

# Inter-Agency Knowledge Fair on UN Effectiveness in Knowledge Sharing

UN Campus, Turin 16-18 November<sup>1</sup>

## Key Outcomes and Recommendations



UN Development Operations Coordination Office (UNDOCO) and the UN System Staff College (UNSSC) organized the fair to provide UN staff from Headquarters, regional, sub-regional and country offices with an opportunity to interact, learn, exchange experience, promote a culture of knowledge sharing (KS) and potentially inform their working practices.

In addition, the Fair aimed to draw on the expertise available at all levels across UN system to identify lessons learnt and good practices for more effective Knowledge Management (KM) and Knowledge Sharing (KS).

Of 116 applications, 26 case study proposals were selected by an inter-agency panel. External participants could follow the fair via a blog and participant interviews were posted on You-tube. In a marketplace set up, participants presented their projects. The Information & Analysis Unit, represented by its head and an analyst, was selected the first among seven projects which raised the most interest and funds among the participants. As a result, the IAU's work was scrutinized and discussed in greater detail on the following day<sup>2</sup>.

The presentation of Inyang Ebong-Harstrup, UNDOCO Associate Director, on UNDG strategic priorities<sup>3</sup> and the importance of knowledge sharing as a basis for enhanced UN effectiveness and integration, set the

<sup>1</sup> <http://unkampus.unssc.org/home/course/view.php?id=18>

<sup>2</sup> A two-minute video interview with the Head of the IAU is available at the following link: <http://unkampus.unssc.org/home/mod/focusspad/view.php?id=3882&action=viewitem&itemid=55&librarytype=global&page=1&altuser=&tag=0>. For an overview of projects, see <http://unkampus.unssc.org/home/mod/resource/view.php?id=3899>;

<sup>3</sup> <http://unkampus.unssc.org/home/mod/resource/view.php?inpopup=true&id=3965>; The strategy is based on the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review (TCPR), Resolution 62/208.

framework for subsequent group work on good practice identification, organizational learning, networking and the development of a common vision from a policy and practitioner perspective.

The Fair concluded with a session on action planning. Based on the generated inputs, UNDG/UNDOCO will write a Knowledge Fair report, which will inform the development of UNDG's strategic work-plan. Geoff Parcell: Lead Facilitator: "There is a hunger for knowledge on the practical application of the IAU elsewhere. It is a great model for On UN".



**Overall**, there was a recognition and consensus that inter-Agency and analysis led work creates the basis for effective and integrated UN Knowledge Management. The IAU's aim to process information into analytical products that serve a purpose, as well as its efforts to *produce knowledge together* with Agencies and the Government of Iraq, was recognized as relevant and innovative good practice.

As a result, the IAU received significant attention, particularly on how participants could learn from the IAU experience and how the IAU "model" could be replicated in other UN Country Teams around the world.

Probing into the IAU can be categorized into the following main areas:

1. Organization: formation; Steering Committee leadership; Analysts Peer Group of champions in the different UN Agencies; neutrality.
2. Priorities: client-driven; workplan approved by Steering Committee
3. Expansion plans: impressive One UN model; limited feedback from HQ.
4. Challenges: mostly political to do with agency being perceived as competitor. These were unblocked through the establishment of a Steering Committee to enhance ownership. Human Resource policies are also a challenge – working with multiple agency contracts; difficulties recruiting staff with an analytical profile.
5. Cost: Initially funded by OCHA and UNAMI though agencies asked to cost-share once value-added is demonstrated – \$10-20K per agency for approx. 30 staff.
6. Dissemination: People-centred and not solely technical solutions – e.g. IAU Analysts peer group for dissemination of products within agencies and to ensure validation of information disseminated; field staff; Inter-Agency Advocacy Working Group. Also, website, public access to databases, such as Information Portal. Emphasis on visual and light products, including maps.



## Key Outcomes

It was clear that there is a great need and strong desire among organizations and participants for learning in terms of good practice, but also on practical issues related to the set up, funding and management of an IAU-type mechanism.

- There is a strong interest in models that could strengthen KS and KM capacities, processes and institutions in a systematic manner (country,-regional-, global level)
- Most KM and KS lacks a strategic purpose and vision, but tends to focus on information/data management for specific projects, programmes or for fundraising purposes. KS focuses on social and peer networking, rather than institutionalized inter-Agency mechanisms
- Analysis is underdeveloped within current KM approaches. Joint “knowledge production” is not practiced. KM practices fail to demonstrate that they are policy relevant and that they produce an impact
- Inter-Agency ownership, technical experts (“champions”) and funding are pivotal for sustainable and successful KM and KS
- Recruitment policies are rigid and inter-Agency administrative processes are heavy; Leadership commitment is critical but often insufficient

## Follow up and Recommendations

### 1. Replicating the IAU model in other country offices

Participants inquired on the set up and management of the IAU. Questions were raised on:

- Inter-Agency product development, technical coordination, funding and cost-efficiency, staffing, service delivery and client orientation and cooperation with the national government and local authorities.
- Pakistan and Vietnam were particularly interested in future follow-up and learning with the Iraq team.

→ IAU to exchange and transfer knowledge in a peer-to-peer approach to support offices around the world and vice-versa

### 2. IAU support to integration at the country level

Participants identified the potential of IAU as a good practice for enhanced UN integration and effectiveness.

- Ensuring support for inter-agency initiatives including UN joint processes, the Iraq Trust Fund, the UNDAF working Groups, Integrated Task Forces

→ Follow up with the interested country teams to provide more examples on the IAU's KM experience supports the integration process in Iraq

### 3. UN Knowledge Management in Iraq as a model to support the UNDG's global strategy

Based on the UNDG presentation and the IAU's work in Iraq, there is an opportunity for feeding into the UNDG's four strategic priority areas<sup>4</sup> and work-plan.<sup>5</sup>

- The IAU will identify good practices in support of the UNCT in Iraq relevant to the four UNDG priority areas. This can potentially feed into UNDG's strategic framework development to increase country-level coherence, deepen leadership engagement and improve system capacity to deploy knowledge and tools.
- Sharing of experience in "up-streaming" through inclusive KS, especially in view of government participation and consultation

→ UNCT in Iraq is consulted to develop proposal/ position paper for UNDG; Working groups on KM/ KS on UNDG's four strategic priorities could be set up upon request of UNDG



<sup>4</sup> 1. Ensuring UNCT support to nationally led processes to achieve MDG's 2. UNDG should drive for realization of UNDAF 3. UNCT support to crisis and transition countries to address development challenges 4. Strengthen Delivering as One Countries. UNDG's strategy is based on KM, KS and best practice exchange.

<sup>5</sup> <http://unkampus.unssc.org/home/mod/resource/view.php?inpopup=true&id=3965>

## The Iraq experience: A model for supporting UN effectiveness?

