INSPIRED

By People in Need

3 | NOV 2018

Photo: Regis Defurnaux

ACCOUNTABILITY

ETHIOPIA:
Evolution of the Complaint Response Mechanism

GEORGIA:
Participatory rural community development

SYRIA:
Whose opinion matters most? Beneficiary Feedback Mechanisms

5 ways to use INSPIRED

1. Take it to your next donor or partner meeting

Every issue outlines important topic connected to PIN relief and development work. Filled of varied examples of our programming, donors and partners can easily find something relevant and interesting to read. Encourage them to take a copy.

2. Display it at events and conferences with partners and stakeholders

With smart graphics and readable but informative content, Inspired is a great material to have to hand when discussing PIN's work and experience globally. Again, encourage people to take a copy for their office or organisation.

3. Introduce and circulate it at your next all-staff meeting

The primary audience of the magazine is PIN. Full of quotes and contributions by our staff, new tools and approaches, this magazine is for our us as much as anyone else. Take a minute at the next staff meeting to introduce it and show what is PIN is up to across the world.

4. Read it before your next programe meeting

Get Inspired! Learn more about what PIN missions are doing in terms of current issue theme in other contexts. Have questions about it? You can contact the mission directly or go through Communication & Advocacy Department to find out more.

5. Keep copies on display

You never know when you, a visiting donor or partner might have an extra few minutes waiting for a Skype call or meeting to start. You can keep one in the kitchen too for reading while the kettle boils!

Have you ever wondered what accountability actually means? Do you hear about accountability from people in various roles and in different contexts and find it confusing? In this third issue of INSPIRED we will explore accountability from different angles.

Accountability is essentially about accepting responsibility. In the past, the accountability efforts of aid organisations traditionally focused on reporting and our obligations towards funding agencies. In recent years, however, we see the need to adopt a more comprehensive approach. In addition to this upward accountability, it is now increasingly important for the humanitarian community and donors to ensure downward accountability towards beneficiaries and communities, as well as horizontal accountability towards our own staff and partner organisations. Strengthening the meaningful participation and empowerment of beneficiaries is essential for responding to needs as effectively as possible. Establishing effective communication and feedback loops contributes to adaptive project management and builds a practice and culture of dialogue and learning. An organisational focus on the establishment, understanding and correct application of accountability and safeguarding rules and procedures builds trust and transparency within our own organisation, and communicates our standards to implementing partners.

Ultimately, accountability is about our acceptance and behaviour, not about putting things in writing. In this issue, we introduce examples of how PIN approaches accountability in its work and how we learn from the process. Explore our safeguarding standards and commitment to the Do No Harm Principle. Learn about the role of accountability in protection mainstreaming. Discover practical approaches to forming partnerships and enhancing the participation of local stakeholders, including children, in our projects in Cambodia, Syria and Georgia. And find out about the new tools PIN has been developing to responsibly assess the value of our projects and securely manage beneficiary information.

Petra Humlová
Senior M&E Advisor

ACCOUNTABILITY is about our acceptance and behaviour, not about putting things in writing. In this issue, we introduce examples of how PIN approaches accountability in its work and how we learn from the process. Explore our safeguarding standards and commitment to the Do No Harm Principle. Learn about the role of accountability in protection mainstreaming. Discover practical approaches to forming partnerships and enhancing the participation of local stakeholders, including children, in our projects in Cambodia, Syria and Georgia. And find out about the new tools PIN has been developing to responsibly assess the value of our projects and securely manage beneficiary information.

Photo: Regis Defurnaux


6


8

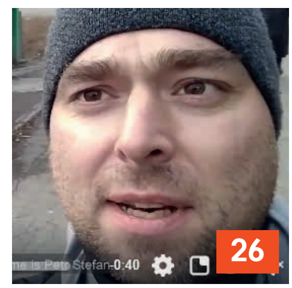

10


16


18


21


24


26

Evolution of the Complaint Response Mechanism in Ethiopia

People in Need began using a complaints response mechanism (CRM) in Ethiopia in 2013. As the country programme has grown and developed, so has the CRM. Hear from our colleagues about how this system has evolved over time and their tips for developing CRMs in other countries!

Kateřina Gabrielová
Head of Communication & Advocacy

People in Need's programme in Ethiopia was one of the first to use a CRM. What was it like in the beginning?

Petra Vránová, Former Country Director in Ethiopia (PV): We launched the CRM in Ethiopia more than five years ago. To be honest, we didn't start properly at all. In fact, our approach might easily serve as an example of 'how not to introduce a CRM as part of your country programme'. We were all busy with implementing our projects and just assumed that our frequent visits to project implementation sites would be sufficient. So, we simply felt like we were already keeping well enough in touch with our beneficiaries. To fulfil the task, we introduced 'complaint/suggestion boxes' in the field and added the item 'complaints from the community' to the agendas of our regular project meetings. We were very naive to think that these steps would be good enough.

PETRA VRÁNOVÁ, Former Country Director in Ethiopia
Photo: PIN Archive

> *CRM helps to identify problems as soon as possible, it also shows to our beneficiaries that their views are very important and that we are responsive.*
>
> *Petra Vránová, Former Country Director in Ethiopia*

How did you find out that your CRM wasn't working?

(PV): The first sign that our CRM wasn't working was when we realised that a few months after introducing the boxes we hadn't received any complaints. Not one. It was hard to believe that we were doing everything to the complete satisfaction of everybody involved, and that nobody had any complaints, or even suggestions. Not until one day during a monitoring visit did we discover that a delivery of tools and equipment to our beneficiary farmers a few months earlier had been a complete failure. We saw that the supplies we had delivered were made of very poor materials and that most of them were already broken. We wondered why we hadn't received a single complaint about this. Detailed monitoring of our CRM in the field took place very soon after that experience. What we discovered was that the holes in the tops of our suggestion boxes, where you insert a message, were in most cases sealed with paint and unusable. To make matters worse, the boxes were placed next to our office doors, which offered no anonymity at all. That experience showed us not only that our CRM wasn't working but that we also needed to offer a range of ways for beneficiaries to complain, at least one of which must offer complete anonymity. Even if we have very good cooperation with our stakeholders in the field, we need to admit that 'human error' may occur and, as a result, complaints might not reach the decision makers if the only reporting channel available is face-to-face with our staff.

How did you manage to improve it?

(PV): We took action immediately. We established a 'CRM working group' involving people from all areas of our team, i.e. the M&E officer, the project manager, the programme manager, field staff, etc. We held a number of discussions with our communities to introduce the CRM and to make sure that beneficiaries understood why we are interested in their input, and that not only is it safe for them to share feedback with us but that it's welcomed.

Liaising with them, we agreed on ways to report their suggestions and complaints. They started coming in good numbers and we then used their input to improve our cooperation with the communities. We can see that a functional CRM is very important for our accountability towards beneficiaries. Not only does it help to identify problems as soon as possible, it also shows to our beneficiaries that their views are very important and that we are responsive.

You mentioned that there was a whole team working on this. But which position would you say is most crucial for the successful functioning of the CRM?

(PV): Everybody involved needs to be very committed. But the key position in this whole process was our CRM officer who needed to be very understanding, empathetic, open and responsible. We had a number of CRM officers in Ethiopia and the effectiveness of our CRM depended on the proficiency of that officer.

How does it work now?

Veronika Jelínková, Head of Programmes in Ethiopia (VJ): Over the years, the country programme has become stronger and the number of projects being implemented has grown. Compared to PIN's work in other countries, our work in Ethiopia today is unique in that it combines both development and emergency programming. With this kind of development, there was also a need to review our strategies in terms of how we approach our beneficiaries. The 'complaint/suggestion boxes' of the early M&E approach were later replaced by a CRM contact person and a hotline that beneficiaries could use to share their comments. Initially, the contact person was always someone people knew. But with the rising number of new projects and beneficiaries, it simply became unfeasible for the CRM focal person to travel to all project locations and stay familiar with all our beneficiaries. Therefore, it became clear that the system in place was going to be insufficient. From our experience, we saw that it was easier for people to share their feedback with someone they know, or face-to-face rather than by phone when they don't know who's going to pick up the call. So, suddenly, instead of speaking with the CRM focal person, the complaints and requests started to be shared with other people in the organisation with whom beneficiaries were more familiar.

VERONIKA JELÍNKOVÁ, Head of Programmes in Ethiopia Photo: PIN Archive

How did you deal with that situation?

(VJ): The whole process has yet to be finalised and will be subject to ongoing changes as the situation evolves. Nonetheless, the first step we took was to familiarise ourselves with all of the areas we are working in and to identify where our sectoral programmes overlap. To do this, we developed a file showing all intervention kebeles (the smallest administrative levels at which we operate). We also hired more staff for M&E and divided up responsibilities for managing the CRM within each project.

Finally, we established among ourselves a culture of joint monitoring. Joint monitoring is an approach that we use for several purposes. It involves senior staff (the Head of Programmes, programme managers and M&E officers) getting together once a quarter to jointly visit the project areas, our staff and beneficiaries to better understand implementation on the ground, its achievements and potential weaknesses. Together, we identify key issues to be addressed and work as a team on solving any problems. We meet with beneficiaries and guide our field staff on communicating with them. The M&E staff identify the issues (including programme-related ones) that they want to prioritise within the CRM, and after following up on the findings of joint monitoring, they organise separate visits as part of the CRM policy framework. This approach is also very useful for raising awareness among senior staff about what is being done by other projects in addition to those they are responsible for.

What are the prospects for the future?

(VJ): We don't want to abandon the idea of having a CRM hotline in the future, especially as it offers anonymity. The phone number will still be functional and remain linked to M&E officers. The officers will also divide areas amongst themselves and focus on particular projects to ensure that they spend enough time with beneficiaries. Besides this, we're establishing the position of a safeguarding officer who will be responsible for making sure that our beneficiaries, especially the most vulnerable, are treated with respect, guaranteed all rights and are not exposed to any misconduct.

i Tips from the Team

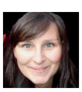
Our tips for introducing a CRM or improving the functionality and effectiveness of an existing CRM:

- → There should be commitment among senior management – it sounds obvious but in order to inspire and build credibility, senior management needs to be involved. Senior management ensures that appropriate resources, financial and human, are allocated.
- → Have a dedicated CRM officer – a chosen person needs to drive the process and make sure that steps are followed through and goals are met. It doesn't have to be somebody from management, but a proactive person with enthusiasm, passion and an eye for detail.
- → Beneficiaries, host communities and other stakeholders should be consulted about how the CRM should function. We can't assume that just because a complaint response channel works in one location for one project means it will automatically work in another.
- → Complaints must be acknowledged, reviewed and investigated.
- → CRM procedures must be explained to all staff, partners and stakeholders, with the appropriate training given to team members.
- → Beneficiaries, host communities and other stakeholders must be informed about how to share suggestions and/or complaints. Your CRM needs to provide a range of ways that allow people to lodge complaints, not just one. Also, if you're not receiving any complaints at all, that should be seen as a red flag.
- → A response should be given to the complainant who should then have the opportunity to appeal the decision.
- → The complaint loop needs to be completed, i.e. information from complaints should be continuously fed into improving the project.
- → The CRM should be evaluated regularly and adjusted according to the lessons learned, context changes and programme-related developments.

Accountability: A Key Pillar in Protection Mainstreaming

Protection Mainstreaming is, according to the Global Protection Cluster (GPC), the process of "incorporating protection principles and promoting meaningful access, safety and dignity in humanitarian aid." The author discusses why accountability, specifically, is so vital.

OUR HUMANITARIAN WORK in Eastern Ukraine. Photo: Iva Zímová



Denisa Bultasová
Emergency Advisor

In situations of conflict or natural disasters, people in crisis face various forms of violence, coercion and exploitation. Current individual and community protection capacities and national protection mechanisms are often perceived as inadequate in light of the new threats to safety and dignity. Therefore, it is important to realise that protection is a collective responsibility and that everyone must be involved. This is why Protection Mainstreaming is fundamental for any humanitarian project.

This article focuses on the first pillar: accountability. To illustrate why accountability is so important, let's imagine a situation where poor accountability practices increase protection risk. Imagine your team is distributing non-food items, in this case, blankets. You are giving a standard package to all displaced families, including families with small children. However, elderly people, disabled people and pregnant women get extra blankets. During the distribution, a group of beneficiaries becomes very angry with your staff about why these people are getting more blankets. The situation escalates and your team has to withdraw halfway through the distribution because some individuals are threatening violence. These people don't understand why some beneficiaries are getting more blankets than others.

Your team hasn't provided information about the organisation of the distribution. Due to this lack of information, violence has prevented distribution efforts. Additionally, families with extra blankets may be subject to increased pressure from the rest of the displaced community. In this situation, the humanitarian workers might have done more harm than good.

From this situation, it is clear why accountability is a key pillar in Protection Mainstreaming. Accountability is primarily about **setting up effective information systems that communicate to affected communities the type of assistance they will receive**.

How do you do this?

→ Include questions about the preferred ways of getting and receiving information in your assessment at the beginning of the project.

→ Organise informational meetings to discuss updates about the project, activities, timeframe, selection criteria, budget and contact details.

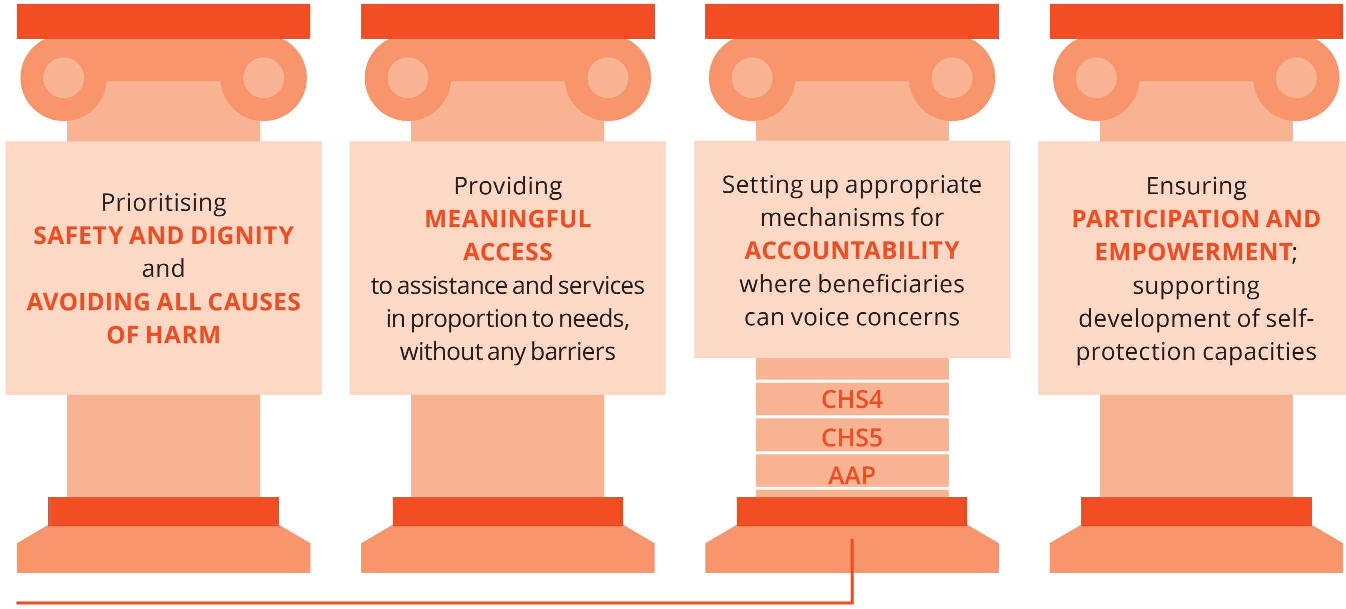
→ Consider literacy rates and use the symbols or visual images, if appropriate.

→ Explain to the affected population about their rights in emergencies and that there are clear guidelines and standards that govern the way aid workers must behave. Invite locals to express ideas about the behaviour they expect from Non-Governmental Organization staff working in their communities.

→ Think of new ways of sharing the information and seek feedback through community theatre, voice recorders and videos.

→ Budget the sufficient staff, transportation and materials to be able to approach all the vulnerable groups.

PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING



CHS4* - Humanitarian response is based on communication, participation and feedback
CHS5* - Complaints are welcomed and addressed
IASC - Accountability to affected population (AAP) Guidance

*CHS = Core Humanitarian Standard

Another reason that accountability is an important pillar in Protection Mainstreaming is because it **seeks to incorporate all views from all segments of the affected population**. Affected populations are never a homogeneous group. Yet marginalised groups are often excluded. Besides raising serious concerns about upholding humanitarian principles, such exclusion often fuels local tensions and undermines humanitarian access. Although reaching particularly vulnerable groups can be more expensive, spending time and money on acknowledging the needs of diverse opinions and trying to provide targeted aid is increasingly important to donors.

How do you do this?

→ Conduct participatory needs assessments and make sure you get information from vulnerable and excluded groups. Have separate discussions with commonly marginalised groups, such as women, the elderly or the disabled.
→ Share the findings of needs assessments and post-intervention monitoring with the affected population and explain the decisions that have been made as a result.
→ Encourage people to use communication channels to provide you with feedback, suggestions and updates.

Finally, accountability is an important pillar in Protection Mainstreaming because it **ensures that feedback and complaint response mechanisms are put in place, thus promoting active participation**. Encouraging both negative and positive feedback and responding to it promptly demonstrate that affected populations have the right to hold us responsible for our actions. Complaint response mechanisms are now a standard part of our programmes. However, we need to do more to make sure that they are accessible to all groups and that comments are always followed-up.

4

pillars of protection mainstreaming

How do you do this?

→ At the beginning of the project, include questions in your assessment about preferred methods of raising complaints and providing feedback.
→ Make sure the feedback and complaints response mechanism is accessible to all vulnerable and marginalised groups. For example, you can mobilise community volunteers to get feedback from people with limited mobility or literacy levels.
→ Combine different communication channels, ideally a combination of traditional (oral communication with a community leader) and new (a hot line via Facebook) channels.
→ Make sure that all vulnerable groups know about the feedback and complaint response mechanism and the different communication channels.
→ If you cannot assist personally, refer people to trusted locals, if possible.

Accountability is a key pillar in Protection Mainstreaming and needs to be incorporated into all kinds of humanitarian work. In addition to the Global Protection Cluster (GPC), other humanitarian organisations and policy-development bodies are realising the importance of accountability in the NGO sector. For more information, please see the nine commitments set forth by the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) and the work produced by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). Accountability is not a vague or moralistic concept: it is an essential part of planning and programming projects and, therefore, as important to giving aid as any other guiding humanitarian principle.

LAG KAZBEGI kindergarten infrastructure. Photo: Tornike Turabelidze

Participatory rural community development in Georgia

In Georgia's mountainous Kazbegi district, PIN is putting a large share of the decision-making responsibility for a 2.1 million EUR project into the hands of the local community, who are represented by a Local Action Group (LAG).

Simona Varga
Program Quality Advisor
- Trans region

Community engagement is increasingly at the heart of People in Need's (PIN) development interventions. In order for our work to be truly sustainable, and for PIN to be truly accountable to the people we aim to serve, we must see the local population as development partners, rather than "beneficiaries". In a sunny July afternoon, some 50 people gathered in Stepantsminda, the largest village of Kazbegi district in northern Georgia, to elect new members of the Local Action Group's Management Team, Board and Project Evaluation Committee (PEC).

The session was open to anyone interested in observing the process, whether an LAG member or not. Anyone wishing to vote or to submit their name for one of the positions was welcome to do so, as long as they were members of the LAG or willing to apply for membership at the event itself. By the end of the day, 20 people had been elected in key positions; 14 of them were women (including the LAG's Executive Director).

i Local Action Group

A Local Action Group (LAG) is typically made up of community members, private sector representatives and local authorities. The LAG can apply for financial assistance in the form of grants to implement the Local Development Strategy for its territory.

Kazbegi is one of Georgia's smallest districts and has a stable population of only about 3,700 people. More than half of the district's population live in Stepantsminda and its neighbouring villages, which lie along the winding Georgian Military Road that leads north to the only open border crossing with Russia. Even though Kazbegi offers breathtaking landscapes and hiking opportunities, which attract an increasing number of tourists every summer, many fail to reap the benefits of the tourist influx.

Dozens of villages in Kazbegi are scattered in remote valleys away from the main road. These villages have poor infrastructure and are effectively cut off from the district centre for half the year during winter. Whilst many choose to leave their village during the winter, others have abandoned their village altogether in search of less harsh living conditions elsewhere. Little investment has been made in supporting these more remote villages of Kazbegi.

The LAG, which was formed with support from People in Need (and funding from the European Union and Czech Development Agency) in 2015, is a partnership of representatives from civil society, the private sector and local authorities from Kazbegi, who are all committed to jointly designing a development strategy and overseeing its implementation.

From the very beginning, PIN has encouraged community members interested in joining the LAG to create the structures that make most sense to them. PIN's role is to facilitate the process, provide training and educate members about different models of participatory rural development in the EU. The PIN project team is entirely from Kazbegi, with the exception of the Project Manager, who is from another Georgian town. As such, the team has a deep understanding of the dynamics of the area, which makes the LAG feel it has a tangible connection as well as greater ownership of the project's plans. After its formation, the LAG drafted its Charter (comprising by-laws which outline the principles and procedures under which it operates), designed a local development strategy, and agreed on the criteria for distributing funds made available by the European Union through PIN. The elections described above took place according to this Charter, which states that representatives of the LAG's different bodies should be elected every two years.

The funds available – amounting to almost 800,000 EUR for 2016–2019 – are allocated to local businesses, community initiatives and public projects. The allocation is based on a transparent grant process, which is outlined in a Grants Manual designed by the LAG and published well in advance of the deadline. Applicants are invited to present their projects at a public meeting, with the final decision made by the PEC. When applications are submitted by relatives of one of the PEC members (which is not unusual considering that Kazbegi has a small and interconnected population), that member withdraws from the process to avoid any conflict of interest. Written justification is provided to all rejected applicants.

PIN oversees the process to ensure transparency but has no decision-making power (except to veto decisions that are not transparent or justified). Additionally, a Complaints Response Mechanism is managed by PIN's Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for Georgia, who is not a member of the project team.

Only one complaint has been received to date. This was from a rejected grant applicant who expressed concern at the composition of the LAG, but had made no attempt to join the LAG or participate in elections. Following an investigation by PIN, the feedback was discussed with the LAG leadership, who decided to strengthen the written justifications provided to rejected grant applicants and increase efforts to encourage people to participate in the LAG.

As part of the LAG's mandate to contribute to the development of Kazbegi and to strengthen its position in the community, the LAG aims to gather and spread information to the community about relevant government and donor programmes, public regu-

LAG's contribution to Kazbegi (2015–2017):

- → A Local Development Strategy designed and updated with community input;
- → 39 small local businesses supported;
- → 133 new jobs created;
- → 23 community infrastructure projects implemented (e.g. street signs and information boards, kindergarten playgrounds, sports grounds, etc.).

> ***How would external people know what's really important for local people? I was interested in participating in the LAG committee because it allows local people to take the lead. We decide what should be prioritised.***
>
> *Artem Tsamalaidze, LAG member*

KAZBEGI YOUTH RUGBY TEAM which received equipment as part of a grant from the LAG. Photo: Tornike Turabelidze lations and standards. This is also part of the LAG's sustainability strategy to ensure continuity beyond the end of PIN's project. One of the ideas the LAG has for the longer term is to be able to provide fee-based consultancies for preparing grant and loan applications and, in addition, to provide free information about the programmes applied for.

LAG ELECTS new leaders. Photo: Nino Chokheli

Does the Local Action Group represent the entire community?

LAG membership is open to anyone who lives in Kazbegi or who is originally from Kazbegi but has left for study or work, a decision made in order to encourage people who have emigrated to return. The People in Need project team made extensive efforts at the beginning of the project to mobilise the community and get people interested in the LAG. Dozens of public meetings and information sessions were held in all the villages. The mobilisation continued over the following three years, with a further outreach campaign being carried out through the LAG's Facebook page and website as well as via information boards set up in each village. Feedback on the content of the local development strategy was collected from communities at public meetings and consultations in all of the inhabited communities.

Despite these efforts, a survey conducted in the summer of 2017 revealed that awareness of the LAG's work remained lower than expected, especially in remote areas. A year later, only about half of the LAG's members were still actively participating in most events and activities. With no public transportation in the district, many members from remote villages find it hard to travel to Stepantsminda for meetings. A recent analysis of the LAG's composition showed that two thirds of the Local Action Grooup members do not have permanent residence in Kazbegi, despite having strong ties to the region through their businesses.

The LAG continues to reach out to the population, but it has limited funds for transportation. All LAG members and leaders are volunteers, except for a technical manager who will receive a salary from People in Need until the end of the project. Additionally, most members have jobs or run businesses, which limits the time they can give.

Lessons learned

PIN's decision to avoid imposing quotas or other restrictions on LAG membership has led to the creation of a cohesive group, driven by very active and dedicated people. Experience has taught us that, in order to achieve full community engagement, more resources should be invested in reaching out to people who choose to remain outside the LAG.

However, considering the fast pace at which Kazbegi has changed over the last three years, from an area with little civic engagement to one where citizens come together to plan for long-term development, there are ample reasons to be hopeful and to continue working.

This project has been supported by:

CZECH REPUBLIC DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

For sustainable and accountable community engagement...

DO:

- → Recruit most of the project team from the community, but make sure that the entire community is represented; take care to avoid recruiting only from one group.
- → Recruit the project manager (or senior member of the team) from another part of the country to ensure objectivity.
- → Draw on local knowledge and develop local capacities.
- → Allow enough time for each phase, as it is a learning process for the community.
- → Facilitate the process, but let the community take the lead.
- → Identify and use various communication channels (public meetings, information boards, Facebook, etc.) to promote outreach and encourage feedback and engagement.
- → Maintain an overview of the process in its initial years, oversee its transparency and inclusiveness, and set up mechanisms that enable PIN to receive feedback directly in case people feel uncomfortable reaching out to the LAG (or whichever type of community-based participatory structure is developed).
- → Have an exit strategy for People in Need that is largely designed by the Local Active Group itself.

DON´T:

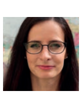
- → Assume you know the community just because you have been working there for a long time.
- → Neglect to build the capacity of PIN project staff to recognise and address the various dynamics which exist in the community (ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, etc.); just because people hail from the same community doesn't mean they can't have blind spots.
- → Try to speed up the process artificially, as the donor funding is short-term.
- → Impose a default structure, mechanism or procedure just because it worked well somewhere else (even in a neighbouring community).

Photo: Tereza Hronová

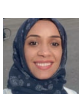
Protection and Safeguarding:

Everybody's Concern, Everybody's Responsibility

Safeguarding adults and children is about reducing or, ideally, preventing the risk of significant harm from abuse and exploitation, while simultaneously helping people take control of their own lives by making informed choices.



Lenka Levin
Head of RDD
Complience Unit



Mawaheb Makki
Grant Development
Manager for UK

Safeguarding involves taking appropriate measures to prevent, eliminate and respond to all forms of harm. Such measures are designed to protect people's health, dignity, wellbeing and rights so that they can live free from harm, abuse and neglect. For organisations working in development and humanitarian fields, we have a safeguarding responsibility to ensure that all aspects of our work and interventions, at every level, follow the **Do No Harm Principle.** We must have a system that prevents and responds to harm, and prioritises safeguarding across all our projects – from design to implementation and evaluation.

Why is Safeguarding essential?

Systematising safeguarding is essential in order to build trust and maintain a safe environment for all persons involved in projects and programmes – from staff and partners to beneficiaries and local communities. Creating and maintaining a safe environment has a significant impact on improving the quality of our work and the chances of sustainability. When working in the aid sector, the aim is always to make things better, not worse. **The safety and wellbeing of the vulnerable children and adults that we come into contact with is of the utmost importance:** the Do No Harm Principle must guide everything we do.

Working with vulnerable groups can be rewarding, but it comes with many responsibilities. Missing warning signs can have serious consequences and leave vulnerable individuals open to abuse, neglect and exploitation. By systematising and prioritising safeguarding we aim to protect each individual's dignity, while delivering our development and humanitarian interventions and making sure warning signs are not missed.

Safeguarding at PIN

PIN is committed to preventing, reporting and investigating any misconduct, allegation or concern raised. We strive to ensure that all PIN staff, consultants, volunteers and associates know and comply with **PIN's Code of Conduct** (CoC), which outlines our obligations toward respecting the welfare and rights of people, and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, fraud and corruption as well as all other abuses of power. PIN's staff are ambassadors for the organisation and are required to maintain the highest ethical standards at all times.

Some of the key policies of PIN's Safeguarding framework are:

- → **PIN's Code of Conduct**
- → **Policy on Ethical Conduct**
- → **Anticorruption Policy**
- → **Conflict of Interest Policy**
- → **Child Protection Policy**
- → **Safety and Security Policy**
- → **Complaints Response Mechanism Policy**
- → **Whistleblowing Policy**
- → **Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy (PSEA)**

A list of PIN's key policies can be found here: https://www.clovekvtisni.cz/policies

How does PIN deliver Safeguarding?

PIN is a member of the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance, a signatory of different UN (UN Global Compact) and donor instruments and commitments, and an active member of different NGO networks, including Alliance 2015, VOICE and BOND. PIN actively contributes to the debate on how to strengthen safeguarding measures to ensure that our beneficiaries and all those connected to assistance delivered by PIN feel safe and protected.

COMPLIENCE MESSAGES POSTER Photo: PIN Archive

Staff commitment: all staff are committed to our policies and the CoC, which are a part of all employment contracts. Staff must sign to confirm their understanding and responsibility, and also complete compulsory e-learning and face-to-face induction trainings on these policies. Other stakeholders – including partners, suppliers in direct contact with beneficiaries, and other PIN associates to the extent relevant – must confirm that they adhere to PIN's Code of Conduct and other key policies. PIN's key policies also apply outside of office hours.

Beneficiary engagement: Considering that beneficiary safety is at the heart of People in Need's work, People in Need's safeguarding approach uses appropriate participatory methods to ensure the engagement of beneficiaries and local communities. This not only ensures that their voices are heard and that their views are presented, but it also means that risks can be identified from the outset of the project. All the beneficiaries must know what kind of services they can expect from the organization People in Need, and be afforded the right and responsibility to report any concerns and abuse through the reporting channels.

Safe recruitment: Staff members working with children are required to sign a declaration that they have never been charged with child exploitation offences. They are also vetted and references are required.

Various Reporting Channels:

Whistleblowing Policy: Staff and stakeholders can report any cases of abuse or concern to report@peopleinneed.cz, fraud@peopleinneed.cz and PSEA@peopleinneed.cz

Complaint Response Mechanism (CRM): CRM reporting channels are developed in a participatory manner to ensure beneficiaries trust the communication channel and feel comfortable reporting sensitive issues. Each of PIN's Country Programmes therefore has its own CRM. The CRM helps programmes to adapt in order to best meet the needs of beneficiaries and their community.

Handling highly confidential and sensitive cases: In cases of abuse, an investigation is conducted, after which the staff responsible consider whether immediate action (such as a dismissal and/or referral to the appropriate authorities) is required. People in Need has designated safeguarding officers, but Country Directors are ultimately accountable for the supervision of safeguarding and investigations.

Standard Operating Procedures on support for survivors and alleged perpetrators: In safeguarding and child protection cases, PIN strives to support survivors as well as alleged perpetrators. The "presumption of innocence" principle must be followed, while maintaining the highest standards of impartial, transparent and professional investigation procedures and ensuring the protection of survivors as well as witnesses.

PIN is constantly seeking ways of improving tools to reinforce an organisational culture that promotes the safeguarding and protection of all people involved in our activities. Such tools include: new safeguarding e-learning, external expert trainings, and rolling out visibility materials, refresher trainings as well as instruments such as Local Organisational Assessment Forms and mission check-lists.

Important safeguarding steps we are proud of:

- → PIN's Safeguarding Task Force was established, offering collective expertise in the areas of HR, compliance and law
- → People in Need succeeded in safeguarding due-diligence procedures and audits of various donors
- → People in Need convened conferences with partners and is an active member of Alliance 2015, BOND, VOICE and other platforms that discuss safeguarding topics
- → In 2018, we adopted a new PSEA Policy with Investigation Guidelines, and reviewed almost all of People in Need's key policies to ensure safeguarding is sufficiently integrated
- → In 2018, Risk Registers were updated and assessed with regard to safeguarding
- → In 2018, we trained hundreds of staff through in-house trainings and launched safeguarding-related e-learning sessions
- → We prepared a safeguarding training plan for the upcoming year (including refreshers)
- → We appointed designated safeguarding officers on the level of the Board of Trustees, HQ as well as selected Country Programmes
- → Safeguarding is a standing item at management and other regular meetings
- → The safeguarding budget is being increased significantly
- → 90% of our responses and actions have satisfied the victims/survivors
- → The majority of trained staff have demonstrated that training has helped them understand the principles that need to be upheld when dealing with vulnerable groups
- → We trained an internal pool of investigators in accordance with the CHS Investigation Training Curriculum and with the help of external experts

i Principles of Safeguarding

Partnership: People, professions, groups and communities working together to cover all angles with regard to preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.

Empowerment: Supporting people to make their own decisions based on the best possible information.

Prevention: Taking action before harm occurs.

Protection: Remembering that those in greatest need require more support.

Proportionality: Avoiding being overly protective in cases of low risk, thereby disadvantaging people and limiting their empowerment.

Accountability: Making sure we are accountable for every safeguarding action we take, as with all our activities.

i Examples of forms of abuse

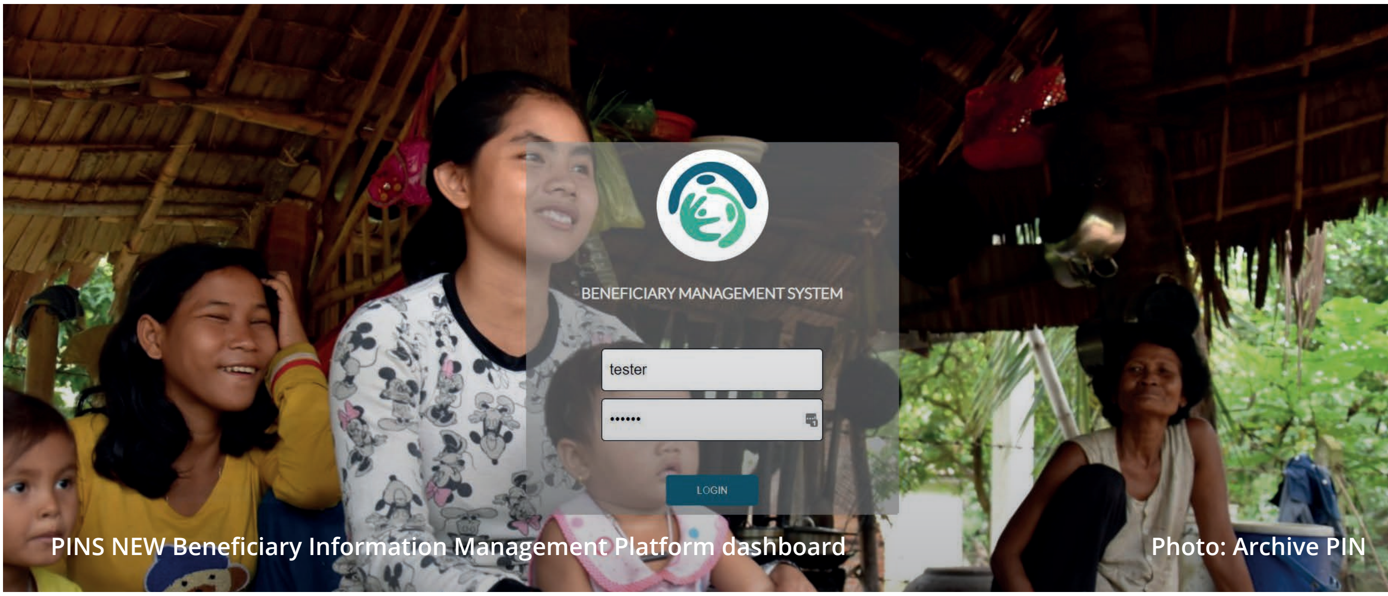
Abuse: is any maltreatment of a person that causes harm, including the failure to take the necessary measures to prevent harm.

Physical abuse: may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or any other type of physical harm inflicted on a person.
Verbal abuse: involves an abuser using words and body language with the intent of hurting another person. This may take the form of put-downs, name-calling or unreasonable criticism.

Emotional abuse: also referred to as psychological abuse, is a form of abuse involving behaviour designed to hurt another person mentally. It may include yelling, threats, shaming and humiliation.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or coercing a person to take part in sexual activities either by physical or non-physical contact.

Neglect: involves the persistent failure to meet a person's basic physical and/or emotional needs.



PINS NEW Beneficiary Information Management Platform dashboard

Photo: Archive PIN

Feedback in the Cloud:

The Beneficiary Management System

James Happell
Global Innovations Advisor

People in Need has been working closely with the software development team Relief Applications to develop Beneficiary Management System (BMS) software. Hosted on a cloud-based platform, the BMS software will improve beneficiary records and provide additional tools for delivering aid to impacted people.

A Welcome Improvement

In humanitarian relief scenarios, ensuring the availability and security of personal and financial data is crucial for facilitating the transparent and accountable delivery of aid. In conflict situations, where security is an obstacle, it is a continual challenge for affected populations to access relief services quickly and fairly. PIN, like all humanitarian organisations, experiences challenges in assisting populations that are on the move or in conflict zones. It is often difficult to ensure that data remains consistent and that monetary activity is transparent across borders and across aid delivery projects.

Our platform will address large-scale humanitarian crises, such as the ongoing Syrian conflict, but will also be applicable to any emergency response, including responses to natural disasters and other forms of recovery-based programming. PIN has traditionally depended on simplified methods of data collection, such as Microsoft Excel, for processing beneficiary and project information. The BMS will provide an intuitive, web-based platform for managing humanitarian and development projects, including the complex distribution protocol required by agencies to transfer money and goods in humanitarian relief scenarios. The software is being presented as a proof of concept for emergency relief in Cambodia, with plans to implement it as part of People in Need's Syria mission before the end of the year. Future plans to adapt the system for development programming are also anticipated to occur in 2019. The system will allow PIN to ensure target populations receive aid regardless of their physical location.

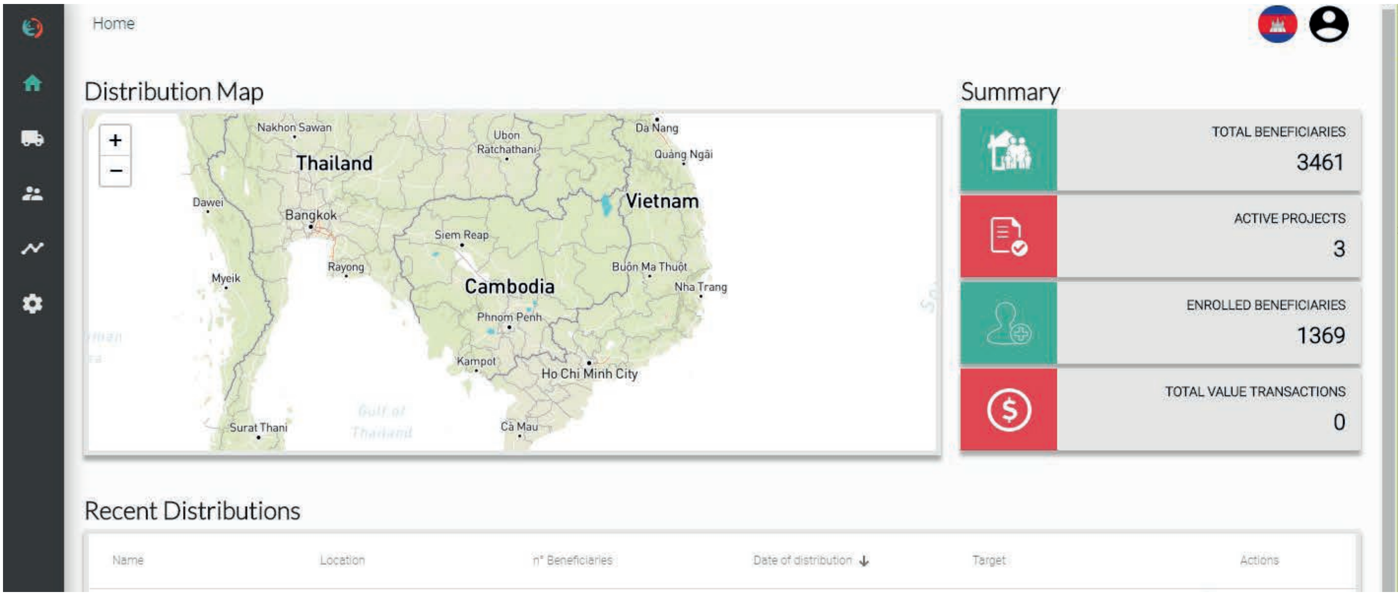
3 647 446

last year beneficiaries

The BMS will provide a more open, secure, functional and easy-to-use method of aid delivery, while promoting transparency and reducing fraud and data theft. The system can collect, store and validate identifying information about the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations. It then registers the data in the form of a secure online record, encrypted and obscured in an online database. The platform has an inbuilt process for analysing and monitoring user activity. In addition, it can search for and highlight possible duplicates and inconsistencies, discovering areas of missing data. This will ensure that distributions are carried out reliably. All transactions within the system, whether monetary or otherwise, will be tracked and an audit trail stored permanently.

Protecting Sensitive Information

PIN plans to expand the functionality of the system to include a more comprehensive set of distribution modalities and aid support types. The system will soon include a secure biometric identification process for beneficiary identification and the improved efficiency of distributions, a progressive web application to ensure offline support (including support for voucher programming), connectivity to established open source SMS and IVR platforms for beneficiary communication, and feedback and 2-Factor Authentication for increased user security. All of these



PINS NEW Beneficiary Information Management Platform dashboard - Front page **Photo: Archive PIN**

added features will enable PIN to assist populations more efficiently.

Data security and privacy are at the core of the platform's design. The added protection should hinder the attempts of nefarious state and non-state actors to obtain data about vulnerable beneficiaries. Legally, EU GDPR Legislation and other best-practice security procedures demand the strictest possible measures on data privacy and storage. The internal procedures of the system we have designed ensure that access to raw data is only available to approved administrators. The personal data and biometric information of our beneficiaries will be stored in separate databases, further restricting access to personally identifiable information. Only the beneficiaries themselves will have access to their aid services.

Overall, the BMS platform will reduce the time required to deliver aid, improve data integrity, stop the use of insecure localised storage of beneficiary data, and reduce the number of beneficiaries who "drop out" of the system. The data will be stored in an online, secure environment, accessible only by registered users. This will increase the ability of PIN to assist beneficiaries, wherever they may be. The database will allow us to monitor the delivery and effectiveness of our programmes over time and automate previously manual processes. This will greatly reduce the prevalence of financial inconsistencies in aid distribution and allow PIN to reduce irregularities, duplications and inefficiencies in paper-based and informal aid-monitoring systems. Overall, the Beneficiary Management System (BMS) software will bring about much-needed improvements, and ultimately, advance the way PIN delivers aid.

This project has been supported by:

Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection

In conclusion, the BMS will:

- → Provide an encrypted, cloud database, featuring demographic data and vulnerability criteria capable of supporting up to 500,000 beneficiaries;
- → Upgrade the efficiency of cash distributions and other modalities, either by using direct connections to financial services or in combination with established informal cash and good delivery methods; provide full audit trails and financial accounting mechanisms and reduce the need for physical cash;
- → Incorporate a voucher-based system in cases where mobile banking services are unavailable, and integrate vendors into the distribution process;
- → Overcome barriers to providing full identification of users at points of distribution and during ongoing support by including secure biometric registration and authentication;
- → Improve communication with aid recipients and access to feedback, regardless of geographic location, via IVR and SMS integration.

The planned upgrade to the BMS will achieve the following outcomes:

- → Decrease the risk of aid diversion, especially in remote management settings;
- → Reduce the risk of fraud and other types of aid inconsistencies by providing a full audit trail and user management profile;
- → Increase the ratio of beneficiaries that receive aid with biometric registration and the total number of registered users in the system;
- → Reduce the number of separate beneficiary and project databases;
- → Improve the registration of beneficiaries, including the centralisation of data across programmes, distributions and countries;
- → Reduce the number of days it takes for aid, specifically food, cash and other goods, to reach target populations;
- → Reduce the number of days from displacement and identification to aid provision.

FARMERS GET TRAINING from PIN and partners_Kompong Chnang province. Photo: Nickie Mariager-Lam

People in Need: Participatory Monitoring in Cambodia

PIN's involvement of veterinary service providers in participatory monitoring has helped vets build sustainable and accountable relationships with farmers and gain better control of the information they need for effective business collaboration.

Bunnara Chourn
Project Manager-Livestock Sector - Cambodia

Julian Brewster
Advisor for Market System Development

In Cambodia, 80% of the population live in rural areas, with most depending on agriculture and natural resources for their livelihoods. Livestock plays a crucial role in supporting livelihoods and providing income and nutrition for rural households. However, productivity and incomes are low among rural smallholder farmers due to limited access to veterinary services as well as advice on effective livestock-rearing practices. As a result, there are high levels of animal mortality, especially among poultry, which is the most important type of livestock for poor farmers.

Since 2013, People in Need and its partners have been working to improve the access of poor farmers to affordable and good quality veterinary services. This involves improving the supply of services provided by village-based veterinarians and increasing the demand for these services among smallholder livestock farmers, their main clients. Such services include vaccinations, disease treatments, as well as advice and training on how to effectively raise and sell livestock.

50 000
livestock farmers involved

The participatory monitoring approach was first piloted by PIN in 2015 as a way to improve the monitoring and coaching of supported livestock farmers, and assess whether the support farmers were receiving was having a positive impact on their livestock production and livelihoods.

Prior to this approach, only project staff had been involved in monitoring. After the initial pilot, however, the approach was scaled up to 183 vets across 8 provinces under PIN's CAM-4-SCALE project, which aims to improve the livelihoods of more than 50,000 smallholder livestock farmers. By strengthening links and relationships between vets and farmers, the approach has also proved important in improving the sustainability and impacts of the project.

What is participatory monitoring?

Participatory Monitoring (PM) is the process of including local stakeholders in the collection, use and sharing of project data and results in order to assist project participants in decision-making and learning.

Participatory approach in practice

The key participants involved in the participatory monitoring approach of the CAM-4-SCALE project are village vets and smallholder livestock farmers. To introduce participatory monitoring and its benefits to village vets, a two-day workshop was organised. During this workshop, the vets were asked about the types of information they were interested in obtaining from farmers in order to help them build their businesses and improve veterinary services.

This information was then used to help develop questionnaires for the purpose of collecting data from farmers. Ensuring the participation of the vets in defining these data needs was a very important step toward gaining their buy-in, as opposed to dictating to them the type of data the project needed. As part of the training, the vets piloted the questionnaire in the field by collecting data from a sample of the farmer group members. Improvements were then made to the questionnaire, while vets were given the opportunity to jointly discuss their feedback. As a result of the training, the vets gained a better understanding of the benefits of being involved in the monitoring process, while availing of opportunities to improve business collaboration.

i	Traditional Monitoring	Participatory Monitoring
Who	Project staff	Stakeholders and beneficiaries
What	Information for predetermined indicators to measure outputs, outcomes and impacts of the project	Information relevant for the project as well as for stakeholders identified by the beneficiaries and stakeholders together
Why	To track progress against project indicators and to adapt the implementation if the project does not progress as expected To make the project accountable to the funding agency	To facilitate access to information required by the stakeholders To empower stakeholders to participate in decision-making, learning and taking corrective action. To support stakeholders' ownership of action, improve the accountability of stakeholders and enhance the sustainability of project results.

Field data collection

The questionnaire designed during the workshop was then used by village vets to collect data from farmers during household coaching visits. Data were collected via household visits, interviews with farmers and direct observation of their animals and enclosures. Vets grade farmers' progress using a simple technical checklist and provide feedback to the farmers on their progress, including advice on how farmers can improve their practices. Vets then prepare a summary report on these visits using a simple template developed by the project. Vets receive a monthly facilitation fee to cover fuel costs for visiting farmer group members and collecting data.

Information management, sharing and learning

Data from the questionnaires and summary reports are entered directly into Kobo, a free open-source software tool for collecting and managing data. The information from the summary report is then entered into an Excel database managed by People in Need's project and M&E teams. The implications of the data for project activities are then presented and discussed during monthly project team meetings with partners. For example, if the data were to reveal a very low adoption of technical practices in one area, the project team would need to discuss this with a view to possibly providing farmers with refresher trainings in that area.


VET is feeding her chicken.
Photo: Nickie Mariager Lam

VILAGE VET provide adivse to his client. Kompong Chnang province. Photo: Jiri Pasz

As a way of sharing a summary of the data with the vets, monthly meetings are also organised at the community level with all participating vets. Vets and the project team jointly reflect on the data and their implications for business development activities and the project itself. These joint reflections provide the vets with ideas about how to improve the support they give to farmer group members. For example, they might see that farmers require additional support with regard to how to use local resources and plants to make chicken feed.

Lessons learned

The data collected by the vets using the PM system have been useful for the project team as a management tool for tracking progress and informing an adaptive management approach. In addition, the regular interactions between farmers and vets that this approach has nurtured have also been very helpful both for vets in developing their businesses and for farmers in terms of building trust and confidence in using veterinary services.

This is a key objective in the project's impact logic.

- → The PM approach required a lot of external coordination support (e.g. organising meetings and trainings, subsidising travel costs), something the vets would not have been able to do independently. Despite the efforts made, vets still view data collection as a project activity rather than as part of their own business. Some possible solutions for ensuring the sustainability of this activity are to identify a suitable actor (e.g. a government agency responsible for the livestock sector in the case of CAM-4-SCALE) that would assume control of the project.
- → It is important that all stakeholders understand the objectives of PM, the benefits it can bring and the process entailed, especially since it can be perceived as time-consuming. Crucially, this includes involving community monitors in defining what data should be monitored. It is also very important that the information collected – as with any monitoring data – is regularly reflected and acted upon as part of an adaptive management approach.
- → Intensive initial capacity-building is required, with continuous support provided to community monitors. To that end, strengthening networks between community monitors in a way that supports peer-to-peer learning has proved to be useful.

i The benefits of participatory monitoring under the CAM-4-SCALE project

Project team benefits: the project team are able to closely monitor farmers' progress, oversee a larger number of beneficiaries with more limited resources, validate findings from traditional project monitoring by comparing them to results of participatory monitoring, obtain timely information about animal disease outbreaks, plan quick responses and introduce new prevention measures.

Vet benefits: the data that vets obtain from monitoring (e.g. number of animals and their health status) allow them to arrange schedules for vaccinations and coordinate collective sales for farmers. The close relationships between vets and farmers developed during the monitoring also help vets to increase their number of clients.

Farmer benefits: Farmers receive technical advice based on their specific needs; regular communication with the vets makes them more confident and motivated to raise technical questions, to discuss any challenges they might be facing and to suggest possible solutions directly to the vets.

This project has been supported by:

CZECH REPUBLIC
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

COOKING WORKSHOP in child friendly spaces. Photo: Ibrahim Alephara

Whose opinion matters most?

Beneficiary Feedback Mechanisms in Syria

PIN Syria has created a Strategy for Accountability to Affected Populations. The idea is to give local communities we work with the power to contribute to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of our interventions.

Ibrahim Alephara
Project manager

Justin Lyle
M&E Advisor for Emeregencies

After seven years of war in Syria, the security situation across the country continues to evolve dynamically while the need for humanitarian aid is as acute as ever. 12.2 million people have been forced to leave their homes since the war broke out in 2011. Across Syria today, it is estimated that 13.1 million people are in need of some form of assistance, with 69% living below the poverty line.

People in Need works in over 200 locations across Northern Syria. We aim to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable families, especially those who have been displaced, by providing multi-sectoral assistance in the form of: food aid; support for water, sanitation and hygiene infrastructures and services; agricultural support for farmers; employment and training opportunities; and improved access to quality education.

Working in so many locations and across various sectors, it became necessary to find an efficient way of informing, and consulting with, local communities about our projects. “The better we understand people’s priorities, experiences and preferences, the more useful our projects will be,” says Ibrahim Alephara, PIN’s project manager.

To ensure that we can respond as effectively as possible to the needs of the people and communities affected, People in Need has designed a comprehensive plan in order to integrate community consultations into each stage of the project cycle. We carefully consider meeting formats and design specific communication materials for each stage. The communication materials include posters and leaflets with visual information about the intervention, its timing and geographical coverage, information about the beneficiary selection criteria and details of the complaints and response mechanism.

> **i Child-Friendly Space (CFS)**
>
> CFS is a safe place set up in a disaster-affected community to address the psychosocial and protection needs of children. These spaces help children return to a normal routine by offering activities, games and informal education.

During the initial needs assessment stage, local community members are invited to participate in open-format focus group discussions to tell us about the main problems they face, the skills and resources they have, and the kind of assistance they need most to support their recovery efforts. These focus group discussions directly influence the design of the project. Once donor funding is confirmed, the programme team sets to work on launching the project. During this stage, another round of community meetings is held to present details of the planned intervention, the beneficiary selection criteria and the complaints and response mechanisms. This is done in order to receive additional feedback and suggestions for implementing the project.

Throughout the implementation of the project right up until the

CRM POSTER used in Syria. Photo: Archive PIN

very end, community consultation meetings are held, including focus group discussions and beneficiary feedback meetings. They give PIN the chance to share information about the project's achievements from its perspective and beneficiaries an opportunity to tell us what worked and what did not in terms of our implementation. This information is used to improve the design and implementation of the ongoing project or the next intervention.

Beneficiary Feedback Informs the Design of Child-Friendly Spaces

More than half of the 8.35 million children living in Syria are in need of humanitarian assistance. After seven years of war, Syria is now the most dangerous country to be a child. Not only are children exposed to death, destruction and displacement but they have also been denied their childhood. Millions of children are out of school or have no school to go to, with many needing to work to support their families, putting them at great risk of exploitation. Beyond the day-to-day hardships of life in a conflict zone, children have to live with the trauma the war has brought, and most have lost family members or loved ones.

„My grandfather told me my father left while our house was being bombed but that he would come back," says little Omer. "But it's been a long time and he still hasn't returned," he adds. „My father also left on a long trip," says Omer's friend Ali, "but he needs to come back – he has to bring me a new leg because I lost mine in the bombing."

The children we work with in Syria lack any sense of normalcy. For those under the age of seven, they know nothing other than a life of war. PIN runs Child-Friendly Spaces in Northern Syria so that conflict-affected children have a place where they can play, socialise and forget, if only temporarily, the upheaval and trauma the conflict has brought into their lives. As part of a pilot activity, PIN provided support to Child-Friendly Spaces in camps in Northern Syria for the benefit of children, parents, the space facilitators and the community in general. Before establishing the spaces, PIN conducted twelve focus group discussions, six in each camp, in order to hear the opinions and ideas of all the different target groups. The objectives of the discussions were to work out: who should organise logistics and how it should be done; what kind of activities would be most relevant for particular target groups; and how to ensure the widest possible participation.

Lessons learned

Discussions were held with the camp management, mothers and fathers, teenage boys and girls, and lastly, with boys and girls between the ages of five and seven. We gained valuable information from all groups. The camp management and parents, for example, recommended that we:

→ Include some psychological monitoring of the children in our activities
→ Help children with special needs to participate by providing wheelchairs
→ Increase the number of CFS shifts provided during a previous project
→ Incorporate protection and awareness-raising sessions for parents
→ Provide educational activities to complement the recreational sessions

FOCUS GROUP discussion. Photo: Dominika Rypa

- Hold first aid training for children, parents and facilitators
- Invite parents to see their children's achievements
- Organise separate groups for boys and girls over 10 years old

When finalising the implementation plan, we took all of these recommendations into consideration. For example, we designed specific activities for children with special needs, and every month we invited parents to attend activities with their children. We also expanded the spaces from four tents to eight tents and increased the number of weekly sessions from twice a month (the frequency at existing centres prior to People in Need support) to three times a week.The most important discussions were with the children themselves.

They asked us to:

- Mix educational with recreational activities
- Decorate the walls of the tents with cartoon characters
- Teach them how to make toys from recycled materials
- Distribute clothes for the children at Eid
- Put on a drama show and exhibitions of their work, and invite their parents to attend
- Make the shifts longer than 90 minutes
- Set up a playground for football

Based on the children's suggestions, we held weekly drama shows and monthly exhibitions of their drawings, which their parents were invited to attend. Over the course of our monthly exhibitions, we noticed significant changes in the children's drawings. In the first exhibition, all of the drawings were about war and included images of guns, tanks and fire. By the second exhibition, the tone of the drawings had begun to change and had become more positive. And by the third exhibition, we could see flowers, colours and smiles.

Dos and Don'ts for Designing and Implementing Beneficiary Feedback Mechanisms

DO:

- Keep in mind that a formal Complaint Response Mechanism (CRM) is only one of the many ways we can obtain feedback.
- Plan, budget for and use the BFM at various stages of the project – feedback on project design (activities, targeting strategy, planned design of the CRM), feedback during implementation (what works well and issues, effectiveness of the CRM) and feedback at project closure (what worked well and should be replicated, feedback on achievements as perceived by beneficiaries)
- Consider various beneficiary/stakeholder groups and use mechanisms and materials that are both contextually appropriate and preferred by beneficiaries.
- Record, analyse, follow up and respond
- Invite beneficiaries to provide feedback and inform them about how the feedback will be used.

DON´T:

- Use the feedback mechanism solely as a one-way process of communication. Instead, use it as a way to build trust within the organisation by introducing PIN values, commitment goals, implementation teams, projects and planned activities while keeping beneficiaries informed about project developments, achievements and findings.
- Forget to allocate adequate resources or to develop the appropriate capacity for feedback set-up and management.
- Underestimate the importance of clearly establishing management of the feedback mechanism within the organisation. Plan ways of involving both project and M&E teams.

Photo: Tereza Hronová

Value for Money & the Four 'E's

Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Equity


Karel Vrána
Advisor for Research and Data Analysis

What is Value for Money?

Value for money (VfM) can be defined as the best use of resources to deliver the desired impact[1]. Yet, although the definition appears straightforward, its practical application differs among actors in the development sector. Value for money is a frequently misunderstood term, largely due to its association with complex econometric calculations and tools. While these can be useful in some contexts, at the heart of value for money is a much simpler idea.

The idea is that when designing and implementing an intervention, the costs and benefits of different options should be compared, so that a defensible case can be made for (1) why the chosen approach provides the best use of resources and (2) why it delivers the most value to poor and marginalised people[2].

From this perspective, value for money is much less about specific econometric methods or calculations and more a way of thinking about and approaching programme design, implementation and evaluation. Since more and more donors have started to require that VfM analysis be implemented, NGOs and other implementers now need to find methods and approaches that allow them to manage performance and articulate their contribution to change in a more robust way.

The 4E Framework

The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) launched its value-for-money agenda in 2011, when it published DFID's Approach to Value for Money[3] and the DFID Business Plan for 2011-2015[4]. DFID's approach is based on the 3Es framework (also used by the National Audit Office), which considers economy, efficiency and effectiveness. However, DFID also recognises a "fourth E": the equity dimension. By adding the "fourth E", the message is clear: development is only of value if it is also fair.

PIN's VfM Tools

Although measuring value for money is high on the agenda for international development actors, we found that the practical guidance available was limited. As a result, PIN sought to develop two practical tools to help development actors answer the following two questions:

→ What is the cost of reaching each output and outcome of our project and are these costs justifiable?

→ Are the correct systems and processes in place to ensure value for money?

The answer to question 1 can be found in PIN's Step-by-Step Guide that takes you through the whole process. The VfM Step-by-Step Guide leads the user through the calculations for:

---

[1] *https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dcdndep/49564530.pdf*

[2] *https://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/Value_for_money_-_what_it_means_for_NGOs_Jan_2012.pdf*

[3] *https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/49551/DFID-approach-value-money.pdf*

[4] *https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfid-business-plan-2011-2015*

- → Evaluating Economy by reviewing the unit costs, identifying the key costdrivers and describing the systems in place for maximising economy.
- → Developing and analysing quantitative VfM indicators of Efficiency. For example, 1 teacher trained in Active Learning Methods will cost 40 EUR, representing 85 % efficiency.
- → Developing and analysing quantitative VfM indicators of Effectiveness. For example, 1 student achieving a 10 % improvement in attainment will cost 85 EUR, representing 90 % effectiveness.
- → Considering Equity throughout.

The guide can be used (a) during the planning/proposal stage, (b) during the evaluation stage (mid-term or endline) or (c) anytime during or after a project. If the guide is used during the planning/proposal stage, a logical framework and a budget are needed. If the project's VfM needs to be accessed during or after a project, a document of actual spending is required.

The second tool referring to the second question, the VfM Systems Matrix, can be used during the proposal stage as a checklist of items to be considered during identification and planning. It can also be used during project implementation as a self-assessment tool or by a project evaluator. It requires a review of the project documents, internal procedures and discussions with programme and support staff. The Matrix can be used jointly with the Step-by-Step Guide to ensure a comprehensive VfM analysis is carried out.

4Es

PIN uses the 4Es to evaluate and demonstrate the true value of our projects, and to ensure they are evidence-based (effective) and provide the most sustainable solutions for the most vulnerable (equity).

Economy: refers to the costs of the inputs needed for the project, e.g. unit costs of staff, materials and equipment. Note that this includes both support costs and direct costs to project participants. We want the minimum cost for the inputs of the required quality.

Efficiency: refers to the cost of achieving each unit indicator at the output level, i.e. what output you get for the input you put in. We want to maximise the output for a given input.

Effectiveness: refers to whether the project's outputs will translate into the project's outcomes and at what cost. A project's Theory of Change must be evidence-based.

Equity: refers to whether the project is addressing social or economic disparity. A cross-cutting principle to consider throughout the VfM analysis

The Leave No Girl Behind project

The Leave No Girl Behind project gives girls in rural areas of Ethiopia the opportunity to start or re-start their education. As part of the project, we provide literacy and numeracy courses to girls who have never gone to school or who have dropped out, encouraging them to enrol and successfully complete school grades or other educational courses, such as Technical and Vocational Education and Training. Throughout the project, we also focus on developing life skills on topics such as hygiene and sanitation, rights, family planning, nutrition awareness and business. From there, we then assist the girls in transitioning to higher education and finding employment.

VfM at PIN

All resources developed by People in Need are available online at: www.valueformoney.guide. For PIN, 2017 was a year dedicated to the VfM approach and the development of related tools, while 2018 has been a year for testing the tools and adjusting them to PIN's needs. The intention is to develop universal tools that can be used and adapted by any organisation. PIN has started conducting VfM analysis for selected projects and has been applying the results to project-preparation and implementation phases. One of these is the DFID-funded, Leave No Girl Behind (LNGB) project, which focuses on improving learning outcomes of marginalised girls in Ethiopia.

VfM analysis was conducted during the proposal stage when the project's budget was in the process of being finalised and approved by the donor. However, the proposal had already been submitted. At this stage, the VfM analysis produced three key findings. Firstly, it revealed weak spots in the proposed budget, which led to it being adjusted before submission. Secondly, the analysis identified a key cost for each output, which helped broaden the discussion as to how each should be monitored. Finally, the analysis identified evidence for the potential of the planned outputs/results to achieve their intended outcomes. In order to fully exploit the VfM analysis, follow-up meetings were scheduled with the aim of incorporating the results of the analysis into the project-monitoring plan. The analysis was limited in that the VfM approach is based on using a budget that divides direct and indirect costs among specific outputs/results, whereas the DFID budget template divides direct costs among results but summarises indirect costs all together.

The Take-Away

Our experience shows that VfM analysis can not only contribute to a more balanced and relevant budget preparation, but also to the creation of stronger logical frameworks and theories of change. They must be evidence-based and balance the project's economy, efficiency and effectivity without compromising equity. The extent to which VfM analysis can be used depends on the stage at which VfM tools are employed, i.e. whether the tools are used during proposal and budget development or after submission.

Eventually, VfM analysis will become a natural part of project development workflow. Until that happens, though, we should continue to ask ourselves the following question before making future submissions: **What is the cost of reaching each output and outcome of our project and are these costs justifiable?**

This project has been supported by:

CZECH REPUBLIC DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Our social media at glance

People in Need @people_in_need
October 22

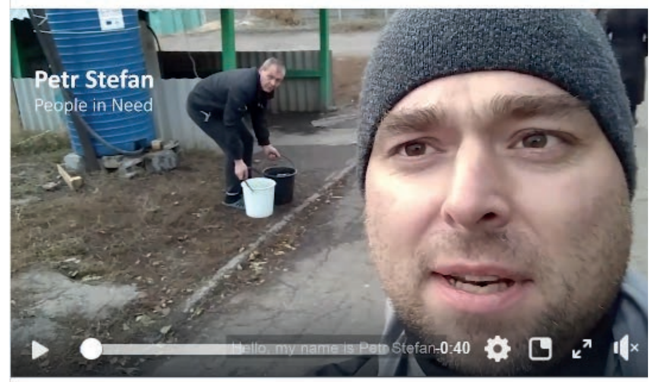
"I've learnt that when the baby is 6 months old, he should start eating solid food," says a mother who receives #mHealth messages sent by PIN in #Angola.
We work together w/ @unitelao and Fundo Soberano de Angola/@AfrInnovFdn.

People in Need - Official
October 31

For two years we have been involved in the EU Aid Volunteers initiative, which has enabled us to send talented volunteers from around the EU to missions all over the world.
This week, nearly one hunderd volunteers and representatives from NGOs and the European Union are meeting in Brussels to reflect on this program and to share valuable experiences.
Would you like to join us as an EU Aid volunteer? Various EUAV positions will be open at the end of this year, so keep checking our website www.peopleinneed.cz!

People in Need - Official
November 4

Our colleague Petr Stefan managed to shoot a short video in a village called Bakhmutka just a few hundred meters from the frontline in eastern Ukraine.
All the wells in the village have dried up due to shelling. People in Need, with the support of the European Commission - Civil Protection & Humanitarian Aid Operations - ECHO., is delivering potable water twice a week there.



people_in_need_official
November 6

people_in_need_official Quiz time: which country has the longest history of beekeeping in the world, dating back 5,500 years? #Georgia! Together with @czechAid we support them through trainings on new technologies, business skills, breeding, bee health and quality control.
@dreams_in_my_backpack
#peopleinneed #honey #bees #beekeeper

INSPIRED

ACCOUNTABILITY

3 | NOV 2018

INSPIRED is an internal PIN publication intended primarily for Relief and Development Department staff and sharing with relevant donors and partners.

INSPIRED is produced by the Communication & Advocacy Department in cooperation with the Knowledge and Learning Department of PIN.

THIS ISSUE WAS PREPARED BY:
Issue Coordinator: Kateřina Gabrielová and Eleanor Davis
Technical Adviser: Petra Humlová
Graphic Designer: Martin Kovalčík and Nina Damová
Editors: Michael FitzGerald and Anna Munter

PEOPLE IN NEED
peopleinneed.cz

People in Need, a Czech non-governmental organization (NGO) that has been providing aid in troubled regions and supporting respect for human rights since 1992. Since then, People in Need has grown into one of the largest NGOs in Central Europe. Today, its work focuses on relief and development aid, advocacy for human rights and democratic freedom, field social work, and education, awareness and information.

ALLIANCE 2015
alliance2015.org

Alliance2015 is a strategic partnership of seven European NGOs engaged in humanitarian and development activities. Besides People in Need (Czech Republic), Alliance2015 members are ACTED (France), Cesvi(Italy), Concern Worldwide (Ireland), HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation (Switzerland), Hivos (The Netherlands) and Welthungerhilfe (Germany).

www.peopleinnned.cz