centre for humdata

Developing a Data Fellows Programme

Background

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is establishing a Centre for Humanitarian Data in the Netherlands for an initial three-year period beginning in mid 2017. The Centre's mission is to increase the use and impact of data in the humanitarian sector.

The Centre will focus on four areas:
1) data services;
2) data policy;
3) data literacy; and
4) network engagement.

The audience for the Centre's services include humanitarian partners and OCHA staff in the field and at headquarters who work in both technical and non-technical roles.

Data Fellows Programme

The data literacy work stream will focus on increasing the capability of people to access and use data in support of humanitarian efforts. One way the Centre will do this is through the establishment of a Data Fellows Programme that will place data experts within partner organizations and OCHA offices to work alongside staff to build capacity. The Fellows may be recent university graduates or people working in the tech industry who want to contribute to the social sector for a fixed time period. The Fellows could work at the Centre in The Hague or be placed within an organization at Headquarters or in the field.

OCHA is undertaking research to understand how best to match the supply and demand for data-skilled people. The research will also determine the most effective administrative model and time cycle for managing Fellows over the coming years.

Key questions that will be considered during the research include:
- What are the main job profiles that should be part of the programme?
- What are the use cases for placing a Fellow into the Centre in The Hague or within a partner organization or OCHA office?
- What are the administrative and legal parameters for universities and the private sector to place students or staff into the programme?
- What is the best way to understand an organization's readiness to absorb capacity and ensure a long-term impact? What are the organization's responsibilities to the Fellow?
- What are the best practices of existing fellowship programmes?

A design workshop will be held during the Humanitarian ICT Forum to kick start the research process. The session will be used to gather requirements from organizations that might host data fellows, and to explore potential partnerships with academic institutions and the private sector. The session should also raise important issues that can be further explored through the research. A report with recommendations for the establishment of the programme is expected by June. We hope to initiate a small-scale pilot soon after.

Contact

If you have questions, feedback or want to collaborate, please be in touch.

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