, PIN, NPA, SPF, IOM, OCHA, INGO Forum, WHO, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, MSF-CH,

UNDP, DFID, Phandeeyar, American Red Cross, World Vision, MIMU

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|  | **Issues discussed** |
|  | **With the increasing attention to the DHP “nexus”, and the challenges in operationalizing this concept, this meeting aims to explore approaches to integrating a peace focus in M&E,** and the lessons from peace-focused programmes for humanitarian and development activities. Specifically, we will be looking at how to integrate monitoring of conflict sensitivity and other peace-related aspects in humanitarian and development activities and to share experience of useful approaches, tools and resources. |
|  | **Learning from Peacebuilding M&E:**  Kyaw Zayar Aung, Country M&E Manager of Mercy Corps presented the Outcomes of the Cross-Learning Workshop for Peacebuilding M&E:  Mercy Corps arranged a 3-day workshop with 12 local CSOs, Paung Sie Facility (PSF) and Search for Common Ground (SFCG) in January to explore solutions to the challenges found in M&E. The workshop was supported by Alliance for Peace Building & Peace Evaluation Consortium. The workshop was based on a pre-assessment with Mercy Corps partners and aimed to:   * Encourage a culture of shared reflection and openness related to challenges and successes in designing and measuring peacebuilding programming in the Myanmar context; * Work together to build on successes and come up with solutions to address persistent challenges; * Improve the capacity of organizations to monitor and evaluate their programs.   The workshop identified key challenges faced by the CSOs in monitoring peace-related initiatives:   * Measuring change related to peace and conflict is difficult – change is longer term and intangible and often difficult to measure; programme environments may be complex and fragile, making it difficult to get conflict sensitive data from communities; access to and sensitivity of data; * Organisational and operational limitations – high staff turnover in CSOs makes it difficult to maintain skilled and experienced capacity; limited budget for M&E makes it difficult to maintain dedicated staff for this purpose and to find adequately skilled external resource persons capacity; * General lack of M&E capacity – the need to outsource limits the possible use of the findings and data from evaluations; poor programme design and analysis due to limited capacity. * Donor-related dynamics – some donors ask agencies to change their mandate to be closer to the donor priority, making it difficult for the CSO to align their own indicators to the donor requirements; donor-required indicators may also be less applicable to the field situation; donor emphasis on success/changes and less on learning; short programme timeframes making it difficult to see the changes at community level.   Suggested next steps  Short term:   * Share recommendations with donors, organisations, and build relationships among organisations to learn from one another * Set up resource sharing tools – google drive, powerpoints, sample tools and templates. MIMU noted that the website can also be used for this purpose. * Share online resources such as DM&E for Peace, Online resource library, UNDP conflict sensitive indicators, Online Field Guide   Long term:   * Create spaces for ongoing sharing on peacebuilding M&E (e.g. Inter-Communal Harmony Working Group) * Pursue funding for more capacity building |
|  | **An approach to integrating measurement of peace-impacts:**  Presentation by Craig Valters, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Manager of Paung Sie Facility  Key challenges to MEL   * Programme types - MEL is challenging for any complex programmes, but there are specific difficulties for peace-specific activities * Not asking the right questions - we often start with what we want to measure instead of what we need to know to support decision-making processes. It’s important to start with the *questions* we want to answer (not indicators) and to gather robust evidence to better understand and explain change processes. * MEL systems - MEL seeks to learn from experience within and across agencies, however each agency has its own systems and processes which are not necessarily used by partners. Agencies may also be cautious around sharing information given its sensitivity, making it harder to get the bigger picture and to learn from our results. * Getting the right peace measure - commonly used Output and Outcome measures (e.g. mediators trained, disputes resolved, % perception change of communities, number of instances of conflict) may be useful in managing programmes or understanding the context but not in letting us know if our interventions are making a positive difference. This requires a deeper qualitative understanding. * Short timeframes – Short term programme timeframes bring other challenges – pushing to resolve disputes in project timeframes for example may be too fast and counterproductive. Peace is a long-term endeavour which requires a long-term approach to MEL.   A suggested way forward:  1. Start with the right MEL principles   * Integrate MEL with programme management, by ensuring new information influences strategic and operational decision-making * Allow space for critical reflection and adjustments to the project direction * Communicate in a simple and jargon free way * Focus on contribution more than attribution, by acknowledging ‘we’ are often only one part of how change happens * Treat accountability and learning as inseparable, by holding programmes to account for how they learn and adapt   2. Have a clear theory of change grounded in evidence   * Ensure the programme is based on a plausible, well-evidenced theory of change. Avoid being overly optimistic. * Include an ongoing process of critical reflection with inputs from critical friends to learn, update theories of what is changing and how, and revising project direction where needed.   Step 3. Using appropriate MEL methods   * Monitoring: Looking at process & quality of outputs & alignment with theory of change; consider ‘everyday peace’ indicators * Evaluation: Theory based evaluation for fund level activities; for projects, data collection based on outcome harvesting[[1]](#footnote-1) or similar. * Learning: Support national skills; peer learning & mentoring; networks and communities of practice.   What this means in practice: taking the example of measuring peace-impacts for Community Conflict Resolution programmes   * What to measure * Programme data: disaggregated info; number & type disputes resolved; number of mediators trained. * Test assumptions: on who is participating, perceptions of fairness, analysis of who/what is contributing, who/what is affected by the change (e.g. mediator legitimacy; demonstration effect of disputes resolved; use of other mechanisms; perceptions of fairness by disputants). * How to measure * Partner reporting; monitoring visits * Qualitative research; perception surveys * Outcome harvesting, Most Significant Change, contribution analysis of who/what is contributing to the change   PSF is focusing on how to use their MEL information to influence decision-making, and work with partners to do this in a conflict sensitive way, ensuring learning while keeping people safe. |
|  | **Introducing peace-focused monitoring to humanitarian and development activities**  Presentation by Kelly Flynn, Head of Programmes, Joint Peace Fund (JPF).  The JPF provides technical support to key stakeholders in the peace process and works with a variety of different stakeholders. A few observations from experience:   * Peace building is not making peace - many peacebuilding programmes have been started in Myanmar but the country is still far from peace. It’s important to consider terminologies and what they really mean. Here in Myanmar we have no comprehensive set of agreed terminologies and definitions around peace-building – this is perhaps an opportunity to make advances on this; * Relationships are central – success in peace-programming will be based on relationships, however it’s also important to recognise that asymmetrical conflict in Myanmar has created asymmetrical peace – this needs to be considered in programme design, recognising the asymmetrical aspects of parties and differing understandings of communities. Access to skills, advice, information, resources is not equal for all people at the table, and the understanding of peace processes at ground level may be quite different than at other levels; * Risk is a central factor, particularly with the challenging and reducing space for civil society; monitoring of peace-related activities and the data gathered can be seen as sensitive and political; now as we come into an election cycle these sensitivities will be still greater. * Peace building is not an add-on indicator to a log frame – it’s challenging, technical and highly political and not straightforward to add this onto existing activities. It’s also important to understand the vertical or horizontal nature of peace-related activities * Work with official stakeholders and getting data from them is also challenging – partly because of their availability and also because it is a process which takes time and engagement; * Sometimes a break in a process is not a bad thing – a period of inertia and deadlock can sometimes help different approaches to rise to the fore; |
|  | **Discussion based on the presentations**  Is a good development approach sufficient to understand peace-related impacts? Can peace-impacts be captured in logframe-led approaches?   * There are different understandings of what “good development practice” is. Kelly noted her preference for the term “Responsible programming” to reflect additional considerations beyond what is usually considered – for example, discussions with donors to ensure realistic approaches. * A development framework does not necessarily work for peace because peace-building work is not a beneficiary-driven type of activity. Instead it is about confidence, trust and relationship-building to agree the areas that need to be addressed and monitored - this is why it is challenging to try to add a peace-focus to a beneficiary-driven project. Peace-focused programming also requires strong analysis with an honest view of assumptions and ways to mitigate risks. This includes sensitivities on how data is collected as well as what data. * Effective monitoring of peace-related aspects is different than the focus on theories of change and pointed evaluation questions which are often used in beneficiary-focused programme activities. An interesting example is the innovative work being done by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue on use of peer-to-peer methods for M&E of mediation activities. * Approaches need to be mixed with downstream/upstream and horizontal and vertical approaches, and to think more broadly, including also more qualitative measures of change; * Ensure investment and resources dedicated to M&E including for dedicated staffing; * Walk alongside those working with communities and proposal writers.   How to incorporate considerations of gender?   * It is good to include women, peace and security indicators but important not to overcommit to particular outcomes at the outset. The risk is that efforts will be diverted to confirming an outcome instead of understanding what is really happening and not having useful information as a result. It is better to take a progressive learning approach – start smaller to define the approaches which can work. * There is also the challenge of emphasising gender for particular groups when there are requirements on numbers of women/girls impacted and ignoring the position of women/girls in a broader society.   What about Rights-based approaches? These are rarely mentioned in discussions on peace-related programming?   * Could rights-based programming approaches also be helpful in broadening the monitoring approaches? At a global level, Save the Children UK had developed an approach to integrate rights-based programming in programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. While not specific to peace-related activities or the peace-impacts of humanitarian and development programmes, it could perhaps be helpful in thinking through the monitoring framework. The approach is based on five dimensions of change that can be applied at the time of monitoring/evaluating a programme, and incorporated into programme design and planning. It would normally begin with a strong analysis to determine which rights the programme can focus on. Indicators are aligned to capture (1) Changes in the lives of beneficiaries/focus areas, (2) Changes in policies and practice, (3) Changes in constituencies of support, (4) Changes non-discrimination and (5) Changes in participation. * A challenge in the Myanmar context is that organisations may not have prior experience in the areas they are now working in and had little time to establish community-developed indicators – these are better than generic indicators as communities can then determine what success should look like. In doing this, it’s also important to recognise that qualitative data collection takes considerable time and skill and requires careful analysis of what the community is telling you to bring out the required information. |

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|  | **Updates on national initiatives (statistics and spatial data)**    **National Indicator Framework consultations** – the 12 Government-led task teams met for a second round of consultations in November/December seeking to refine and finalise the National Indicator Framework for the MSDP monitoring. This second round sought to ensure around half being ccountry specific indicators and half as SDGs indicators (there were less SDG-specific indicators in the first round), and to ensure a high level of strategic level indicators (outcome and impact level indicators). The new draft is also now stronger in mainstreaming the indicators related to environmental issues. The draft National Indicator Framework will go for higher level approval after which metadata will be developed to clarify systems of measurement.  **OECD case studies mission** – Myanmar visit in November 2018 focusing on SDG 4 (education) and SDG 6 (water and sanitation). The initiative aims to foster exchange and drive collective learning among development cooperation partners through capacity building, promoting collaboration and data sharing, SDG data measurement, quality and harmonisation, and promoting the use of SDG data for dialogue and mutual accountability.  **National Strategy for the Development of Education Statistics** – The NSDES draft document is at a final stage and ensuring alignment with the SDGs and the MSDP. UNESCO is continuing support to MoE on the EMIS system and the online platform that will allow various stakeholders to access data.  **CSO/Central Statistics Organisation** – DG Dr Wah Wah Maung is moving to the Pensions Department of the Ministry of Planning and Finance and the new DG is U San Myint, previously DG of the National Archive Department. A number of agencies are working with CSO on various initiatives - IMF has provided training on the Consumer Price index and technical assistance for expansion of the commodity basket. UNFPA is also working with CSO on a Data Harmonisation project as one of the recommendations in the NSDS / National Strategy for development of Statistics to standardise concepts, categories, classifications, data processing output formats and dissemination formats of common indicators produced by the major data producing departments, i.e. population census (DoP), Myanmar Living Conditions Survey and Multi-indicator Cluster Survey (CSO), Myanmar Demographic Health Survey (MoHS), Disability Survey (DSW) and DoL.  **Intercensal Census** – planned by DoP in 2019/2020 if resources are available. |
|  | **Updates on cluster/sector/agency initiatives**  **GIS Working Group:** The GIS Working Group is a subgroup of the IM Network and is now meeting quarterly rather than monthly with a focus on particular themes, aiming to share data, tools, data standards and ongoing projects to explore possible synergies. The recent GIS WG in January focused on available information and initiatives on the Road Network. Information is collected by the Dept of Highways which has a detailed series if categories, as well as several other govt depts. (Survey Dept, Dept of Rural Road Construction and Dept of Rural Development), as well as by Open Street Map. Lack of detailed definitions is a challenge. Yangon technological University also presented their analysis of road traffic in Yangon using Big Data (MPT phone use).  **IOM:** Extended DRR project areas in Rakhine  **Innovations for Poverty Action:** Focus on research and can support other agencies.  **Health Poverty Action:** Focus on health and humanitarian response. Currently working with Local stakeholder, IRRC in NGCA in Kachin for capacity building and strengthen the local coordination, communication and M&E network.  **UNHCR:** CCCM cluster – camp profiling Round 8 in Kachin and N Shan has been completed covering 145 camps of the 179 IDP locations in Kachin and N Shan. Data was collected using a Kobo-based mobile data collection system and is being shared on a Power BI Dashboard with CCCM partners and through the MIMU website.  **OCHA:** Released CCCM IDP site map for Kachin, Shan and Shan for December. Humanitarian Access snapshot also released for Rakhine as well as new displacement in N Shan area.  **DFID:** Supporting CSO work with WB, starting new work with CSO support to CSO on monitoring the SDGs  **MSF- Swiss** will have a GIS expert focused on Naga.  **WHO:** Launching EWARS/Early Warning and Response System for Rakhine. This involves real time data entry and real time dashboard  **INGO Forum:** Facilitating consultation with NGOs on World Bank Systemic country diagnostic  **Phandeeyar:** Open Devt Myanmar platform which includes datasets that can be uploaded and dashboards. Currently developing an election dashboard. New data collaboratives platform focusing on the demand side - listen for the demand side – project-based data needs – matching up data providers and those needing the data.  **UN Habitat:** Hydropower project and LIFT projects under implementation. Hlaingtharyar project with JICA support. Govt plan to celebrate World Water Day 5-6 March.  **East West Management Institute:** Implementing Open Development Myanmar with Phandeeyar. Also focus on land information management system to support Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation in monitoring and tracking land allocation to small holding farmers  **MIMU:**  National Coding system: The system for the national coding has been developed with GAD and other key data producing ministers, and will be hosted in an Access database. MIMU has been working on the database and manuals to support use of the system, and has provided initial training to key staff who will use the system. The database will initially be populated with the 2015 Place codes.  School mapping initiative (MIMU, UNESCO, MoE) – coordinates have been collected for over 49,000 schools and education training institutions across the country through this initiative. School coordinates will now be verified at TS level and the school mapping platform integrated with the new Education Management Information System being developed by MoE.  Village mapping:  Capacity building/training: 300 persons received MIMU technical training in 2018 (49% female) including many from government departments. Courses have included data management, spatial data management and information management. The distance Excel training for Ayeyarwady-based participants is now being completed and we are considering the next focus area (starting in June 2019). The next 3-day IM Network training will be held in May and priority will be given to IM Network members.  Surveys and Assessments: The MIMU Assessment Tracking currently includes 1158 assessments reported by close to 100 agencies. Information on assessments and publications can be received at any time and the Assessment dashboard on the MIMU website is frequently updated.  MIMU 3W: This initiative is actually a 5W in including Who is doing What, Where and When, as well as Who (project focus) for Rakhine, Kachin and Northern Shan-based activities. The new round of data collection will start from Tuesday 12 February with a deadline of March 5th for agency inputs. 3W data and some of the main products should be available before Thingyan. A 3W support Session has been arranged by the INGO Forum on Thursday 7 February for interested agencies (ActionAid office).  Seminar on partnerships with Academics: Building on the successful three-day Symposium “Building Capacity for Evolving Geo-spatial Needs in Myanmar” (May18) which involved 27 universities providing courses in GIS-related disciplines, MIMU is arranging a two-day seminar for around 70 persons from selected universities to explore approaches to partnerships that could be leveraged to build capacity of GIS professionals, others in ancillary disciplines requiring GIS skills, and teachers/lecturers in GIS-related fields. It will also include interventions from academics from the Netherlands, AIT in Bangkok, and Vietnam as well as some from government departments in Myanmar and UNITAR.  Vulnerability Study: The MIMU Manager is available to make further presentations on the countrywide township-level vulnerability study undertaken by MIMU and HARP-F, Vulnerability in Myanmar: A secondary review of needs, coverage and gaps. |
|  | **Next Meeting:** The next scheduled IM Network meeting to be confirmed. |

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1. Outcome Harvesting collects evidence of what has changed (“outcomes”) and then works backwards to determine whether and how an intervention has contributed to these changes. The outcome(s) can be positive or negative, intended or unintended, direct or indirect, but illustrate a connection between the intervention and the outcomes. It is particularly useful in complex situations when outcomes, and even, inputs, activities and outputs, are not sufficiently specific or measurable at the time of planning an intervention. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)