department of internal oversight services

high level evaluation of the organizational structure in Lebanon Field Office

May 2014
About UNRWA
UNRWA is a United Nations agency established by the General Assembly in 1949 and is mandated to provide assistance and protection to a population of some 5 million registered Palestine refugees. Its mission is to help Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, West Bank and Gaza to achieve their full potential in human development, pending a just solution to their plight. UNRWA services encompass education, health care, relief and social services, camp infrastructure and improvement, microfinance and emergency assistance. UNRWA is funded almost entirely by voluntary contributions.

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Cover photo: Palestine refugees sharing housing in Lebanon © Mahmoud Khair / UNRWA Archives
evaluation division – may 2014

high level evaluation of the organizational structure in lebanon field office

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abbreviations

A/D/DUA/S Acting / Deputy / Director of UNRWA Affairs / Support
D/DUA/P Deputy / Director of UNRWA Affairs / Programme
DUA Director of UNRWA Affairs
DIOS Department of Internal Oversight Services
DRU Donor Relations Unit
HR Human Resources
LFO Lebanon Field Office
NBC Naher El-Bared Camp
NMU Northern Management Unit
OSO Operations Support Office
PCGU Placement and Career Guidance Unit
PIO Public Information Office
PRS Palestine Refugees from Syria
PSO Programme Support Office
SSA Special Service Agreement
TVET Technical Vocational Education and Training
introduction

In early October, the Lebanon Field Office (LFO) initiated a query to the UNRWA Headquarters Evaluation Division within the Department of Oversight Services (DIOS) to ask for assistance to evaluate the LFO organizational structure and make recommendations to better align its resources. The DIOS Evaluation Division responded positively to that request. The LFO, with an evolved structure, has expanded as a function of arising needs.

The LFO Director of UNRWA Affaires (DUA), the Acting Deputy Director of UNRWA Affaires for Support (A/D/DUA/S) and the Deputy Director of UNRWA Affaires for Programmes (D/DUA/P) have raised specific issues that will be addressed. Specifically these include the following issues.

- Nahr El-Bared Camp (NBC) funding for 2014 is being reduced, thus there is a need to reduce staff.
- Northern Management Unit (NMU) departing staff implies perhaps a shift of administrative and financial functions back to LFO Beirut.
- Palestine Refugees from Syria (PRS) activities are transiting from crisis to long-term interventions with implications on staffing arrangements particularly if there is an ability to use NBC resources to meet PRS requirements.
- Finance staff redundancies across departments need to be removed and operations made more efficient within the core finance team as such there is a need to look at the Finance PRS response need for additional resources using current staff who are reassigned.
- Public Information Office (PIO) vacancies are hindering service delivery especially with respect to interpretation and translation services.
- Programme Support Office (PSO) covers a number of services including Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Monitoring and Evaluation, the Placement and Career Guidance Unit (PCGU), Scholarships, and Assessments for Programme Departments in LFO. This combination of services is not logical and requires to be addressed.
- The current structure of the Operations Support Office (OSO) /Protection Team to be reviewed in order to ascertain what additional resources are required to meet the increased demand related to PRS concerns. Specifically determine whether the current balance of assets between Legal Aid/Protection and border monitoring should be adjusted and review the management chain and structure with a recommendation on how best to strengthen.
- The leadership of the Human Resources office (HR) is relatively new and looking towards changing the way human resources operates in LFO.

Given the present situation of reduced resources and key personnel vacancies, the timing is advantageous to propose a more appropriate structure for consideration.

summary of recommendations

The Evaluation team’s recommendations are summarized below. It will be upon LFO leadership to implement these, and several of them will require significant will and energy to have them implemented during a complex emergency.

1. Coordination between programmes, projects and emergency delivery should be improved. The coordination function

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1 The DUA is willing to enforce the implementation of agreed upon recommendations based upon her declaration during the meeting with the Evaluation team on 5 November 2013 in the presence of the A/D/DUA/S
therefore should be streamlined with fewer offices being involved in coordination. Since it is a highly sensitive function, it will need to be at an appropriately high level (See diagrams in Annex Two). LFO leadership should decide on the nature of the protection services provided and if protection should cover staff.

2. For Communication efforts to be relevant, they must be more strategically implemented. The reinforcement of the PIO/Communications office is recommended and this should strengthen work on issues of strategic importance.

3. If the LFO leadership believes that decentralized evaluation is useful this should be established within the structure (Refer to the diagrams in Annex Two).

4. All financial support should be centralized in the Finance Department except for financial support in each of the area offices. To do the financial centralization and make it operational, service level agreements are required across projects, field offices and programmes.

5. HR needs to prioritize reorganization areas with a clear view on resource requirements for these areas. Because HR has not been able to cost out the desired reforms across the LFO, the front office should not decide on what reforms need to be implemented until that is done. For example, if LFO chooses to move forward on creating rosters for all professions, HR needs to have a clear picture on the resource implications within HR and the political implications throughout LFO. To address the mismatch between tasks performed and contractual arrangements LFO should request a review of the fixed term headcount and or hiring modalities from headquarters Amman (HR Department, and ACRA).

6. Project / programme implementation of TVET, career guidance and scholarships needs to move out of PSO. Given the past challenges of education department in these areas, Education Department could take these on after being strengthened. It necessary to reorganize PSO, PIO, DRU and Protection. Reorganization must insure increased substance and appropriate relationships within each office and clearer roles and responsibilities (Refer to diagrams of potential options in Annex Two).

7. DRU is overloaded with functions not necessarily in the core profile. These functions need to be reassigned. Specifically monitoring and reporting would require more involvement of project managers, (this will require the front office to enforce performance of project managers).

8. Communication throughout LFO needs to be more strategic, building on lessons from the past.

9. HR needs to be the owner of the staffing situation in the different departments and offices. The personnel files should be kept in the human resources office and HR should determine the final staffing of all offices throughout LFO. However, this should only be transferred if the human resources office can provide a plan on how its own resources will match this additional workload.

10. LFO needs to be more strategic in its interaction with donors, as a first step required activities need to be prioritized and fundraising done proactively including that projects need adequate support structures including dedicated project managers.

11. Contractual arrangements (for staff) need to be reviewed and adjusted to match core functions with fixed term contracts, SSAs with clearly defined tasks. Daily-paid personnel should be used appropriately for temporary and low level staff, not to be used to replace SSAs, for example.

12. Without increasing the overall headcount, the LFO leadership should allocate more
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staff to HR and should facilitate the implementation of HR plans to remove the personnel bottleneck felt at all levels of the LFO.

objectives

The evaluation objective is to analyse the current LFO organization structure of support services and recommend improvements.

methodology

The mission carried out an evaluation of the staffing and organizational structure of LFO. To do this, the mission followed a simple set of activities. These activities are listed below.

1. Agreed on the background paper prior to the mission’s arrival in Lebanon.
2. The mission started with an introduction and the expectations for the mission from the DUA and the D/DUA/P and the A/D/DUA/S.
3. Each day involved a series of meetings and discussions with UNRWA staff ending with the evaluation team documenting the day’s activities.
4. The mission talked with and listened to LFO staff in key offices, divisions and projects as selected by the LFO front office. The focus was on listening, so as to collect the most information possible in a limited amount of time. There were one-on-one meetings with actual or acting department and division chiefs. Focus group meetings with senior level staff (minus office chiefs) were held to obtain their viewpoints as a counter balance to their supervisor’s points of view. The evaluation team ensured that the staff interviewed had a gender balance and that the discussions would include gender issues.
5. Based on the best understanding of the team from the interaction with interviewed staff, the team developed an as is scenario and several options how the structure of support services could be changed. The team aimed to provide to the LFO front office a better understanding by defining clear functions provided by the support offices so that decisions made with respect to potential structural changes addressed the issues identified by the LFO front office.
6. A meeting with the A/D/DUA/S was held to examine and ground truth these proposed scenarios.
7. A final meeting with the LFO DUA and A/D/DUA/S was held prior to the departure of the evaluation team from Lebanon to present and obtain feedback on the evaluation preliminary findings.
8. The evaluation team put together the draft evaluation report to be submitted to the LFO DUA and A/D/DUA/S.
9. LFO provided comments to the evaluation team on the draft report.
10. The evaluation team incorporated the comments into the final report to be issued by DIOS.
11. Additional information was sought from the previous management of LFO.
12. The draft report will be circulated back to LFO for final comments.
13. The report will be issued.
14. LFO will send a management response back to the Evaluation Division.

The evaluation used the five domains of evaluation: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability as the basis for the work. The evaluation team, given the short timeframe was obliged to limit itself to looking at only a few relevance issues. UNRWA as an

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2 This was the only meeting with the D/DUA/P during the evaluation. All future meetings at the D/DUA level were held with the A/D/DUA/S who served as the front office focal point for this evaluation.
organization remains relevant to the current situation where Palestine refugees in the region and in Lebanon specifically depend on UNRWA for services that are a necessity of life. The evaluation team looked for specific examples of how to increase efficiency without the need for increased financial input. Organizational effectiveness goes hand in hand with organizational efficiency. They must be considered together if service delivery is to be improved over time. Portions of LFO’s actual organizational structure do not lend themselves to effective service delivery. It has evolved over time changing at points in time based on judgments made by LFO leadership in the past. The present LFO leadership believes that the evolved LFO structure has cases of redundant personnel and inappropriate department activities or the lack thereof.

It was not in the mandate of this evaluation team to look deeply into the impact of LFO programmes and projects as time and information verification were limiting. Impact is often confused with final results of projects and programmes perceived by beneficiaries. However, there is a need for a future external impact assessment to verify LFO declarations (past and present) of impact especially for projects that have a definite closing date. The evaluation team concentrated its analysis of sustainability as it relates to staffing. The secondary focus was on the use of best practices within departments and offices.

The crosscutting issues of gender and neutrality were woven into the interviews with LFO staff. Understanding gender differences, inequalities and capacities improves the effectiveness of UNRWA’s humanitarian response. This includes but is not limited to: (a) ensuring that all data-collection in the department is disaggregated by sex and age; (b) Making sure staff members with knowledge and experience on gender mainstreaming participate in the programme management cycle process and in formulation of new initiatives; and (c) ensuring equal distribution of male and female colleagues selected for training and career-building opportunities including placement in leadership positions.

As a neutral, impartial UN agency providing humanitarian assistance, UNRWA has a legal framework for operations that requires neutrality of staff, third parties, facilities and beneficiaries. Neutrality is also a core obligation and value of UNRWA staff and an important condition for its donors’ continued trust and financial and political support. This subject was also woven into the interviews with LFO staff.

The Evaluation Consultant, on Capacity Building and Organizational Structures, Dale Rachmeler, Ph.D, acted as the team leader supported by the Chief of the Evaluation Division, Robert Stryk, as a team member. The team leader provided the best practice knowledge and the team member brought to bear his knowledge of UNRWA structures. The team implemented the evaluation field work between 29 October and 6 November 2013.

### Analysis of Domains

The LFO structure is being evaluated against the following evaluation domains.\(^3\)

**Relevance:** Extent to which the activity(s) is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor.

**Efficiency:** Measures qualitative and quantitative outputs in relation to inputs. Efficiency is an economic term which signifies that the intervention is using the least costly resources possible to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted.

**Effectiveness:** Extent to which an activity attains its objectives.

**Impact:** The positive and negative changes produced by an intervention, directly or

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3 OECD Development Assistance Committee, DAC Criteria for Evaluation Development Assistance, 1991
indirectly, intended or unintended. The main impacts and effects are measured against local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The examination should focus on both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of trade and financial conditions.

**Sustainability:** Measures whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Programmes / projects need to be environmentally, organizationally, as well as financially sustainable.

**relevance**

Relevance describes the appropriateness of intervention objectives in relation to the problems the intervention is supposed to address, and to the physical and policy environment within which it operates. It should include an assessment of the quality of intervention preparation and design; i.e. the logic and completeness of the planning process, and the internal logic and coherence of the design.

In the context of the LFO offices that the evaluation team reviewed, relevance relates to the utility of the types of services provided by the offices. The evaluation team established that the offices under review (HR, Finance, Legal, Protection, PSO, PIO / Communication, and DRU) provide services that are essential for the operation of the LFO field including the cross-cutting issues of gender and neutrality. The financial and human resources services were in principle well understood and appreciated by all stakeholders.

The DRU is currently engaged with liaising with donors, drafting project proposals, monitoring progress of projects and programmes as well as reporting to donors. While all these services are relevant for LFO, there was a feeling that the DRU as it stands is not necessarily the right location for monitoring, reporting and project design.

The purpose of both the PIO / Communication office as well as the Protection office was not entirely clear to stakeholders interviewed even though the purposes of these offices are viably stated in various documents. The role of staff, in communicating to refugees to ensure that all the staff provided the same information to refugees, was very apparent. It is the quality of this communication stream that still needs more effort. For example, there is a clearly identified need to communicate better and with only one voice with the refugees. The lack of this is seen as a weakness of UNRWA that limits its ability to implement relevant activities. In many cases the fact that the services have not been fully understood by refugees has led to friction between UNRWA staff and beneficiaries. Senior staff was not entirely clear on how to streamline communications to make their messages more coherent and more easily understood even though guidelines had been previously developed. The PIO / Communications Office prepare press releases and newsletters, which is a function that the evaluation team believes is useful. However, to make it even more relevant, the quality as well as the targeting of the service needs to improve. The evaluation team understands that communication had been a priority for the previous management and was strengthened at the time. However, with key staff of communications moving to new tasks the office is no longer able to maintain the high quality of service.

Protection is concerned with the protection aspect of UNRWA services. However, as all services can be seen through the protection lens, the perceived scope of the protection office’s work is confusing to many. Therefore the relevance of the protection work depends critically on the general approach UNRWA is taking towards programme delivery. Currently this has not been clearly defined, and therefore it seems appropriate to limit the protection work to the core mandate of protection. This would certainly include addressing gender-based violence, registration, access to service issues, the legal status of Palestine refugees in Lebanon and corporal punishment. It was not clear to staff interviewed if protection of staff is something that should be provided by LFO. Staff, however, interpret the name of the
protection office in this way and mentioned to the evaluation team that they perceive a gap in staff protection. The evaluation team believes that staff protection should be (at least partially) addressed by the area staff security policy implemented by the Safety and Security Division.

While managing the TVET, scholarship and employment activities of LFO is a relevant service to Palestine refugees, these are not relevant services to be provided normally by PSO. The terms of reference of PSO still state that it should provide services in coordination, programme support, strategy development, assessment and planning. Right now it only provides assessment services that are highly appreciated by programmes and projects. The inability to provide the other normally mandated PSO services hampers the relevance of PSO within the field office overall.4

Coordination is a service element that is highly relevant for the efficient and effective functioning of the LFO. Without coordinated programme delivery, it will be difficult to avoid overlapping service delivery, or to detect service delivery gaps where essential services are not provided to Palestine refugees in Lebanon. Currently coordination is dispersed between the DRU, PSO, the D/DUA Programme and the DUA, thus negating the essence of coordination.

Evaluation is contributing to the improvement of programmes and projects over the medium term. Many UN Agencies are developing decentralized evaluation functions to provide management with some evidence to make programmatic decisions. In LFO this function is currently not provided.

Findings

1. The services provided by the offices reviewed are all relevant.

2. There are some service gaps that are relevant to the operation of LFO and that are not provided at the level that is required. These are noticeable with respect to Coordination, Communication and Evaluation.

3. Staff feels that the protection unit should also cover their protection. Is this intended by LFO?

Recommendations

1. Coordination between programmes, projects and emergency delivery should be improved. The coordination function therefore should be streamlined with fewer offices being involved in coordination. Since it is a highly sensitive function, it will need to be at an appropriately high level (See diagrams in Annex Two). LFO leadership should decide on the nature of the protection services provided and if protection should cover staff.

2. For Communication efforts to be relevant, they must be more strategically implemented. The reinforcement of the PIO/Communications office is recommended and this should strengthen work on issues of strategic importance.

If the LFO leadership believes that decentralized evaluation is useful this should be established within the structure (Refer to the diagrams in Annex Two).

efficiency

Efficiency assesses whether the project results have been achieved with the most economical utilization of resources, i.e. how well inputs / means have been converted into activities in terms of quality, quantity and time, and the quality of the results achieved.

The LFO efficiency imbalance directly relates to the quality of services it delivers to its beneficiaries, where lower efficiency implies lower quality delivery seen from the beneficiary’s eyes.

Best practices indicate that the duplication of

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4 This description is supported by the D/DUA/P discussion paper of October 10, 2013.
efforts is inefficient as are staff redundancies. If staff is specialized for a specific task, this is typically more efficient than having staff performing many different tasks.

The current situation in LFO has evolved over time by adding tasks leading to the creation of new offices without adequately adjusting the tasks of existing offices. This has eventually led to a situation where some tasks are not efficiently distributed and the overlap had resulted in offices competing for resources rather than collaborating for best results. This is compounded by the changes in senior management, the long periods of senior positions being vacant, and the additional pressure on the LFO leadership coming from the Naher el Bared and the Syrian crises. LFO therefore had to react in an emergency mode to ensure that the most critical tasks were delivered on time at an acceptable level of quality. This emergency mode is, however, not the most efficient way to organize the tasks. Investing more effort in coordination and balancing the workload and tasks of the different offices should pay off in the medium term.

DRU, in itself, is efficient in monitoring projects, producing well-conceived and well written reports in addition to maintaining good donor relations. However the staff of DRU under this arrangement is required to produce much more than the typical output, feel overworked and are worried about the future as the contractual arrangements and the funding security for the future are not secured. DRU’s output is more than what its core mandate requires and they are able to do this in part because of a concentration of international staff. As a result, high output service delivery requirements falls nonetheless on its limited staff. Therefore, the quality of the service is constrained and the efficiency is falling. It is noted that best practice does not recommend such a unit to do project monitoring or require them to do project design. Typically such a unit only gets involved at the reporting stage on quality assurance. It may be seen to be expedient to manage donor relations, write the reports and design the projects that they know meet donor requirements. The PSO conceptually is in the best position to monitor progress and advise programme and project managers on the progress against what was planned, but currently lacks capacity to do so due to the lack of trained personnel assigned to PSO. To be most efficient, reporting should always be initiated by the office responsible for the implementation (programme offices for programmes and project managers for projects) as they would be most aware of service delivery status. Only when this shared responsibility is properly coordinated will there be a higher level of efficiency. DRU could easily take on a coordination role insuring that reports and the design process are timely, meet donor expectations and requirements, and fall into the overall LFO work plan.

PSO is providing good quality assessments in a reasonably efficient way. Best practice indicates that PSO is best placed to lead the planning process, contribute to coordination and provide support to programmes and projects. However, current focus on other tasks prevented PSO from implementing these functions efficiently. The PSO management of TVET, employment services sub-programme and the scholarships project are reasonably efficient but, these are not tasks PSO should typically get engaged with. The past decision to move these sub-programmes into PSO was justified based on their low performance while managed in other offices, given the current focus of UNRWA on youth related programmes. The resulting performance improvements, while managed within PSO, are laudable. Sacrificing the normal functions of PSO previously mentioned should be rectified as the lack of these normal functions has far reaching negative impacts on LFO’s service delivery across all programmes.5

Public information and communication are important strategic functions. Given current staffing, PIO is only able to produce relatively low level documents fairly efficiently. Strengthening of the office during the times of the previous leadership could not be sustained as it involved close management of the process and relied on staff that has since left.

5 The D/DUA/P discussion paper of October 10, 2013 highlights this current situation and presents potential structural modifications to re-focus PSO activities to what its normal mandate should be.
There are other instances where coordination is lacking with other offices leading to inefficiencies.

Protection and security operations are essential, but efficiency is undermined when misperceptions by staff exist as to what each function means. The Protection office is doing good work and is extending services in as many situations as possible. The OSOs are gender-balanced, mostly young, motivated international staff that goes the extra step in providing protection services, especially in PRS cases needing services dealing with violence. However, as international staff, they are very expensive compared to area staff, and with area staff (social workers) already filling the gap during vacancies, a more systematic approach would be needed to utilize this approach adequately. In particular, these highly motivated staff in direct contact with the beneficiaries would be able to conceptualize what they see in their interaction. This resource should be more systematically used in assessment, planning and developing the field strategy, instead of being used like front line service staff.

The Finance Office is not operating efficiently as currently there are finance officers dispersed across offices, departments, projects and programmes. Many staff and office chiefs stated a strong desire to keep their financial officers because they fear that they would have lower service quality and less access to information if the finance officers are only in the finance department. The finance staff in this arrangement is not coordinating well enough to enable the Finance Office to produce up to date financial statements and information for the LFO leadership in a timely manner. Overall this arrangement is not efficient. To address the concerns of office chiefs and project managers, the Finance Office suggested introducing service level agreements\(^6\) to ensure an agreed level of financial services for all functions in LFO. The exception to this rule is that finance officers should still sit in the field finance departments in the area offices. They have proven their worth in a decentralized system and this should not be changed.

HR services seem to be overly ambitious with regards to what the existing staff in the LFO HR office can deliver. This translates to the fact that most processes that the HR office tries to support are under-resourced and not conducted efficiently. Therefore the field HR function more or less operates only at the level of a personnel section. A fundamental reorientation of the field HR function is required so that the services that do have a high priority for the field HR function can be delivered efficiently. For example, some rosters for daily paid employees are out of date and rosters do not exist for all professions. Therefore, some hiring processes are confused, with no clear instructions on how to ensure the best candidates are chosen in a process that normally provides equal access of all applicants.

The contracting terms for many staff do not match the type of work performed. Over the years due to the limited resources and the urgent needs of the Palestine refugees, the practice for hiring daily paid and SSAs staff has moved towards using these categories to replace core functions. The purpose of these contract modalities are that SSAs are output-based so that staff can be hired to achieve a specific result. Daily paid are hired to bridge gaps, for example to replace teachers that are sick. However, if these categories are used to hire for core functions, then staff performing these tasks need training as for any staff in a core function. It also results in colleagues in a specific office performing identical tasks with very different contractual arrangements leading to dissatisfaction and potential conflict within offices. This is at odds with the time limit imposed on both SSAs and daily paid contracts (two years and six month) which were introduced primarily to avoid SSAs and

\(^6\) Service level agreements will determine the level of service offices can expect from the finance department in terms of quality and quantity of the service. The typical requests should be listed and levels of accuracy of the information and timing for the provision of the information agreed. The level of service will have to be monitored and the DDUA will have to assure that the Finance Office is actually providing the service at the agreed level through the line management function. This arrangement should for the time being only be used for the Finance Office in LFO to address the concern of managers to receive accurate and timely information and let go of their finance staff. It is not expected that this arrangement would in the short term be used for all support services.
daily paid contracts being used to replace core staff.

As NBC winds down, PRS is gearing up. Skills from one project are transferable to another in an efficient manner. Indeed as PRS funding also increases, its use to fund support staff in PSO to underpin overall PRS service delivery is an efficient use of resources. DRU positions being tied to NBC funding are very crucial. With the opportunity to rearrange some of the tasks, there might be a possibility to use staff experienced in monitoring and reporting in PSO permitting PSO to take a bigger role towards these functions.

Findings

1. There is duplication and overlap in the organizational structure with regards to DRU, PIO / Communication, PSO and Protection (Refer to diagrams in Annex Two).

2. Financial functions are dispersed throughout LFO making it difficult to get a comprehensive picture of where LFO stands in financial terms. The only function that seems to be useful outside the finance department is the one in the Administrative Office (AO). Departments and projects feel anxious that a centralized finance function would not give them the same level of service.

3. The HR function at the moment is more at the level of a personnel function not able to deal with more strategic issues. The HR function and LFO leadership is aware of the mismatch between the contract duration with the type of work that should be performed, i.e. SSAs for task oriented work, fixed term contracts for core functions, and daily paid for staff temporarily being replaced. However, the limit of fixed term staff headcount is impacting the ability of LFO to address this systematically.

Recommendations

1. All financial support should be centralized in the Finance Department except for financial support in each of the area offices. To do the financial centralization and make it operational, service level agreements are required across projects, field offices and programmes; to address the fear of managers to lose access to their finances.

HR needs to prioritize reorganization areas with a clear view on resource requirements for these areas. Because HR has not been able to cost out the desired reforms across the LFO, the front office should not decide on what reforms need to be implemented until that is done. For example, if LFO chooses to move forward on creating rosters for all professions, HR needs to have a clear picture on the resource implications within HR and the political implications throughout LFO. To address the mismatch between tasks performed and contractual arrangements LFO should request a review of the fixed term headcount and or hiring modalities from headquarters Amman (HR and ACRA).

Effectiveness

Effectiveness relates to the extent to which the intervention has achieved (or is likely to achieve) its objectives, taking into account the perspectives of its beneficiaries. It assesses the contribution made (or expected to be made) by outputs to achievement of the outcome(s) and the degree to which assumptions have affected intervention achievement.

Overall, UNRWA services in LFO are delivered and achieve the desired results. However, not all the offices under review in this evaluation are delivering as effectively as they could be. Project monitoring, reporting, and project design, as well as good donor relations are provided effectively by DRU.

Protection is provided effectively by the
protection office. This includes the issue of neutrality of UNRWA staff. This is particularly true for the protection actions around the legal status of Palestine refugees and the violence aspect. However, the Protection Office does experience limitations when it comes to the interaction with the Lebanese government which is in principle handled by the Legal Office. The Legal office does not seem to be empowered enough to challenge the government on issues pertaining Palestine refugees and might need clearer guidance from the LFO leadership for the protection aspect to be fully effective.

The PSO is not currently effective delivering the normal UNRWA-wide set of services it was created to deliver because the office is basically managing specific projects/sub-programmes. It is not serving as an overall programme office providing support to all activities, providing guidance related to programme issues and LFO operations, and linking the various parts of the overall delivery of services in a coordinated effective fashion to beneficiaries.

Therefore it is strategically important for PSO to reorient itself to its normal functions now that the new FPSO has begun work. It needs to shed its project management responsibilities and it needs to realign itself based on the roles and responsibilities mutually agreed with the front office\(^8\). It also needs to be properly resourced with appropriate staff to be operational. As NBC winds down, suitable staff could be transferred that are currently NBC-funded as a first step.

PIO/Communications while still being relatively efficient it is not effective. The messages delivered by different actors such as the Camp Service Officer, the Area Officer, frontline staff and chiefs and leaders from the LFO headquarters are not consistent. The challenges to implement the strategy for public information and communication as well as having a current focus on relatively low level interaction, rather than being able to prioritize the messages that need to be sent, with a clear vision of how to send it, limit the effectiveness of the office. With new leadership of the PIO / Communications office, there is an opportunity to improve the effectiveness of communications and public information. For that to happen, the office will have to implement a strategic approach. It will most likely have to review and verify what needs to be communicated and with which priority. It must determine how messages should be communicated and specifically what messages need to be sent to each different audience. However, so as not to limit the operation of the office during the re-launch of its strategic approach, it is recommended that the previous approach be reviewed in light of limited resources.

The lack of a clear coordination between the different offices in LFO limits the effectiveness of service delivery. Coordination is crucial to ensure that the portfolio of services provided is coherent and addresses the most urgent needs of Palestine refugees. It is especially important in a situation where different funding modalities are possible and handled in principle by different offices. The coordination ultimately will have to be owned by the DUA, but should be designed and implemented so that the DUA provides the oversight and will not have to deal with the details of the different items. Within projects currently DRU provides some coordination. However, coordination among projects, the overall programme and the emergency activity is currently weak. To strengthen coordination and make it more effective, PSO could play a stronger role supporting in particular the DDUA for Programmes in the coordination role.

TVET, career guidance and scholarships were moved to PSO at a time when the education department with the staff it had did not give them the attention they required. As such the TVET, career guidance and scholarships activities were effectively managed when moved to PSO. However, as mentioned earlier, this structural shift diverted the PSO attention from its core tasks. The education department’s demonstrated lack of understanding of these activities as well as its limited available managerial capacity constrains its ability to take over these responsibilities.

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\(^8\) This finding is consistent with and mirrors the D/DUA/P findings prior to this evaluation start-up.
activities. LFO should consider a new structure to appropriately address these youth-related programmes as mandated by the MTS that would allow LFO to be able to focus on these tasks and give them the attention they need.

The decentralized nature of both finance and human resources throughout the LFO office limits the capacity of both support functions to provide effective services to the LFO leadership. The Finance office delays in providing regular financial status reports because of the need to gather information. HR is not currently able to provide up-to-date organizational diagrams nor have a full overview of the staffing in the different departments and projects due to the decentralized management of some of the contracts. The team obtained a few department organograms but LFO was not able to provide any kind of overall organizational chart reflecting previously proposed structural changes leaving the evaluation team to devise hypothetical structures as shown in Annex Two. To improve effectiveness both functions should operate in a more centralized manner.

Findings

1. FPSO implementing projects / programmes is inappropriate for a support function. It de facto created a fifth programme.

2. DRU is effective in monitoring and reporting for projects as well as with their core task of raising funds and managing donors.

3. Community interaction is not done strategically, and is split between several offices, Camp Service Officer, Area Officer, Communication, Protection and FPSO for assessments.

4. Current PIO / communication activities are concentrated at too low levels and do not deal with strategic issues.

The importance of the TVET, Scholarships and Employment and Youth components have also been highlighted in the handover of the outgoing D/DUA/P suggesting to create a high level independent structure for these tasks.

Recommendations

1. Project / programme implementation of TVET, career guidance and scholarships needs to move out of PSO. Given the past challenges of education department in these areas, Education Department could take these on after being strengthened. It is necessary to reorganize PSO, PIO, DRU and Protection. Reorganization must insure increased substance and appropriate relationships within each office and clearer roles and responsibilities (Refer to diagrams of potential options in Annex Two).

2. DRU is overloaded with functions not in its core profile. These functions need to be reassigned. Specifically monitoring and reporting would require more involvement of project managers (this will require the front office to enforce the performance of project managers).

3. Communication throughout LFO needs to be more strategic, building on lessons from the past.

4. HR needs to be the owner of the staffing situation in the different departments and offices. The personnel files should be kept in the human resources office and HR should determine the final staffing of all offices throughout LFO. However, this should only be transferred if the human resources office can provide a plan on how its own resources will match this additional workload.

Impact

Impact describes broader changes brought about by the intervention. For the purposes of this evaluation, impact can be considered in terms of how coherent the services are that UNRWA delivers in LFO to the Palestine refugees, how strategic the fundraising is, how adequate the programme that LFO delivers is balancing the needs of Palestine refugees with
the available funding, and how staff identifies and appreciates UNRWA as employer.

Given this definition the key elements that determine the impact of the offices are the coordination function and the level of engagement with donors on the programmatic side and the staff relations on the internal side.

Overall LFO is very determined to deliver the best possible programme towards the Palestine refugees. The office is very aware which of the programmes are the highest priority for the refugees and overall the services reflect this reasonably well. There are still some gains to be made with improved coordination among different offices and funding streams as mentioned earlier.

The relations with donors overall seem to be very good and the DRU is able to ensure donors are appreciative of the work UNRWA does. However, the engagement with donors is still more reactive rather than proactive. LFO is more likely to spend resources at short notice to adapt an idea for a project from a donor towards a project that is implementable in the UNRWA context, rather than to convince donors to fund activities that LFO has identified as being essential for the overall programme. The internal LFO strategy and priorities towards fundraising are not communicated clearly enough to move LFO into a proactive environment where for the majority of initiatives, LFO would set the agenda.

In many of the projects implemented in LFO, the project management and support structures are weak, leaving projects essentially undermanaged and necessitating DRU filling some of the gaps. Several offices confirmed that project management tasks were added to their core task responsibilities without taking other tasks out of their job descriptions. Many of the projects, although project support cost is provided by the donor, have to rely on support services (human resources, finance, procurement, logistics) that have not been expanded adequately to reflect increasing implementation services for projects.

The current structure does not necessarily support this as programme support is too weak and the coordination rests almost exclusively with the DUA and DDUA programmes. A strengthened PSO could play a more important role in ensuring that projects do fit within the overall portfolio of services delivered and that project proposals do adequately address the implicit costs.

The lengthy time of operating under crisis management in LFO- since the Naher el Bared crisis the office has been essentially in constant crisis mode - has had a negative effect on staff. Due to the crisis mode of operation, roles and responsibilities of different offices evolved rather than were designed purposefully. This in turn has resulted in an unequal distribution of tasks, where some staff carries more of a load of essential work than others. At the same time the SSAs and daily paid modalities have been used for some core functions such that there are offices where different staff receive different benefits and have different employment conditions for the same task.

Findings

1. Staff motivation after a long time of crisis management, overload, and potentially unequal distribution of tasks and contract modalities is suffering.

2. There is no strategic approach to donor relations, it is reactive instead of being proactive, this leaves LFO without much leverage to implement what LFO believes is most important. In addition project design often misses addressing the support side leaving project management weak by stretching support services beyond what was planned.

Recommendations

1. LFO needs to be more strategic in its interaction with donors, as a first step required activities need to be prioritized and fundraising done proactively including that projects need adequate support structures including dedicated

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10 The D/DUA/P position could face overload, to counter this it will require systematic support from PSO. This was confirmed through the interaction with previous management.
sustainability

Sustainability indicates how far the changes brought about by the intervention are likely to continue in the long term, with particular reference to factors such as, ownership by beneficiaries, policy support, economic and financial dimensions, sociocultural aspects, and institutional and management capacity.

LFO has very adequately reacted to the various crises over the years and prioritized the immediate answers to challenges posed by the situation over strategic responses. However, as the crisis situation is still on-going and unlikely to end any time soon, the imbalances this approach has introduced to the office will make the approach unsustainable over the longer term. This has been recognized by the LFO leadership and is one of the reasons why the evaluation has taken place.

With funding for NBC being reduced it will not be possible to maintain the staffing of NBC as it currently stands. There is an urgent need to reassign some of the staff within the office. This would potentially address some of the gaps in human resources and PSO in particular but also make experienced staff available to implement the initiatives aimed at PRS.

The PRS project is expanding to meet the important needs of Palestine refugees from Syria. The recommendations already proposed under the other domains will to a large degree address issues of sustainability.

An important issue concerns HR and its current status. Essential for service delivery, having the right people in the right position cannot be questioned including the issue surrounding gender balance. However due to the nature of how people are engaged and for how long, constraints exist that reduce the ability of LFO to assist beneficiaries to their satisfaction. Some of these are cited here. The HR office is under-resourced and overwhelmed by their work load. There are a plethora of vacancies at all levels of LFO including area offices. The speed with which these vacancies are being filled is slow at best. The use of different categories of staff - fixed term, SSAs, daily paid staff - is often not appropriate. Rosters of pre-qualified candidates are not up to date. Monitoring of staff needs across offices is insufficient. The database management within HR is not yet totally operational. Personnel evaluations are not linked to professional advancement, thus little in the way of incentives to motivate staff to improve performance.

Finally, there is no exit strategy for senior staff whose tenure is never questioned and whose presence inhibits upward mobility in the organization. Some of these issues are easily solved while others are not. HR staff seems to have some solutions in mind, but they are not able to move forward with them as they are constantly reacting to one personnel ‘crises after another. At the heart of the problem is on the one hand, a lack of resources and on the other the lack of assertive attitudes with respect to implementing substantive improvements in HR procedures and processes. Sustainability of LFO, given its important employment responsibility within the Palestine refugee community, can be questioned if nothing is done to reform HR. This is particularly important in a situation where for the first time in many years UNRWA staff have opportunities to join other organizations as the Syria crisis unfolds.

Findings

1. Often, at least more than normal, project funded, daily-paid employees, SSA personnel are used for core functions. This implies higher training costs as people rotate through positions faster. Higher turnover and staff dissatisfaction also impacts negatively on efficiency and effectiveness.

11 It was impossible for the new leadership or the evaluators to get an accurate organizational chart from HR.

12 This is not unique to LFO and something that will require HR Department in headquarters to develop a strategy to address this.
2. HR does not have sufficient staff to even minimally cover its responsibilities. The proposed additional staff (two) is not sufficient and is an underestimate of the needs.

Recommendations

1. Contractual arrangements (for staff) need to be reviewed and adjusted to match core functions with fixed term contracts, and SSAs with clearly defined tasks. Daily-paid personnel should be used appropriately for temporary and low level staff, not to be used to replace SSAs, for example.

2. Without increasing the overall headcount, the LFO front leadership should allocate more staff to HR and should facilitate the implementation of HR plans to remove the personnel bottleneck felt at all levels of the LFO.
### Annex 1: List of Staff Interviewed by the Evaluation Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Who Was Interviewed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>10/29</td>
<td>Ann Dismorr, DUA, John Marks, A/D/DUA/S, Roger Davies, D/DUA/P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:00</td>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>John Marks, A/D/DUA/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>Hadil Al Hattab, Chief, Field Human Resources Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>Sahain Khan, Chief, Finance Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:15</td>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>Acting Chief, Programme Support Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45</td>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>Programme Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00</td>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>Ziyad Qamar, Chief Donor Relations Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00</td>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>Donor Relations Unit Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>09:00</td>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>Ahmad Mouh, Chief, Beqaa Area Office (telephone interview)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>Mohammad Abou Khaled, Chief Central Area Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>Walid El Khatib, Chief, Education Office, Salem Dib, Deputy Chief</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>Fadi El Tayyar, Acting Chief, Public Information Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:00</td>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>Hadia Chanaa, Chief, Civil Society and Relief Support, Fadi Fares, Deputy Chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:30</td>
<td>11/1</td>
<td>Daoud Korman, Officer in Charge Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:30</td>
<td>11/1</td>
<td>Ismail Moussa, Ibrahim Abdullah, Rachid Ajjawi, Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>09:45</td>
<td>11/1</td>
<td>Fauzi Kassab, Tyre Area Office Chief (telephone interview)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30</td>
<td>11/1</td>
<td>Hadil Al Hattab, Chief, Field Human Resources Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>11/1</td>
<td>Dr. Suha Ismail, Deputy Chief, Field Health Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>11/1</td>
<td>Dr. Nimer Qassem, Field Health Hospitalization Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00</td>
<td>11/1</td>
<td>Mohamad Abdel Al, Project Manager, Northern Management Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:30</td>
<td>11/1</td>
<td>John Marks, A/D/DUA/S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>11/4</td>
<td>Staff, OSO Protection Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>11/4</td>
<td>Chief, OSO/Protection Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30</td>
<td>11/4</td>
<td>Olivier Charles, Palestinian Refugee Syria Project Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:30</td>
<td>11/5</td>
<td>Ann Dismorr, DUA, John Marks, A/D/DUA/S</td>
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</table>
annex 2: organigrammes – actual, option 1 and option 2

Implementation is not covered as it is supposed to be done by programmes/project management

Implementation is not covered as it is supposed to be done by programmes/project management
Option 2

Deputy Director
Programmes

PIO
Programme & Project Support
Protection [staff & vulnerable groups]

DUA

Deputy Director Support

RSS HEALTH EDU INFRA

NBC PRS Other Projects

Comm Monitoring Planning Assessment Coordination Protection Donor Relations Reporting Evaluation Legal

Implementation is not covered as it is supposed to be done by programmes/project management
annex 3: definition of functions

Functions of the core activities

1. Assessment
   a. Creation of baseline data to be used in evaluation
   b. Interact with communities to insure that UNRWA correctly understands the needs and context. Assesses community interaction between the different groups of beneficiaries
   c. Engage communities using dialogue to insure that UNRWA realistically understands the priorities of women, disabled, poor and youth in particular

2. Planning
   a. Preparation of overall LFO biannual work plans [FIP] requiring direct interaction with each programme, project and office
   b. Insuring that plans are feasible, that resources are in place on time, and that plans are created on time as well
   c. Project design comes under this activity

3. Monitoring
   a. Is continuous
   b. Data collection, data entry, data summation and collation, for management purposes
   c. Quality of data maintained and consistency assured
   d. Data analysis and preparations of presentations internal and external to the LFO
   e. Assesses project performance on a regularly scheduled basis as well as at a specific point in time
   f. Regular transmission of monitoring reports to relevant offices and personnel both internally and externally

4. Reporting
   a. Obtain data from all projects and programmes upon which reports are founded
   b. Draft and finalize project and programme reports on a regular agreed upon schedule and insure that sufficient feedback is incorporated insuring quality and buy-in
   c. Distribute finished reports on time to appropriate readers

5. Evaluation
   a. Evaluation systematically searches for answers about the quality and effects of humanitarian/development activities
   b. In order to be effective, it needs to have a certain level of impartiality, and independence
   c. Evaluation is applied to projects and programmes as well as the performance of the internal agency processes

6. Communications
   a. Appropriate external communications assures that there is consistent and unambiguous communication with donors, beneficiaries, the general public and the press.
   b. Appropriate external communications is always a two way process where both parties should have equal value
   c. Appropriate external communications with communities should be consistent to avoid manipulation
   d. Appropriate communications internally assures that all staff are operating from the same page
   e. Appropriate internal communication assures that the means and techniques are clearly defined, i.e., staff know what channel to use for each communication, within headquarters, between headquarters and field offices and among field offices
   f. The activity is a constant one over time using the various suitable tools

7. Coordination
   a. Insures consistency of service delivery for both programmes, projects and emergency activities
b. Insuring that specific project planning is consistent with programmes and LFO strategic policy
c. It insures that resources are dedicated to where they are most needed
d. Looks at the consistency of LFO programming with respect to the rest of the agency

8. Protection
   a. Insures neutrality of UNRWA staff
   b. Protection for both staff and beneficiaries

9. Donor Relations
   a. Maintains a constant and consistent two-way link to all donor organizations and the LFO
   b. Insures that the DUA is fully aware of opportunities, requirements and duties when dealing with donors, able to distinguish specific needs unique to a specific donor
   c. Informs LFO staff at all levels of donor requirements for fund use if it applies
### annex 4: roles and responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **PSO**      | Provide support to programme departments, projects, support departments and emergency operations on programme / project cycle management. | • Support coordination for and among programmes, projects and activities,  
• Programme support aligned with PPCM principles  
• Preparation of strategy development and planning documents,  
• Assessments for programmes and projects  
• Monitoring programme/project progress against planned progress  
• Guide the development of work plans  
• Insure the integration of cross cutting themes into all programmes and projects |
| **DRU**      | Strategically engage with LFO donors to meet programmatic needs of LFO | • Responsible for the development of LFO fundraising strategy  
• Maintain constant contact with all UNRWA donors  
• Proactive fundraising approach donors to ensure the LFO programmatic needs are met  
• Provide regular communications and information flow to and from donors and coordinate feedback to and from donors to all programmes and projects  
• Guarantee the quality of LFO reports  
• Participate in programme and project planning and designs to provide the perspective of funding potential by donor  
• Verify adherence to donor funding stipulations and conditions |
| **PIO/Communications** | To strategically conceive and deliver information both for public consumption and for | • Develop and implement the overall communications strategy  
• Ensuring that messages from LFO are |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protection</th>
<th>Mainstream the protection aspect of UNRWA services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Insures that LFO programmes adequately address protection issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Address gender-based violence,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Implement refugee registration,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Insure access to humanitarian services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Defend the legal status of Palestine refugees in Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Deal with inappropriate corporal punishment</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal</th>
<th>Provide legal services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Advocate for the rights of Palestine refugees with the Lebanese government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Support investigations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide legal services for LFO offices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>