



SCHR Impartiality review: report of findings

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1. Context

Faced with increasing difficulties to operate in countries affected by conflict and challenges to access populations in need of protection and assistance, SCHR members believe that there is need to restore trust in humanitarian aid by being clear on the values and methodologies that differentiate principled humanitarian actors from others.

SCHR members are committed to applying and promoting the humanitarian principles set out in the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and/or NGO in Disaster Relief and in the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. These principles are what distinguishes principled humanitarian actors from others and they represent values and methodologies that can be shared and used to facilitate dialogue with others.

However while nearly all humanitarian actors claim adherence to humanitarian principles, there is undoubtedly great variation in how these are interpreted and put in practice. This raises the question of how it is possible to objectively differentiate principled humanitarian actors from others not so principled in increasingly challenging political contexts.

2. Background and purpose

Since 2012, SCHR members have been working together to design and test an approach to define and measure the application of humanitarian principles, with a focus on the principle of impartiality. This principle was chosen as it carries the fundamental objective for humanitarian action that resources and responses are prioritised and allocated according to actual humanitarian needs, and as SCHR members want to maintain and demonstrate a common ground for action rooted in this principle.

After reviewing the work which had been done to translate the conceptual dimension of impartiality into an operational framework, SCHR Principals tasked their Working Group members in January 2013 with carrying out a light peer review, of how SCHR organisations define and apply impartiality in their policies and programming practices. The overall purpose of the review was to test indicators against which the application of the principle of impartiality could be measured and identify challenges to its consistent application.

The review was broken down into two components, on the one hand, a self-assessment¹ of how impartiality was perceived to be integrated into each organisation's policy framework, and on the other a light peer review of how impartiality was applied in practice in programme planning and

¹ Each organisation's self-assessment questionnaire results were presented and discussed at the May 2013 SCHR Working Group meeting.

operational responses. The light peer review was carried out by the SCHR Working Group members in Colombia² from 30 September to 4 October 2013.

The review was carried out to contribute to the following outcomes:

- support the development of verifiable indicators against which to measure an organisation's institutional commitment to impartiality and its application in practice;
- Identify critical areas and gaps that need to be addressed in order to attain a consistent common understanding of what the implementation of the principle of impartiality entails;
- inform SCHR organisations' work towards translating impartiality into practice;
- inform dialogue on impartiality in humanitarian operations with other actors, especially states.

3. Preparing for the review: definition, benchmarks and indicators

In developing an operational framework for impartiality, SCHR organisations under the leadership of ICRC, defined the principle of impartiality and identified key areas of organisations' decision-making and implementation cycle where the principle of impartiality was at stake and for which measurement indicators would be required. The results of this work are described below, in 3.1 and 3.2.

3.1 The Principle of Impartiality and what it means in practice for humanitarian organisations

The principle of impartiality states that the provision of humanitarian assistance and protection should be based on a careful, precise, continuous and objective assessment of the humanitarian situation regardless of nationality, race, religious beliefs, class, political opinions, gender or any other similar criteria.

This principle includes two sub-principles³:

- Non-discrimination, which is the concrete expression of the principle of equality among people. It provides that all human beings should be treated equally, without discrimination based on external elements (nationality, religion...) according to the humanitarian needs of a person affected by natural disaster or violence.
- Proportionality, which nuances the notion of non-discrimination, which could be misunderstood as requiring that the same humanitarian assistance is provided to all people in need. Proportionality implies that humanitarian assistance has to be provided according to needs. Furthermore, in situations where coverage of all the needs of all the affected population is not

² Colombia was chosen based on the following criteria: presence of a high number of SCHR organisations, on-going humanitarian crisis, impartiality issues for organisations working there, relatively stable environment with easy logistics for internal travel.

³ The interview questionnaires used for the Colombia review and presented in annex 3 refer to three components of impartiality, namely needs-based, non-discrimination and proportionality, as the review team wanted to verify whether these three dimensions were understood by interviewees.

possible, there should be a hierarchy of needs and priority should be given to the most urgent cases.

For SCHR organisations, the principle of impartiality translates into practice in the following ways:

- Humanitarian activities are based on careful, precise and objective assessments of the humanitarian situation. As much as possible, assessment should be continuous, repeated and comprehensive. Needs assessment should be based on first-hand information; if this is not possible, information available should be cross-checked, so as to ensure that the response is evidence-based.
- SCHR organisations will not necessarily provide equal amounts of assistance or protection to all persons affected by conflict or natural disasters. The provision of humanitarian assistance and protection must be proportionate to the humanitarian needs assessed. When resources are limited and do not allow to respond to all needs assessed, coordination with other humanitarian responders should be sought to avoid gaps in the response. As a last resort, provision of assistance and protection is given based on a hierarchy of needs.

Implications of applying the principle of impartiality are identified as follows:

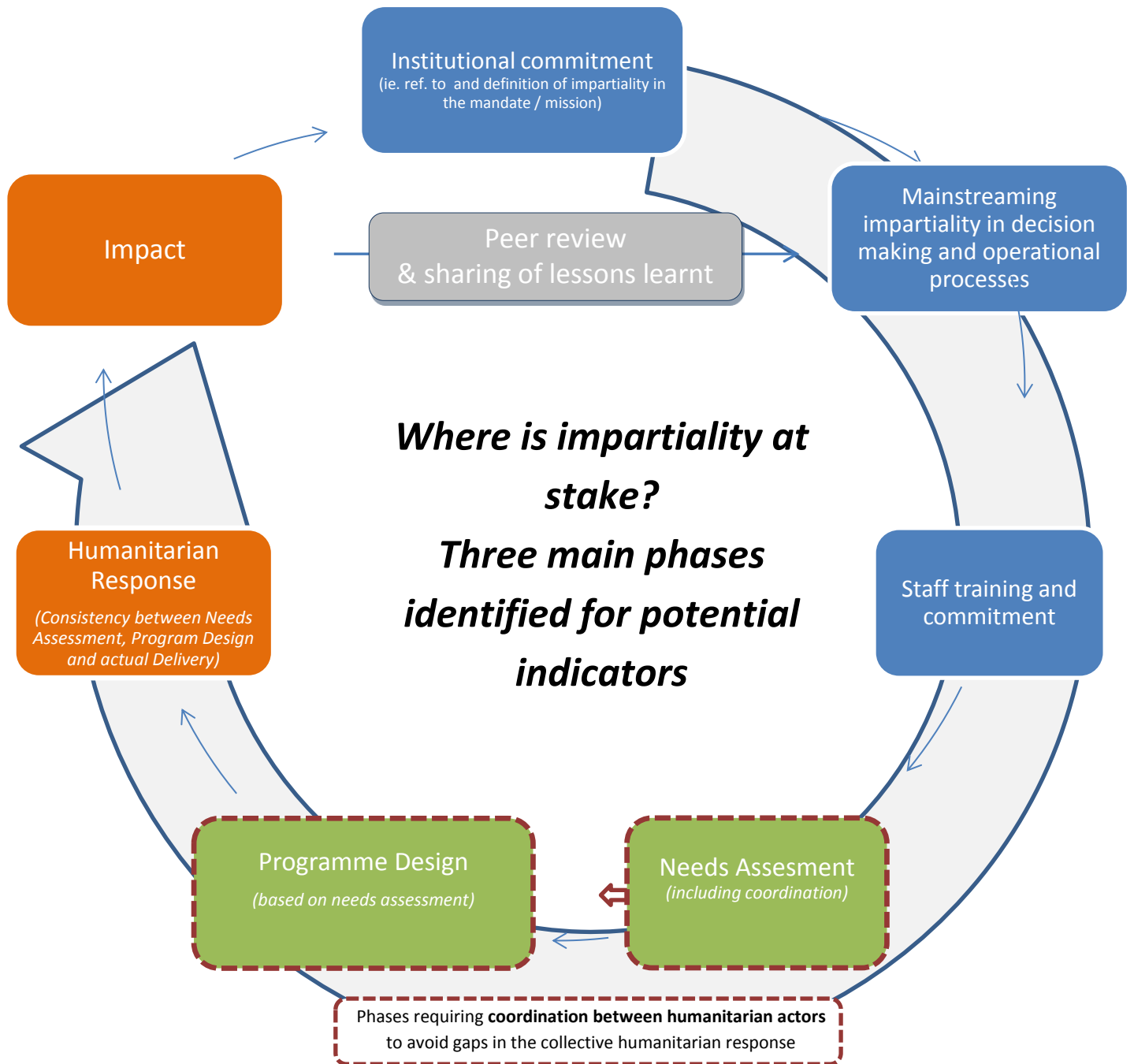
- Political or religious motives, visibility or donor priorities cannot determine who is eligible for assistance and protection, nor should it determine what level or type of protection or assistance is provided.
- Affected states and non-state actors have the primary responsibility to provide protection and assistance to the population in areas under their control; however humanitarian organisations will not knowingly support or participate in any state / non-state led humanitarian activity which goes against the principle of impartiality. Organisations are therefore required, in addition to being impartial, to ensure a reasonable analysis of potential misuse of humanitarian aid that could infringe on the principle of impartiality (due diligence).
- The staff of humanitarian organisations provide protection and assistance to persons most in need, without taking into account their own personal, national, political, religious and racial opinions.
- Worldwide, the allocation of resources and responses are decided according to global humanitarian needs.

3.2 Where are indicators to measure impartiality required?

SCHR organisations, under the leadership of ICRC, identified three main phases of an organisation's decision-making and implementation cycle where impartiality is at stake:

- The institutional predisposition which includes the institution's commitment to impartiality and its mainstreaming of impartiality in strategic decision-making processes (blue phases in diagram below);
- Programme planning and design, which includes mainstreaming impartiality in operational decision-making (green phases in diagram below);
- Programme implementation and evaluation which ensures that actual responses are non-discriminatory and proportional to needs (orange phases in diagram below)

Responses (orange phases) are more likely to be impartial, that is non-discriminatory and proportional to needs, if the principle of impartiality is integrated in the previous strategic and operational decision-making phases (blue and green phases).



Colour legend: the phases which relate to the application of the principle of impartiality:

- Institutional predisposition
- Programme planning
- Actual implementation and evaluation

3.3 Developing benchmarks and indicators

As the next stage in preparing for the review, the SCHR Working Group, with the support of the certification project Coordinator, designed a review guide outline, which identifies impartiality benchmarks and indicators for each of the three phases identified above.

The review guide outline is included in Annex 1.

4. The review

4.1 The approach chosen and its limitations

It was a given from the onset that a key parameter for the review was that it should be light, requiring minimal time and resource from the SCHR organisations. This requirement translated in the following decisions being taken:

- Each WG member was responsible for taking forward the short self-assessment of his or her own organisation's institutional commitment to and mainstreaming of impartiality in decision-making and operational processes; there was no peer review of organisation's institutional predisposition to impartiality. The self-assessment questionnaire is presented in Annex 2.
- The WG decided on a three day light peer review of how a limited number of the SCHR member organisations applied impartiality in operations. The Colombian context was chosen as it was felt by WG members to be most appropriate given the issue and the time-frame. Country offices were not consulted in this decision.
- The review would prioritise the following objectives which were felt to be achievable within the timeframe and the process:
 - test the feasibility of measuring impartiality, and if possible,
 - identify challenges to organisations' application of the principle,
 - collect good practices.

These choices resulted in the Colombia peer review having the following limitations:

- The methodology was simplified so as to rely exclusively on interviews with staff from the organisations' reviewed and some of their stakeholders; no desk reviews of key documentation was carried out;
- The questionnaires which were used as a basis for interviews were not tested prior to being used;
- There was a strong bias in favour of the organisations reviewed amongst persons interviewed as all interviewees had a stake in the project. Within the short timeframe and with the limited preparations, it was not possible to interview 'control groups' of persons who did not have a direct stake in the organisations' activities;
- The small number of people interviewed, and the lack of rigorous method in selecting them, brought on results which are not statistically sound;

- As a result of the limited involvement of country offices / delegation in decision-making related to the design of the review, and their subsequent uneven buy-in to the process, it was not possible to have a review which was exclusively carried out by peers: each review team included a member of the organisation reviewed, to facilitate access to and buy-in from their country programme.
- It was not possible within the timeframe and with the limited preparations to document any good practices during the peer review.

4.2 The methodology for the Colombia peer review

Four SCHR organisations were reviewed in Colombia, namely ICRC, LWF, Oxfam and Save the Children. These were selected based on the fact that they agreed to participate in the review during the week chosen by the WG members. Whereas each country office reviewed ensured that staff was available for interviews and facilitated transport, accommodation and security cover for travel to field locations as appropriate, their degree of engagement varied, depending on how early on they had been informed of the work, on their capacity in-country at the time of the review, on whether the review objectives resonated with their programme, etc.

It had been agreed that the review would follow a standard format, based on questionnaires designed from the review guide outline in Annex 1, with pre-determined answer options which would facilitate compilation of results and production of statistics. Questionnaires were developed, one for each of the target groups, namely senior country managers; project managers / officers; local authorities and affected people. These are presented in Annex 3 .

These questionnaires were reviewed by the team on its first day in Colombia, to ensure that all reviewers had a common understanding of what the interviews meant to achieve and common messaging on the review and its purpose. The team also agreed that the questionnaires would only guide interviews so to ensure consistency of approaches; that it was essential for interviews to go beyond the actual questionnaires so as to ensure that reviewers developed a proper understanding of the local context and of organisations' approach to challenges to impartiality, and the rationale behind some of their difficult choices.

Interviews were carried out in Bogota, with management and sometimes advisory staff of each organisation reviewed. In addition, a review team⁴ travelled to Arauca (Arauca Department) to interview LWF's project staff and some of its stakeholders and two separate teams travelled to Tumaco (Narino Department), to respectively interview Oxfam and Save the Children staff and stakeholders.

⁴ The seven member review team, comprised of representatives of CARE, ICRC, LWF/ACT, Oxfam, Save the Children, WWI and the SCHR Executive Secretary, split up in four, with two people reviewing LWF, Oxfam and Save the Children each, and the ICRC representative reviewing ICRC. It had been anticipated that she would be joined by a senior staff member from another SCHR organisation in Bogota, but this fell through as the request was sent out with insufficient notice.

5. Findings from the review

5.1 Key findings from the self-assessment questionnaire on organisation's institutional commitment to and mainstreaming of impartiality in decision-making and operational processes

The analysis of the self-assessment questionnaires highlighted the points below.

Benchmark: The organisation has a clear publically communicated policy statement regarding respect for and promotion of impartiality of humanitarian assistance

- Some organisation have no policy statement to guide the organisation, but this doesn't mean that they don't have good practice. There are also examples of existing policies which do not necessarily translate into good practice;

Benchmark: The principle of impartiality is incorporated into policies and procedures and communicated to and understood by staff

- Staff members have different understandings of what impartiality means – it's often confused with neutrality. Also, only the non-discrimination component of impartiality is understood within certain organisations, without the notion of proportionality being integrated;
- Staff in countries with emergencies are usually more aware than other staff members of the principle and how to operationalize it;
- Operationalization of guidance varies from one country to another. There are differences in understanding and practice between the global/international level and the national level;
- Several confederations face a challenge in supporting affiliates in integrating impartiality in their way of operating.

Benchmark: The principle of impartiality is incorporated into fundraising and resource mobilisation strategies of the organisation

- The principle of impartiality is undermined when non-earmarked funding is limited and when the organisation is limited in the reserves it can put aside. Increasingly all organisations are facing resourcing challenges.
- Donors are challenging our ability to operate in a principled way by focusing their funding on certain countries only and by making it conditional to a certain type of activities.

Benchmark: Impartiality guides global resource allocations within the organisation

- Few organisations have clear criteria to decide on allocation of resources globally, taking into account considerations of impartiality. Nevertheless, several amongst those who do not have such a mechanism in place are moving into that direction.
- Several organisations have mechanisms to move funds from one situation to another to ensure that the response to one emergency is not happening at the expense of other emergencies.

Broad findings against institutional predisposition:

More work, such as reviewing and analysing the content of actual policies and guidelines, interviewing more staff members and correlating what is in place at the institutional level with what is being taken forward at the field level, is required for a proper analysis of organisations' predisposition to impartiality.

Nevertheless, the results of the self-assessment exercise already point out to gaps at the institutional level around:

- guidelines articulating what impartiality means for the organisation,
- guidance on how to translate the principle into practice,
- guidance on impartiality-grounded fundraising and resource allocation mechanisms.

5.2 Findings from the Colombia field review⁵

The statistical analysis per indicator and per type of responder (these are divided in two main groups, external and internal) is available on demand. Whilst these results have no statistical significance as the samples are biased and too small they nevertheless show the following broad results.

Broad findings against programme planning, design, implementation and evaluation benchmarks:

- Considerations of impartiality are an integral part of decision – making throughout programme planning, design, implementation and evaluation, even if these are not always identified and referred to in terms of impartiality.
- The work of the organisations reviewed is perceived externally as non-discriminatory in nature and as responding to agreed-upon identified humanitarian need;
- Practically all external stakeholders interviewed report understanding the rationale and the criteria for choosing specific beneficiaries to receive protection and assistance; they also report feeling that they have channels to communicate suggestions and concerns to the organisations.

Qualitative findings on the application of impartiality

The review team members came together to share, process and analyse views, concerns and suggestions, based on their own impressions and perspectives. Out of this discussion, the following findings were agreed upon, which form an integral part of the Colombia review.

- The review demonstrated the need to contextualise any review and analysis of how impartiality is applied, as approaches are informed by the context.

⁵ These findings should be read in light of the limitations identified in 4.1.

- Lack of resources comes across as the main constraint to impartial action. Beyond that, constraints identified vary considerably from one context to another: for one organisation operating in frontline conflict areas, the fact that Colombian nationals are not legally allowed to talk to armed groups representatives (except if they work for the Red Cross) is a significant constraint⁶; for organisations operating in areas of a high level violence, access and security were put forward as the most significant constraints; for organisations operating in more stable areas to which populations have sought refuge away from conflict, accessibility of project areas and logistics were identified as the most significant constraints.
- The review clearly demonstrated that the question of compliance with the principle of impartiality needs to be considered within a given scale, as findings could vary significantly depending on whether we measure the application of impartiality at the municipality level, at the department level, at the national level and more broadly even at the global level. Overall, the review team felt that the organisations are taking into account proportionality as much as possible, based on the information that's available to them and on the resources that they have, within their programme locations. Proportionality is not reflected at the scale of several municipalities or of the department though, which is a gap. The main reason put forward is the lack of resources to respond, which equally applies to local authorities, who may be aware that there are needs which are not covered in the areas that they administer, but are not keen on assessing these as that they know they won't have the resources to respond.
- Ensuring impartial responses and being perceived as neutral are essential priorities for all organisations assessed, and all staff interviewed put forward the close relation between the two principles of impartiality and neutrality. All staff interviewed demonstrated that while they were asking themselves relevant questions which aimed at ensuring a principled approach as a matter of course, they also often tended to confuse impartiality and neutrality. This lack of clarity does not seem to result in a dilemma for the organisations or for communities/authorities, but it does contribute to the fact that organisations have different approaches to ensuring impartiality and safeguarding the perception of their neutrality. The review team believes that understanding the interplay between the two principles is important, as there may be situations which arise where programmes need to be able to position themselves in relation to each. Support and training should be considered to support consistency in approaches.
- The review team felt that the distinction between humanitarian and development work in the Colombia context was not obvious. One organisation reviewed saw itself as a development programme, yet for the reviewers their programmes were clearly humanitarian. It may be that the issue is one of approach and mind set, rather than of actual operations. Regardless of how staff saw their programmes though, all agreed that considerations of impartiality and neutrality were essential to their work. The review team

⁶ This specific constraint was only raised by one organisation indicating that it's the only organisation of those reviewed who operates in such context.

members had very different views about the applicability of humanitarian principles in development programmes, but the findings from this review suggest that humanitarian principles are as relevant for work with communities in conflict / risk of conflict / high level violence contexts whether developmental or humanitarian.

- Organisations reviewed who worked with partners were very concerned that their partners should also be perceived as neutral. One organisation who had to deal with complaints about the perceived lack of neutrality of one of its partners learnt that whilst it had a robust mechanism to receive and address complaints, it showed insufficient up-front due diligence in dealing with the issue. Nevertheless, the question of how organisations address impartiality concerns with their operational partners remains a gap, as this issue wasn't specifically covered by the review team.

5.3. Findings relative to the methodology

The review demonstrated that it is possible to measure an organisation's realisation of impartiality in a given geographical area, by measuring its compliance with the benchmarks relative to the seven phases identified above in 3.2. The review also confirmed the relevance of the indicators proposed in the review guide outline presented in Annex 1.

The main flaws which were made apparent, in addition to those limitations identified in section 4.1 above, revolved around the methodology adopted to verify the indicators. The outcomes of standard semi-structured interviews / focus group discussions summarised in answers to a standard questionnaire did not provide enough qualitative objective analysis of programmes' performance in relation to impartiality, especially as the questions and answers became repetitive for the benchmarks related to programme planning and design, monitoring and evaluation. In the future, initial sources of verification for these benchmarks as well as for the benchmark on public communication should be based on desk reviews and analysis of as relevant policies, assessment reports, project log-frames and proposals, monitoring and evaluation tools and reports and public communication outputs.

It was also felt by many in the review team that a proper comparison between organisations would have required the review of each organisation to take place in the same local context, as contextualisation was found to be so important in measuring and analysing compliance to impartiality.

6. Conclusion

The findings from the rapid self-assessment of SCHR organisations' institutional predisposition to impartiality and those from the peer review in the Colombia context of their programme planning, design, implementation and evaluation have been coherent in showing that:

- it was possible to have measurable indicators' of an organisation's institutional commitment to impartiality and its application in practice;
- the organisations involved face gaps at the institutional level on articulating what impartiality means for the organisation and how to translate the principle in practice, nevertheless their staff understand what it means and apply it to programming;

- organisations can do more to ensure consistency in their understanding of what impartiality means for the organisation and how to apply it.

The review has consequently contributed to the identification of some areas which would need to be addressed by organisations in order to attain a consistent common understanding of what the principle of impartiality entails at different stages of organisations' decision-making cycles. In particular, it recommends that organisations consider the development of institutional guidelines or tools to:

- articulate what impartiality means for the organisation,
- provide guidance on how to translate the principle into practice,
- provide guidance on impartiality-grounded fundraising and resource allocation mechanisms.

It also suggest that support and training of staff be considered to ensure that the interplay between impartiality and neutrality is consistently understood.

Nevertheless, the review has also faced a number of methodological limitations and flaws which have impacted on its findings. The methodology requires further improvements and rolling out before the results of such a review of how organisations apply impartiality can be used to inform outreach with other actors on impartiality in humanitarian operations.

SCHR will consequently review the methodology and share it, together with the findings articulated in this report, within each of its organisations to gather suggestions on how to most effectively collect the evidence further required to confirm critical areas and gaps that need to be addressed in order to attain a consistent common understanding of what implementing the principle of impartiality entails, and to inform a dialogue on impartiality in humanitarian operations with other actors, especially states.

Annex 1

Review guide outline, which identifies impartiality benchmarks and indicators for each of the three phases identified in 3.1.

Institutional predisposition (global organisational level)

Benchmark/Indicator	What does it tell us?	Level of compliance	Sources of verification
The organisation has a clear publically communicated policy statement regarding respect for and promotion of impartiality of humanitarian assistance	Degree of institutional commitment to impartiality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Internal policy documents only 2. Publically available on request 3. Published and accessible to public 4. Communicated actively to partners and key stakeholders 	Desk review of policies and procedures
The principle of impartiality is incorporated into policies and procedures and communicated to and understood by staff	Degree of internal commitment to application of impartiality within the organisation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policies to ensure that all staff across the organisation understand impartiality 2. Guidance to staff on what impartiality means in practice 	Desk review of policies and procedures, training materials, etc. KAPs staff surveys or focus group sessions
The principle of impartiality is incorporated into fundraising and resource mobilisation strategies of the organisation	Degree to which funding and resource mobilisation efforts are consistent with non-discrimination and proportionality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fundraising policies and tools explicitly mention impartiality, non-discrimination and proportionality 2. Public fundraising efforts explain how resources will be used in accordance with impartiality principle 3. Private and government resource mobilisation efforts limit the extent of conditionality of funding 4. Organisation has procedures in place to reject funding that might contravene principle of impartiality 5. Organisations with a specific programming focus can demonstrate how they actively work to ensure any gaps are met through other organisations or complementary funding sources or programmes 	Desk review of policies and procedures, fundraising materials, appeals, etc.
Impartiality guides global resource allocations within the organisation	Extent to which global resource allocation decisions are in proportion to needs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Depending on size of organisation and scope of operations, organisation attempts to equitably distribute available funding based on overall global needs 2. Organisation has clear and transparent criteria in place for determining global funding allocations 3. Organisation proactively and transparently reallocates 	Desk review of policies and procedures, fundraising materials, appeals, etc. and financial records

		<p>funding from over-funded crises to under-funded and neglected crises</p> <p>4. Organisations with a specific programming focus can demonstrate how they actively work to ensure any gaps are met through other organisations or complementary funding sources or programmes</p>	
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Programme planning and design, which includes mainstreaming impartiality in operational decision-making (at country level)

Benchmark	What are we looking for?	Indicators	Sources of verification
Staff understand the organisation's commitment to impartiality	Evidence that staff understand the concept of impartiality and can apply it to the local context and work.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are aware of what relevant policy(ies) exist(s) Staff can provide specific examples of how impartiality is applied in programmes Staff have examples of where they think impartiality has been compromised and why 	Interviews with country senior management and project staff
Impartiality concerns are integral to strategic operational decision making	Evidence that country level planning decisions take into consideration impartiality (or threats to it).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The decision to operate in specific areas of the country: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> takes / took into consideration identified unmet humanitarian needs throughout the country and the number of people in need in areas under control of different groups (principle of proportionality); balances / balanced these elements against others, such as access, security and funding is reviewed based on changes in the context 	<p>Review of country strategy and documentation of decision making</p> <p>Interviews with country senior management</p>
Impartiality guides program design and planning	<p>Evidence that project planning decisions take into consideration impartiality (or threats to it);</p> <p>Affected people and authorities (where relevant) perceive the organisations' action as responding to identified needs</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Organisation uses a recognised objective methodology for needs and risks assessments to guide programme/ project planning which includes data disaggregated by age and sex and which engages with communities and where possible local authorities Programme plans demonstrate that activities address needs and risks identified in the assessment as well as discrimination or risks of discrimination Programme plans demonstrate effective collaboration / partnership with others, when the organisation cannot respond to all identified humanitarian needs Programming planning involves participation of affected communities to promote support for the humanitarian 	<p>Desk review of needs assessments</p> <p>Desk review of project proposals</p> <p>Interviews with project staff and community representatives and where possible authorities</p>

		<p>action, including targeting of assistance</p> <p>5. Affected people and authorities (where possible) perceive the organisation's actions as responding to agreed-upon humanitarian needs and as non-discriminatory</p>	
Public communication material refers to impartiality and demonstrates impartiality in language and messaging	How well impartiality is reflected in public communication	<p>1. Public communication materials (media works, web-based docs., project proposals, reports, etc.) make it specific that the organisation's response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is grounded in a needs assessment; - takes into consideration the number of people in need and / or at risk in areas under control of different groups - is non-discriminatory in nature <p>2. Advocacy messages to parties to the conflict refer back to humanitarian principles and the party's responsibilities under IHL</p> <p>3. Where possible, external messaging is shared with local communities and local authorities</p>	<p>Desk review of relevant material</p> <p>Interviews with senior country management staff and project staff and authorities</p>

Programme implementation and evaluation which ensures that actual responses are non-discriminatory and proportional to needs (at country level)

Benchmark	What are we looking for?	Indicators	Sources of verification
Impartiality principle incorporated in all program monitoring	Evidence that monitoring takes into account considerations of impartiality as part of the project's implementation strategy	<p>1. Programmes / projects include mechanisms for monitoring and assessing changing needs and risks every 6 months at least. These mechanisms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - refer to data which is, at the minimum, disaggregated by age and sex; - look for risks and evidence of discrimination in people's access to protection and assistance <p>2. Corrective actions is taken based on recommendations from monitoring findings, as appropriate</p> <p>3. Communities participate in monitoring needs and risks as they evolve</p>	<p>Desk review of monitoring reports and project reports</p> <p>Interviews with staff, and communities</p>
Impartiality principle included in all programming evaluations at the country level	Evidence that application of impartiality is evaluated as part of the project evaluation strategy	<p>1. Programme evaluations explicitly review results against assessments of needs and risks, including as they relate to discrimination or risks of discrimination and as they relate to action in the same community by other humanitarian actors</p> <p>2. Programme evaluations seek out views and feed- back from affected populations and local partners, and findings from the evaluation are communicated back to affected populations as much as possible</p>	<p>Desk review of programme evaluations</p> <p>Interviews with staff and communities</p>

Annex 2

SCHR Peer Review on Impartiality Self-Assessment Questionnaire on Impartiality

Introduction:

The SCHR is planning a Peer Review on how its member organisations define and apply the principle of impartiality in their organisational policies and programming practices. The outcomes of this review will help the SCHR understand and address policy and operational challenges to the consistent application of the principle of impartiality. It will provide inputs on how to promote greater awareness, respect for and application of impartiality internally within their organisation, as well as externally to other stakeholders. The review findings will also contribute to the SCHR Certification project.

As a first step in the process, the SCHR would like collect information on how impartiality is integrated into current policy frameworks. The following pilot self-assessment questionnaire will help the SCHR test the validity of some of the proposed criteria to benchmark impartiality within an organisation as well as the feasibility of collecting this kind of data. The results will be discussed by the SCHR Working Group and will form the basis of plans to conduct a more in-depth peer review process in a crisis context (likely Colombia) to assess how well impartiality is integrated into SCHR members' programmes.

Definition of impartiality

For the purpose of this questionnaire, impartiality is defined as follows:

"Impartiality of humanitarian assistance means that aid:

- *Is for the sole objective of preventing and alleviating suffering of people affected by a crisis;*
- *Is based on an objective and continuous assessment of each individual's needs*
- *Is allocated in proportion to needs and provided without discrimination based on nationality, race, religious or political beliefs, class or gender."*

Instructions:

For this self-assessment exercise, you will be asked to review a series of statements that describe – or benchmark - different ways an organisation can integrate the principle of impartiality into its policy and processes. Please review each statement and select the response that best describes your organisation's current status against the proposed benchmark. For membership organisations, please indicate where you think the secretariat or headquarters fits against where you feel the majority of your members (or field offices) fit. You will also be asked to indicate the sources of information that support your response.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. *How well is impartiality integrated into our overall policy framework?*

Benchmark:

The organisation has a clear, publically communicated policy statement regarding respect for and promotion of impartiality of humanitarian assistance

Please select the statement(s) that best reflects the current status in your organisation:

- We have no policy statement on impartiality
- We have policy statements on impartiality but they are internal documents only
- We have policy statements on impartiality that are publically available on request
- We have policy statements on impartiality that are published and accessible to the public
- We have policy statements on impartiality that are actively shared and communicated to the public, partners and other stakeholders (including affected communities)

Information source:

What information sources or documentation supports your response? If you are not sure you can answer, "don't know".

Other comments?

2. *How well is impartiality known and understood by our staff?*

Benchmark:

The principle of impartiality is incorporated into policies and procedures and communicated to and understood by staff.

Please select the statement(s) that best reflects the current status in your organisation:

- There are no formal policies or procedures in place to inform staff around impartiality
- General information around impartiality is made available to staff on an ad-hoc basis
- Our organisation's policy position on impartiality is explicitly communicated to staff as part of their training and orientation
- Our position on impartiality is communicated to staff, and specific guidance is provided on what impartiality means in working practices
- Our staff are fully aware of and understand our policy position on impartiality and how to apply it consistently in our programming

Information source:

What information sources or documentation supports your response? If you are not sure you can answer, "don't know".

Other comments?

3. How well is impartiality reflected in our fundraising?

Benchmark:

The principle of impartiality is incorporated resource mobilisation and fundraising policies and procedures and communicated clearly to donors and supporters

Please select the statement(s) that best reflects the current status in your organisation:

- There is no formal mention of impartiality in our resource mobilisation or fundraising policies, procedures or materials
- Our fundraising policies, procedures and materials explicitly mention the principle of impartiality
- Our public fundraising efforts explain how resources will be used in accordance with the principle of impartiality, in particular, non-discrimination and proportionality (or needs-based allocation of funding)
- Our institutional and government resource mobilisation efforts explain to potential donors how resources will be used in accordance with the principle of impartiality, in particular, non-discrimination and proportionality (or needs-based allocation of funding)
- Our organisation has procedures in place to limit the extent of conditionality of funding and/or reject funding that might contravene the principle of impartiality

Information source:

What information sources or documentation supports your response? If you are not sure you can answer, "don't know".

Other comments?

4. How well is impartiality reflected in our allocation of resources?

Benchmark:

Impartiality guides global and thematic resource allocations within the organisation

Please select the statement(s) that best reflects the current status in your organisation:

- There are no formal policies or procedures in place to allocate resources against criteria of impartiality, non-discrimination or proportionality
- Our organisation has clear and transparent criteria in place for determining global, regional or county-level funding allocations
- Our organisation can demonstrate, to the extent possible, that we attempt to equitably distribute available funding based on overall global needs
- Our organisation proactively and transparently reallocates funding from over-funded crises to under-funded and neglected crises
- Our organisation can justify allocating resources for a specific target population, programme issue or geographic area by demonstrating how we work to ensure any gaps in needs are met through coordination with other organisations or by complementary funding sources or programmes

Information source:

What information sources or documentation supports your response? If you are not sure you can answer, "don't know".

Other comments?

Annex 3

IMPARTIALITY FIELD REVIEW MASTER COPY – ALL STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONS BENCHMARKED

Benchmark 1: Staff understand their organisation's commitment to impartiality.

ALL STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES (SENIOR COUNTRY MANAGEMENT & PROJECT MANAGER / OFFICER)

1. Does your organisation have a policy on impartiality?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know (DK)

2. A) If yes, please define in your own words how that policy defines impartiality?

B) If no, please define impartiality using your own words

- Full answer - includes: response based on assessed needs; response proportional to needs; response is non- discriminatory
- Partial answer – only some of the components listed above are included
Please list those components
- No component of impartiality is included
- No definition is provided

3. Can you provide a specific example of how impartiality is applied in programmes?

- All three components of impartiality are reflected in the answer
- Partial explanation – Only some of the components of impartiality are reflected in the answer. *Please list those components*
- No component of impartiality is reflected
- No example is provided

4. Do you have an example of challenge(s) resulting from applying impartiality to your programming?

Challenges described relate to one or more components of impartiality
Briefly describe the challenge(s)

No component of impartiality is reflected in the example provided

No example is provided

5. Do you have an example of benefit(s) from applying impartiality to your programming?

Benefit(s) described relate to one or more components of impartiality
Briefly describe the benefit(s)

No component of impartiality is reflected in the example provided

No example is provided

6. Do you have an example of where you think impartiality has been compromised?

Compromise(s) provided relate to one or more components of impartiality
Briefly describe how impartiality has been compromised

No component of impartiality is reflected in the example provided

No example is provided

**Benchmark 2: Impartiality concerns are integral to strategic decision making –
SENIOR COUNTRY MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

7. How important were the following factors in your decision to operate in a given geographical location?

<i>Factors:</i>	High Importance	Medium importance	No importance
Assessment of humanitarian needs across the country			
Assessment of humanitarian needs in this location			
Nber of people in need of assistance			
Presence or absence of other humanitarian organisations			

Security and access

Mandate and technical expertise

Authority in control

Funding

Previous experience of working in the area

Proximity to existing bases

Other

8. Has the decision to operate in this geographical location been reviewed?

- Yes
- Because of changes in the local or national context
- Changes in terms of funding opportunities
- Changes within your organisation
- Other reason? If yes, specify which reason
- No
- DK

9. Coordination fora are a means to ensure humanitarian actors work in complementarity to each other to meet needs evenly. Do you participate in any coordination mechanism(s)?

- Yes – if yes which one(s)?
- No – if no, why not?
- DK / NA

**Benchmark 3: Impartiality guides programme design and implementation –
PROJECT MANAGER /OFFICER QUESTIONNAIRE**

10. Is the needs assessment methodology used by your organisation:

	Yes	No	DK
Specific to your project?			
Specific to your country programme?			
Specific to the whole of your organisation?			
Common to several organisations? If yes, specify which ones			
Providing you with population data with is disaggregated by sex, age and location?			
Identifying actual or risks of discrimination?			
Engaging affected communities in the assessment?			
Engaging local authorities in the assessment?			

11. What are the factors,, in addition to the findings from the assessment, which inform the design of the project?

- Sectoral expertise
- HR and financial resources
- Existing coverage by organisation
- Existing coverage by others
- Other, *Please list factors*
- DK

12. Is the project designed to be complementary to humanitarian assistance provided by other actors in the same geographical area?

Yes

No
Why not?

DK

13. Coordination fora are a means to ensure humanitarian actors work in complementarity to each other to meet needs evenly. Do you participate in any coordination mechanism(s)?

Yes – if yes which one(s)?

No – if no, why not?

DK / NA

14. If the organisation is working through partners, has it carried out an assessment of the capacity of potential partners to deliver impartial humanitarian assistance?

Yes – it's part of the organisation's global standard mode of operation

Yes – our country office has set up its own assessment methodology

No
On what criteria was the partner selected?

DK / NA

15. Do affected communities participate in the design and the implementation of the project?

Yes
How are the representatives selected?
How do you ensure non – discrimination in the selection process?

No

DK / NA

16. Are affected communities involved in identifying who receives assistance?

Yes, *How are the representatives selected? How do you ensure non – discrimination in the selection process?*

- No
- DK / NA

AFFECTED COMMUNITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

17. Affected communities understand the rationale for choosing specific beneficiaries for the project –

- Yes
- No, *Do they think specific criteria have been taken into account? Which ones?*
- DK / NA

18. Affected communities perceive the organisations' actions as non- discriminatory in nature

- Yes
- No, *why not?*
- DK / NA

19. Affected communities understand the different roles of the different actors providing humanitarian assistance in their community

- Yes
- No
What do they not understand?
- DK / NA

20. Affected communities perceive the organisations' actions as responding to agreed-upon identified humanitarian needs

- Yes
- No
What do they perceive as the rationale for humanitarian action?
- DK / NA

LOCAL AUTHORITIES QUESTIONNAIRES

21. Local authorities perceive the organisations' actions as a non-discriminatory in nature

- Yes
- No, *why not?*
- DK / NA

22. Local authorities understand the rationale for choosing specific beneficiaries for the project

- Yes
- No, *do they think certain specific criteria should be taken into account? which ones?*
- DK / NA

23. Local authorities understand the different roles of the different actors providing humanitarian assistance in this area

- Yes
- No, *What do they not understand?*
- DK / NA

24. Local authorities perceive the organisations' actions as responding to agreed-upon identified humanitarian needs

- Yes
- No, *What do they perceive as the rationale for humanitarian action?*
- DK / NA

Benchmarks 4&5: Impartiality incorporated in all programme monitoring and evaluation – PROJECT MANAGER / OFFICER QUESTIONNAIRES

25. How often are needs re-assessed?

- When there is a change of situation (either within the area of operation, or organisationally)
- Every 6 months at least

Annually at least

Every 2 years

Never

26. Do you have a monitoring mechanism?

Yes

What is the monitoring frequency?

< 6 months

Annually

Every two years

When the situation in the project area changes

As described in the project proposal

Are affected communities involved in the monitoring?

Yes systematically

Sometimes

No

Is the project subsequently revised to take into account monitoring findings?

Yes systematically

Sometimes

No

No

DK / NA

ALL STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES

27. Do you have an evaluation policy?

Yes

Does it require evaluations to review results against needs assessments and against discrimination or risks of discrimination?

Yes

No

DK

Does it require evaluations to review coordination and complementarity with other humanitarian actors working in the same area?

Yes

No

DK

Does it require evaluations to seek out views and feed back from affected communities?

Yes

No

DK

28. Are findings from evaluations documented with a view to inform other projects?

Yes

Who is responsible for making sure findings are documented and passed on to relevant project staff?

No

DK / NA

AFFECTED COMMUNITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

29. Affected communities feel that they have channels to communicate suggestions and concerns to the organisation

Yes

No

DK / NA

LOCAL AUTHORITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

30. Local authorities feel that they have channels to communicate suggestions and concerns to the organisation

Yes

No

DK / NA

Benchmarks 6: Public communications material refers to impartiality and demonstrates impartiality in language and messaging

DESK REVIEW

31. How well is impartiality reflected in your public communication?

Communication material makes it specific that the organisations' s response is:

	grounded in a needs assessment	takes into account the nber of people in need, in areas under control of different groups	is non - discriminatory in nature
Media work	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Web-based docs	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Project proposals and reports	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No
Briefs, factsheets, etc...	Yes / No	Yes / No	Yes / No

SENIOR COUNTRY MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

32. Do advocacy messages to parties to the conflict refer back to humanitarian principles and the party's responsibilities under IHL?

- Yes
- No
- DK / NA

ALL STAFF QUESTIONNAIRES

33. Is external messaging shared with local authorities and communities where possible?

- Yes systematically
- Sometimes
- No
- DK / NA

‘Learning questions’, answers will inform the further development of impartiality indicators – COUNTRY MANAGEMENT

Do you have any suggestions on how programmes can be improved to ensure better compliance with the principle of impartiality?

Under benchmark 2

What are the issues which weigh against our ability to take fully impartial decisions?

What triggers the review of the decision to operate in specific geographical areas in the country?

Under benchmark 3

What can be done to ensure that assistance is proportional to needs?

Under benchmark 6

What other messages (to those proposed under question 31 do we need to include in our external communication to reflect our impartiality?

What messages do you consider to be off limits in terms of impartiality?