PROCEDURES AND TECHNOLOGIES THAT ALLOW YOU TO MANAGE RISKS WHEN REGISTERING TO RECEIVE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF HUMANITARIAN REGISTRATIONS IN UKRAINE IN 2022-23)

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Summary. Humanitarian missions have obligations and standards of performance. Part of these standards consists of registering program participants for the distribution of humanitarian aid. Often the length of the registration process can be an additional risk, and implementing tools to reduce the time of the registration process without compromising the completeness and quality of data can have a significant impact on humanitarian programs.

Key words: humanitarian aid, registration of humanitarian aid, monitoring and evaluation tools, risks in humanitarian aid, humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, consequences of Russia’s war against Ukraine, M&E, data collection mobile tool, DIIA technology use.

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During humanitarian missions, the task is to register potential participants in assistance programs.

This process is quite significant and the quality of the collected data is often the basis for the quality of the program itself. Registration is the collection of data, most often personal, including data on vulnerabilities and medical conditions. The collected data is necessary to formalize and validate the approach to distributing available assistance. Often, registration form data is based on the principle of providing a scoring model, that is, each question asked in one way or another influences the decision on distribution and assistance, and although communicate approach\(^1\) distribution of aid is often not possible\(^2\) transparency and accountability require consistency of action.

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\(^1\) John Borton. An Overview of Humanitarian Accountability, - THE 2008 HUMANITARIAN ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

In addition, data and their subsequent processing are necessary for software training and critical thinking about the formation of certain approaches to distribution\(^1\), simply put, it is necessary to analyze not only those who successfully passed the selection, but also those who applied for help and did not receive it, in order to understand whether the selected distribution model is really appropriate to the situation.

Considering all of the above, approaches and methods for collecting data for registration are very important. We will leave out of this article methods that do not involve personal contact between the interviewer and the respondent; we will only note that many of these methods also respond to the challenges of the time and have their own limits of use in each context.

Here we will talk about direct personal registration using the face-to-face method.

Increasingly, when we talk about face-to-face data collection, we talk about the use of mobile applications such as Kobo, Ona or Commcare, and this applies even with regions with poor mobile coverage, since technologies already provide\(^2\) the ability to temporarily store data and transfer it to the server after receiving a connection, for example.

New technologies solve most problems, even the issue of the impossibility of re-registration: for example, the use of case management technology in Commcare or automatic connection to a common database of registrations available in the region based on blockchain technologies.

And yet there are humanitarian interventions that face a challenge: without losing the information content, validity and quality of the data collected, to reduce the time of such registration to a minimum.

The work in Ukraine in 2022-2023 is such an example: as humanitarian intervention is carried out during full-scale military operations, accompanied by frequent air strikes throughout the country. This leaves an imprint on all actions, and in particular on the registration tool, posing a challenge - to make registration as short as possible in time. After all, the duration of such registrations may in fact mean an increased or, conversely, reduced risk to the lives of workers and program participants.

This becomes especially important along the demarcation lines, where constant artillery shelling is carried out.

Below is an implementation scheme for registrations, which, using a combination of various tools, made it possible to reduce the time of household registration by more than five times without changing the questionnaire questions. This is achieved through risk management, quality awareness of participants, operating with stable definitions and the use of technology. Some of the described methods are universal and can be used everywhere, while others are quite unique and can so far only be used in Ukraine due to the prevalence of technology.

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Safety comes first.

To ensure this principle in the conditions described, it is important to avoid open mass registrations. In particular, if the place and time of registrations are public and open, or if it is possible for everyone passing by to join the registrations, then it will be difficult to avoid the crowd, which significantly increases risks.

Attacks are often carried out at such points of any humanitarian action, despite the norms of international law.\(^1\), sometimes as a result of non-selectivity of target, sometimes points can become a target\(^2\).

Therefore, it is recommended to use a more complex and comprehensive approach to find potential participants in the program: break it down into stages and perform preliminary pre-registration, the so-called identification. This can be done in different ways, for example,

- when targeting a program to displaced persons - such lists can be requested on a regular basis from local authorities,
- working through the involvement of local organizations, it is possible to identify participants through those who turn to local organizations for help,
- you can open self-registration using online tools, bots, short questionnaires or calls.

The main goal of this approach is the possibility of introducing control over the flow of people at registration.

After preliminary identification, it becomes possible to contact people and invite them to a specific place and time, avoiding the publication of this data.

You can choose more than one permanent place for registration, it is good to disperse registrations throughout the locality, reducing the time and effort for participants to travel\(^3\). It is also worth paying attention to the requirements for the physical security of such locations, and in cases of the described context of registrations in Ukraine, avoid proximity to potentially dangerous objects targeted for attack, avoid glass structures, provide for the presence of at least two walls, and better be able to quickly and easily move into shelter together with registration participants.

A general recommendation for all humanitarian processes is to refrain from activities during an air raid to avoid putting participants and staff at risk, and to avoid misinterpreting such activities as requiring exposure to danger in order to receive humanitarian assistance.

Of course, this approach has its limitations and does not aim to become a universal method of organizing registrations, but it covers most of the problematic issues when broadly targeting, for example, migrants or refugees who have means of communication (mobile phones).

Using this approach and knowing well the statistics of your target group, you can separately use focal registration measures: for example, if necessary, close the

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issue of registering groups with limited mobility - organize on-site home registrations.

When inviting participants to register, you should provide them with complete information and answer all their questions. As a rule, this concerns the assistance itself, the rules for its distribution, and the timing of provision.

Next, you need to inform the rules of the registration procedure itself, which should definitely be developed in advance, based on the context of the situation and understand which cases will relate to the general rules, and which procedures will be applied for situations not covered by the rules. Here it is always important to indicate the duration of registration, the need for documents, the complexity of the questions and their sensitivity. It is important to discuss this in advance also in order to get the best respondent for registration, which is very important for situations in which one participant can register on behalf of the entire household.

However, the issue of identifying the best respondent and its intersection with the concepts of head of household and main recipient should be given a separate article. Here we will only touch on the fact that it is necessary to answer all questions when inviting you to register, in order, among other things, to shorten its duration and reduce problems on the spot.

When scheduling registration times, it is best to use the approach of service center administrators. Know the duration of registration and divide the registrars’ working day into such time slots, and assign specific people to register at a specific time. It is also worth asking participants not to be late and at the same time not to arrive earlier, in this way you can achieve the result of having the minimum possible number of people at the registration site.

For the same purpose of managing and reducing risks, if the conditions of the program allow, it is worth asking only one representative from the household to be present with copies of documents or with their electronic versions (more on this later in the article).

The next useful tool of the recommended scheme is the presence in the team of registrars at the field registration point of the position of administrator or queue manager.

Such a person can provide queue management: accept the expected people, recommend that those arriving out of turn - turn to the pre-registration channel (this is important to prevent mass gatherings, as indicated above), and also contact those who are late and move the time, warning of delays on the part of the registrars, which is especially important in the case of air raids that affect schedule changes.

The queue administrator should answer questions, provide orientation in procedures, help check documents before registration, and provide explanations on the informed consent procedure before the registration interview. In addition, if it is necessary to register a household with particular attention: for example, issuing assistance in an amount that is a multiple of the number of household members, or operating in the program as a stable household unit - it is the queue administrator who will be able to ask defining questions in order to transfer the already prepared package of documents and the respondent to the registration. And it is precisely this position as a queue administrator that is key and indispensable for familiarizing participants with the program's feedback mechanisms.
Separately, it is worth noting the possibility of automatic registration of personal data of Ukrainian citizens based on documents that have electronic versions contained in the state software “Diia”.

Each document reflected in this application has individual barcodes and QR codes. Modern technologies make it possible to read such codes and automatically enter data from such documents into data collection programs.

The experience of the author of the material speaks of the successful use of such technology in the CommCare app. Despite the fact that the codes are valid for no more than 3 minutes after they are generated, this does not negatively affect the ability to read basic data, which is sufficient to register for humanitarian aid.

In addition, the same tool allows you to read bank card numbers both through number reading technology and through the use of a QR code for replenishment. The second method is preferable, since it contains not only the card number, but also full bank details. However, not all banking providers have the function of generating QR for replenishing an account.

This tool has objective limitations: not everyone has a personal smartphone, the ability to demonstrate data, and of course this tool should not be the only possible one, so as not to become the main one for exclusion. However, based on technology penetration statistics’smartphones among the Ukrainian population, such a tool can be regarded as capable of satisfying most situations.

Based on the experience of piloting the technology, more than 75% of the participants found this opportunity convenient and used it; for others, a standard registration form was used with manual data entry.

However, in general statistics, the use of technology has significantly reduced the overall time and duration of the registration process and has also significantly improved the quality of the data obtained.

References: