

TOOL 11

Sample terms of reference for a UASC technical working group

Terms of Reference for the Inter-Agency Child Protection Case Management & Information Management System Steering Committee

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone are facing the largest Ebola viral disease (EVD) outbreak ever recorded. The cumulative number of confirmed cases stands at 13,676 across the three countries, with an estimated 2,100 child deaths. Additionally, an estimate 7,500 children have lost at least one parent and now face stigma and discrimination from some of their relatives and neighbours.

Life can be traumatic for children living in EVD-affected countries. Death and grieving surround them. They watch medical personnel in masks and protective gear take away bodies and spray liquids around the homes of the lost. They are missing school, which has been closed because of the outbreak. Children are even discouraged from playing with other children and often confined to their homes. No aspect of a child's life is untouched by this outbreak, and children do not know how to respond. While public health professionals are working to stop the outbreak, the extreme circumstances in the affected countries also require critical child protection services to ensure children are protected from

harm. The Government of Sierra Leone, through the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (MSWGCA) and in partnership with UNICEF, is scaling up efforts to build and strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacities of EVD survivors and the affected population, especially children, to better cope with the impact of risks and hazards of the crisis. It is doing so in collaboration with its partners in the child protection, psychosocial with gender pillar and with local communities.

Given the scale of the EVD response required, the MSWGCA in partnership with UNICEF, as co-pillar leads, are working with other child protection agencies. Their aim is to strengthen child protection coordination structures and ensure that appropriate alternative care arrangements, including kinship and foster care, are made available to unaccompanied and separated children, while also conducting family tracing to reunite these children with their families.

As part of this effort, 13 Observational Interim Care Centres (OICC) have been opened in 12 districts to provide care for a 21-day quarantine period for children who have been in contact with the virus and are without parental care. Plans are urgently under way to open another four OICCs through the MSWGCA and partners. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) have been developed under the leadership of the MSWGCA and Ministry of Health, and have been approved by the National Ebola Response Centre for operationalization. The OICC will be mainly staffed by survivor health staff and workers.

The cumulative number of children documented by UNICEF through the Family Tracing and Reunification network is 15,258 (7,594 boys and 7,664 girls), of which 7,968 (3,985 boys/3,983 girls) have lost one or both parents and 552 (253 boys/299 girls) are unaccompanied. These cumulative numbers are registered in a database led by the MSWGCA, but upon registration, tracing and ongoing follow-up is problematic given the high volume and centralized management of the database.

In order to provide an accurate and shared evidence base for child protection response, the MSWGCA and its partners are currently taking immediate measures to secure a common dataset on persons who are infected or have been in contact with the virus, disaggregated by district, gender, age and admin level 3, to inform the response in all districts and guide policy initiatives and programming response.

It is important to note that the global Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) database has been customized as a web-based application site and can interface with external database and information systems. This means that data can be moved electronically into the centralized data repository on a regular and timely basis. The multi-user software possesses six important design features: availability, manageability, reliability, scalability and is secure and user-friendly. However, the incumbent Steering Committee and the child protection inter-agency working group will evaluate these six qualities highlighted during the course of this assignment.

The MSWGCA and UNICEF's contribution to improving data management within the overall EVD response also includes the establishment of a common activity set among partners in the affected countries; a corresponding common indicator set; ongoing tracking of the needs and the response; and timely analysis and sharing of incoming data on child protection with partners, including government.

The completion of this assignment will facilitate the establishment of an effective CPIMS with databases set up in the MSWGCA and all child protection agencies working in the EVD epidemic response. The effective functioning of the national CPIMS to be developed will support case management, including tracking the situation of children within the continuum of care, identifying child protection concerns and the well-being of children that are in need of care and protection, as well as those placed in community-based alternative care arrangements.

B. CONTEXT OF AN INTER-AGENCY CHILD PROTECTION CASE MANAGEMENT & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (IA CP CM & IMS)

There is growing demand for evidence-based programming, and national institutions and child protection humanitarian agencies, including donors, are facing increasing demand by the general public, donors and communities themselves to demonstrate attributable results from humanitarian action in response to the EVD epidemic.

The MSWGCA has statutory responsibility to monitor and report on child protection and child well-being programmes. It also has responsibility to ensure the availability of child-focused data and provide continuous and regular data for other government institutions, decision-makers and programme implementing partners that reflect performance in the child protection sector; such data can also be used to provide evidence of the achievements of the EVD epidemic programme response. Monitoring and reporting are needed to make informed decisions about programme implementation, to demonstrate that resources are being used effectively and efficiently, and to make conclusions regarding the extent to which EVD epidemic programmes can be judged a success or failure.

The database system is intended for monitoring and reporting on child well-being and protection. It will be used for organizing, storing and presenting data in a uniform way to facilitate data sharing at all levels – national, district, chiefdom, ward levels across government departments, child protection NGO partners, and donors. The system to be developed will support both standard indicators and user-defined indicators and will be compliant with international statistical standards to support open access and widespread data exchange. The system will operate both as a desktop application as well as on the web, so it can be accessed from anywhere.

The system provides an ideal tool for evidence-based planning, results-focused monitoring, and advocacy purposes. In sum, the MSWGCA, UNICEF, and other

child protection partners aim to help track and report on the progress of Sierra Leone's children towards realizing their rights to access humanitarian assistance and beyond.

Generally, the anticipated IA CP IMS focal functions are as follows: collect, store, process, and disseminate data related to child protection in emergencies, providing timely, relevant information to stakeholders using functional and user-friendly interfaces. In its normal operations, the CPIMS employs both manual and ICT functions. The establishment of the IA CP IMS also promotes an institutional culture that utilizes objective information for policy formulation and implementation and seeks to sustain the policy process through accurate, reliable and timely statistical information.

C. TECHNICAL VISION AND APPROACH

- To establish and strengthen the implementation of an IA CP IMS as part of a wider effort to collect, analyse and disseminate information on child protection and well-being to ensure long-term sustainability and usage of the database system.
- To strengthen the technical capacity of the MSWGCA and child protection agencies at all levels to adapt IA CP IMS to their national monitoring strategies and thereby effectively use CP IMS technology to monitor progress in child protection in emergencies and social welfare interventions.
- To provide access to timely and relevant information that is necessary for solutions.
- To help close data gaps and improve data quality.

D. COORDINATION

In order to build consensus among partners on the parameters of the CP CM & IMS and establish effective mechanisms on the coordination of care and support to all vulnerable children that are affected by the EVD epidemic, a partners meeting will be organized by the MSWGCA in coordination with the national child protection working group. The working group comprises the following organizations: UNICEF, Save the Children, International Rescue Committee, FHM, World Vision, CARITAS, XXX, and other government ministries – Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and XXX to:

- Share the child protection, gender and psychosocial pillar EVD epidemic results framework, district plans and strategy
- Identify and share common understanding, approaches, challenges and promising practices in planning, developing and managing an IA CP CM & IMS and coordination of care and support to survivors of the EVD epidemic and other populations impacted by the current emergency
- Stimulate effective coordination mechanisms among stakeholders to develop strategies and take actions that will strengthen EVD programme implementation at all levels to support the establishment of the IA CP IMS and effective coordination of humanitarian action
- To establish an IA CP CM and IMS Steering Committee at the national level that will provide technical oversight and guide the planning, establishment and management of the IA CP CM & IMS.

- Build consensus and agree on the parameters of the IA CP CM & IMS and coordination of care.

The MSWGCA will continue to provide the required leadership, overall coordination and commitment to work with all relevant stakeholders, leverage resources and continually assess the status of the development of the IA CP CM & IMS and share this information with all concerned. Therefore, the MSWGCA will serve as a chair and secretariat of the IA CP CM & IMS Steering Committee, and UNICEF will serve as co-chair.

E. TASKS OF THE NATIONAL CP CM & IMS STEERING COMMITTEE

An efficient working group comprising technical experts from relevant ministries and non-governmental organizations, including child protection agencies and donors, is organized to lead the development, management and sustainability of the IA CP CM & IMS.

I. Overarching objective of the IA CP CM & IMS Steering Committee

The development and maintenance of an IA CP CM & IMS is a significant undertaking and will require the technical and financial input of many different actors with experience and expertise. The Steering Committee will be an important part of this effort. The primary objective of the Steering Committee is to support the ongoing efforts of the MSWGCA to provide technical input in the course of planning, designing, implementing and managing child protection cases of all children identified or referred to the social welfare system. The Steering Committee will hold regular meetings to plan, discuss and track progress made so far and to identify and contribute to the management of risks associated with the development and long-term maintenance of the IA CP CM & IMS.

II. Specific tasks of the Steering Committee

1. Provide technical input into the development of IA CP CM & IMS strategic documents.
2. Provide technical support regarding issues related to planning, developing and managing the IA CP CM & IMS.
3. Provide inputs to the development of a well-prioritized and realistic action plan to monitor and report sector indicators and activities.
4. Develop a case management process, including SOPs and data protocols.
5. Provide input for the development of relevant indicators so that the IA CP CM & IMS database has timely, valid, integrated, precise, reliable and consistent information.
6. Provide input into the data management processes with an emphasis on the source, collection, collation, analysis, reporting and utilization of data. This will contribute to the achievement of the expected outcome and results indicators, including their relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coverage, and coherence with EVD humanitarian action.
7. Identify, quantify and contribute to the efforts of the MSWGCA to control risk to ensure that the product developed is used for its intended purpose.

8. Provide technical input into the development of data-quality assessment tools, the definition of a harmonized data-flow system, development of user-friendly data collection tools, and a data-entry system.
9. Provide insight and suggestions to identified consultants/consulting firms hired for specific activities related to conducting a situation analysis of data systems and data use, aggregation of core indicators that will be used to collect data/information from relevant stakeholders, development of the data management system, taking into account the use of appropriate software and hardware and verify quality of their outputs; provide capacity development.
10. Provide input regarding the content of training to relevant stakeholders in the use, maintenance and administration of the IA CP CM & IMS at both national and district levels.
11. Provide input into draft documents delivered by the staff that are working on the development of the system.

III. Deliverables of the Steering Committee

- A clear strategy and roadmap with a definite time frame for the establishment of the IA CP CM & IMS
- Relevant indicators identified and data flow system developed
- Regular coordination meetings held at the national level and with district structures
- Case management process, SOPs and data protocols developed
- Contribute to technical feasibility and risk mitigation in the planning, development and management of the system
- Follow up on the efficient integration of child-related issues and data residing with other stakeholders and partners.

F. STEERING COMMITTEE COMPOSITION, MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS AND STRUCTURE

Key government ministries and agencies, UN agencies, donors and NGOs working in the child protection sector can be represented by a person or two (as appropriate) in the Steering Committee. The experts representing these entities should be closely involved in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of endeavours to promote the well-being of children and/or technically adept in child-related data management systems. While the MSWGCA will chair the Steering Committee, other member organizations will be assigned specific tasks, as appropriate.

Composition of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee will be composed of different line ministries, donors and partners based on their experience in planning, developing and managing relevant management information systems and databases. The composition of the Steering Committee is MSWGCA.

The representatives of the above-mentioned stakeholders should come from different disciplines and include, for example, a M&E specialist, information technology specialist, and programme specialist.

Structure of the national CP CM & IMS Steering Committee at the national level and its interaction with district coordination structures



Accountability of the national CP CM & IMS Steering Committee

The MSWGCA has overall responsibility and accountability based on its mandate to ensure that the IA CP CM & IMS is developed and sustained in coordination with all relevant government ministries, and other child protection partners. It will provide the required oversight throughout this process.

The IA CP CM & IMS Steering Committee is accountable to the MSWGCA's Children's Directorate, and will coordinate work in the planning, development and management of the IA CP CM & IMS. The District Coordination Committees are also accountable to their respective MSWGCA structures. Regarding technical support and coordination, the national effort for the IA CP CM & IMS will be coordinated by MSWGCA with support from UNICEF and other child protection agencies and donors. This includes technical capacity building of other partners, while district structures will receive support from the Child Protection Working Group.

Linkages between the IA CP CM & IMS Steering Committee and the District CP CM & IMS Coordination Committees:

- MSWGCA, in collaboration with its partners, will establish District CP CM & IMS Coordination Committees in all 14 districts.
- The District Coordination Committee is accountable and reports to the IA CP CM & IMS Steering Committee national/MSWGCA Children's Directorate.
- The District Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs (DSWGCA) office will lead the district coordination structure office.
- Members will include relevant stakeholders, similar to the national level
- The District Coordination Committee will follow up and support the establishment of IA CP CM & IMS at district and lower levels, ensuring linkages with the national CP IMS and sustainability.
- Joint IA CP CM & IMS Steering Committee and District Coordination Committee meetings
- will be held on bi-monthly basis.
- District Coordination Committee chairperson/DSWGCA representative will share progress reports at the bi-monthly meetings.

Chairpersonship and the responsibility of the chair

The Director of Social Services of the MSWGCA will chair the Steering Committee at the national level, while the District Social Services Officer of the DSWGCA will act as chair at the district level at the same time serving as secretariat to coordinate the implementation of tasks to be identified. The responsibilities of the chair include:

- Sets the agenda for each meeting
- Ensures the agenda and supporting materials are delivered to members in advance of meetings
- Encourages broad participation from members
- Ferrets out and shares information relating to the planning and development of the IA CP CM & IMS.

G. MEETINGS AND LOCATION

- The IA CP CM & IMS Steering Committee shall meet on a monthly basis with extraordinary meetings held when necessary and called by the chair.
- The Steering Committee will meet at the MSWGCA conference room and adequate provisions are made to ensure that member of the committee are accommodated.
- The agenda for the upcoming meeting, minutes of the previous meeting and any other documents/information to be considered at the meeting shall be sent to members three to five business days in advance of the next Steering Committee meeting.

Meetings will be held on the second Friday of each month at 10:00 a.m.