Photo ©Massimo Sestini

Refugee Assistance Guidance Manual

Emergencies and Transitions Unit (OSZPH)

Programme and Policy Division

May 2017

HQ.OSZPH@wfp.org

WFP

World Food Programme

wfp.org

Table of Contents

i.   List of acronyms

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
BCC	Behaviour Change Communication
BIMS	UNHCR biometric system
BSFP	Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programmes
CBT	Cash-Based Transfer
CFM	Complaints & Feedback Mechanism
CRF	Corporate Results Framework
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CSP	Country Strategic Plan
ESSN	Emergency Social Safety Net
FAO	Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFA	Food Assistance for Assets
HEB	High-Energy Biscuit
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HLM	High Level Meeting (UNHCR/WFP)
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IRM	Integrated Road Map
JAM	Joint Assessment Mission (UNHCR/WFP)
JPA	Joint Plan of Action (UNHCR/WFP)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFI	Non-Food Item
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PLW	Pregnant and Lactating Women
ProGres	UNHCR registration platform
POC	Person of Concern
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
SAFE	Safe Access to Fuel and Energy Initiative
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SNF	Specialized Nutritious Foods
TSFP	Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programmes
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
VAM	Vulnerability Analysis & Mapping Unit, Policy & Programme Division

ii.　Definition of key concepts

Key Concepts	
Concept	**Meaning**
Disruptive technology	A technology that significantly alters the way that businesses operate.
Durable solution	Voluntary repatriation, resettlement in a third country or integration within the host community.
Internally displaced person	A person who has been forced to flee their home for the same reason as a refugee, but remains in their country of origin.
Person of concern	General term used by UNHCR to refer to asylum-seekers, stateless persons or returnees.
Protracted refugee situation	Situations in which refugees have been in exile for five years or more after their initial displacement, without immediate prospects for implementation of durable solutions.
Refugee	A person who has fled conflict or persecution. He/she is defined and protected in international law, and must not be expelled or returned to situations where their life and freedom are at risk.
Returnee	A refugee who has voluntarily returned to their country of origin.
Self-reliance	The ability of individuals, households or communities to meet their essential needs and enjoy social and economic rights in a sustainable manner and with dignity.
Self-reliance in food security and nutrition	Self-reliance in food security and nutrition is the ability of refugees to meet their food security and nutrition needs – in part or in whole – on their own in a sustainable manner and with dignity.

Part 1: The new global context

1.1 A new refugee landscape

For more than forty years, the World Food Programme (WFP) has been providing assistance to refugees across the world. In recent years, however, the landscape has changed in ways that have far-reaching implications for the design of refugee assistance strategies.

- **Protracted situations.** Challenges in finding durable solutions for refugees have led to a growth in the number and duration of protracted displacements globally. At present, nearly half of all refugees in the world are living in a protracted situation, while the average length of refugee displacement is now exceeding 20 years.

- **Out-of-camp settings.** Until recently, encampment was used as the default solution to refugee protection and shelter. However, countries of asylum and refugees themselves are increasingly leaning towards out-of-camp settings. As a consequence, over half of refugees under UNHCR's mandate are now out-of-camp, the majority of whom are located in urban areas[1].

- **Disruptive technologies.** A wide range of new technologies have entered the humanitarian space, ranging from biometric and mobile phone technology to 'big data'. Combined with the emergence of cash-based transfers (CBT), these technological advances hold the potential to completely transform the manner in which refugees are assisted.

- **Resource constraints.** Recent trends in conflict and natural disasters have not only led to unprecedented levels of forced displacement across the world, but have also meant that refugee operations are increasingly competing with other large-scale crises for the finite donor support available.

1.2 A new global development agenda

Against this backdrop, Member States of the United Nations (UN) have adopted the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development which conveys the overall global commitment to eradicating poverty, hunger and inequality. It includes a number of key concepts, some of which are particularly relevant to refugee assistance, including:

- **Reaching the furthest behind first***. Agenda 2030 recognizes that there are groups with particular vulnerabilities, such as refugees, which tend to be excluded from mainstream development, highlighting the need to *leave no-one behind* and, within that, to *reach the furthest behind first*.

- **The humanitarian-development nexus.** Agenda 2030 situates humanitarian work within a broader development framework, paving the way for refugee operations that have a multi-year lens and which combine humanitarian and livelihoods approaches.

---

[1] This new trend has formally been embraced by UNHCR, as set out in its corporate policy on Alternatives to Camps (2014).

- **The whole-of-society approach.** Agenda 2030 recognizes the central role that governments play in terms of creating the enabling environment for sustainable development while, at the same time, calling for inclusive efforts that involve (inter alia) civil society, the private sector and academia.

1.3   A new set of humanitarian commitments

At the same time, there is also a heightened interest globally in new approaches for addressing humanitarian crises, with a lot of attention being paid to refugee displacement in particular. This has resulted in a new series of commitments by the international community, most notably:

- **The New York Declaration.** At the UN Summit on Refugees in Migrants in New York September 2016, Member States signed a new Declaration which, in effect, represents a renewed commitment by the international community to providing greater support to countries that are hosting large numbers of refugees, based on the principle of responsibility-sharing that is enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention[2].

- **The Grand Bargain.** A major outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in May 2016, the Grand Bargain consists of a number of specific commitments by donors and agencies that seek to increase the efficiency and overall effectiveness of humanitarian aid. Agencies, for their part, committed to (inter-alia) coordinating their joint efforts more effectively over multi-year time-frames in pursuit of collective and more sustainable outcomes, while enabling affected communities to participate actively in decision-making.

1.4   A new strategic direction for the organization

In order to align with the Agenda 2030 and deliver on its new commitments, WFP has embarked on a new strategic direction.

- **The Integrated Road Map (IRM).** Approved by the WFP Executive Board in November 2016, the IRM is a consolidated package of four main elements: 1) a new corporate Strategic Plan covering the period 2017-21; 2) a new policy on Country Strategic Plans (2016); 3) a new corporate financial framework; and 4) a new corporate results framework (CRF). Broadly speaking, the IRM renews WFP's commitment to the principle of national ownership and to supporting countries to achieve their vision for 2030, while placing a particular focus on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 on *achieving zero hunger* and SDG 17 on *partnering to support the implementation of the SDGs.*

In keeping with the spirit of Agenda 2030 as well as some of the commitments in the New York Declaration and the Grand Bargain, the IRM situates the work that WFP carries out with crisis-affected people, communities and countries within the broader humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus. At a more practical level, the IRM emphasizes the criticality of policy dialogue with counties and will see WFP's entire portfolio at the country level become consolidated in the form of a single country strategic plan.

---

[2] The New York Declaration also paves the way for a new Global Compact on Responsibility-Sharing for Refugees and a related implementation mechanism called the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), both of which are currently under development.

This new strategic direction has major implications for WFP's work with refugees. It provides an opportunity for country offices to ensure that its refugee portfolio has a much stronger strategic focus than has been the case in the past while being more coherent with the actions of government and other humanitarian and development actors. At the same time, it provides an overall institutional context that should be much more enabling of transformative programming and should provide country offices with the agility they need in order to find working arrangements that make most sense at the country level.

In order to capitalize fully on this opportunity, however, WFP needs to provide clear orientation to field-based colleagues that are being tasked with identifying new approaches to refugee assistance in the context of this broader organizational realignment as well as fundamental shifts in the external landscape. This document addresses that gap.

Part 2: Framing an effective response

2.1 Taking a holistic view

Before designing a refugee assistance strategy, it is essential to look at the bigger picture because important factors are likely to be present in the broader context that may be either helpful or constraining. This should be done as part of the country strategic planning process, which is central to the Integrated Road Map (IRM). Factors that need to be understood include:

2.1.1 The legal and policy framework

Refugee status is something that is conferred on people by the national government, though it often comes with certain official or unofficial conditions attached. For instance, country offices need to understand whether refugees enjoy the legal right to work and to own property in the country of asylum, and whether they are able to access mainstream basic social services such as education and health. In addition, some governments have very strong policy stances regarding encampment, with some being firmly in favour of it and others being resolutely opposed to it. Also, encampment can itself be implemented in different ways. In some countries, camps are associated with very strict restrictions on refugee movement, whereas in other countries they function merely as a hub and refugees are, in practice, allowed to move freely around the country. These factors inevitably have major implications for the design of refugee assistance strategies.

2.1.2 The phase of displacement

The challenges and opportunities for assisting refugees tend to evolve over time, so it can be helpful to think in terms of four 'phases' of displacement (see Figure 2). Generally speaking, the beginning of the displacement cycle is highly dynamic, given that people are still physically on the move and lacking clarity regarding their legal status (the "arrival" phase). At some point, however, the situation will begin to normalize (the "settled" phase). With the further passage of time, the situation will start to acquire some new characteristics, be it greater interaction between refugee and host populations, or simply growing aid dependency and donor fatigue (the "protracted" phase). Finally, at some point prospects for a durable solution should eventually emerge, whether it be return, resettlement or local integration (the "solution" phase). To complicate matters, in some locations there may be refugee caseloads who are at different 'phases' due to multiple displacements. Moreover, refugees from the same displacement cohort may follow different trajectories, with some obtaining an early durable solution and others languishing for many years in exile.

2.1.3 Salient characteristics of the operational context

The refugee setting may have other features which are very important. In some refugee situations, social bonds between the refugee and host community are quite strong, whereas other situations are noted for high levels inter-community tension. Camp settings are generally quite 'low-tech' environments with relatively weak market activity, whereas urban settings are normally very 'high-tech' environments with dynamic markets. From the perspective of nutrition, rural/low-income environments in regions such as sub-Saharan Africa are normally noted for widespread undernutrition in refugee populations, whereas urban/middle-income environments in regions such as the Middle-East usually present the challenge of dealing with a 'double burden' of under- and over-nutrition in the refugee population. Livelihood opportunities also vary enormously from one context to another and, generally speaking, are less diverse around traditional refugee camps than

they are in urban settings. Appreciating these different contextual factors will be critical to designing a relevant and effective assistance strategy.

Phases of displacement		
Phase	**Begins**	**Ends**
Arrival	The moment people cross an international border	When people have physically settled somewhere and have been formally registered as refugees.
Settled	When people have physically settled somewhere and have been formally registered as refugees.	When clear prospects for a durable solution present themselves *or* After five years[3]
Protracted	Five years into a refugee situation without immediate prospects for implementation of durable solutions.	When clear prospects for a durable solution present themselves
Solution	When clear prospects for a durable solution present themselves	When a durable solution has been implemented in full.

2.2   Right people, right assistance, right way

Although refugee situations vary enormously, the design of WFP food assistance strategies should always be guided by the over-arching principle of trying to provide the *right people* with the *right assistance* in the *right way*.

- **Right people:**   The "right people" refers to people who have been formally registered by host governments as refugees or, failing that, are nonetheless regarded by UNHCR to be a 'person of concern' (POC). Furthermore, they must be in genuine need of WFP assistance or – in the context of severe resource constraints – the people who are *most* in need of food assistance.

- **Right assistance:**   The "right assistance" means ensuring that a robust humanitarian platform is in place that will safeguard the food security and nutritional status of refugees. However, it also means taking advantage of every available opportunity over the course of time to adapt assistance more effectively and enable refugees to become more self-reliant.

---

[3] The 5-year cut-off point has been chosen so as to be consistent with the UNHCR definition of protracted displacement

- **Right way:** The "right way" means that WFP is mindful of protection considerations and is accountable to the affected population[4]. It also means ensuring that assistance strategies for refugees are conflict-sensitive while contributing, to the extent possible, to peaceful coexistence between refugee and host communities.

---

[4] The term "affected population" is understood to refer not only to the refugee community but also their hosts.

Part 3: Key components of an effective response

3.1 "Right People"

Targeting

KEY DOCUMENTS

- UNHCR/WFP Joint Principles for Targeting Food Assistance in Refugee Settings (Document pending publication as of May 2017)

Although the global Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between WFP and UNHCR clearly stipulates that food assistance should be provided to refugees on the basis of need, the practice that has been widely observed for many years was that food assistance was provided to all refugees based on their legal status. However, the new refugee landscape calls for a much greater focus on targeting for a number of reasons. First, the reality of protracted displacement has meant that there is a greater need for agencies to be capable of matching different households and individuals in the refugee community with the most appropriate interventions. This is an essential prerequisite not only for ensuring that the *needs* of those refugees who are most vulnerable can continue to be served in the best possible way, but also that the *capacities* of those refugees who are less vulnerable can be strengthened more effectively over time.

Second, out-of-camp – and, in particular, urban - settings present a whole set of new challenges. Recent experience from countries such as Lebanon and Turkey, for instance, has shown that it can be very difficult to establish 'first contact' with refugees when they are highly dispersed across large cities. As a result, the major challenge WFP has faced in urban settings has been how to target refugees *into* (as opposed to *out of)* assistance. And third, resource constraints have resulted in pipeline breaks on many refugee operations, forcing WFP and UNHCR to agree a principled basis upon which to prioritize limited resources and decide which households and individuals, and associated interventions, should be maintained at the expense of others. This is key to ensuring that WFP is upholding the principle of *reaching the furthest behind first*.

There are a range of different approaches to targeting, each of which is associated with certain advantages and drawbacks which will play out very differently from one setting to another. As a result, WFP does not promote a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to targeting in its work with refugees but rather acknowledges the need for decisions around targeting to be driven by knowledge of the local context and carried out jointly with other key stakeholders, in particular the host government, UNHCR and, to the extent possible, the refugee community.

That notwithstanding, WFP and UNHCR have agreed corporately to ensure that their joint targeting efforts are always guided by a set of common principles, which are elaborated in the document entitled "UNHCR/WFP Joint Principles for Targeting Food Assistance in Refugee Settings". In the document, the agencies commit to ensuring that refugee targeting is: protection-focused; evidence-based; inclusive; collaborative; appropriate and

relevant; accurate; cost-efficient and proportional; accountable; coherent; participatory; monitored; timely; dynamic; documented for learning.

At the same time, WFP and UNHCR jointly acknowledge that there may be trade-offs between these different elements and which will need to be managed, for example between cost-efficiency and accuracy. In such circumstances, the challenge WFP and partners face is to identify the targeting approach that will deliver the *optimal outcome*, as well as those steps which can be taken in order to mitigate, to the extent possible, any attendant risks. So for instance, in urban settings it is often prohibitively expense for WFP to carry out door-to-door screening of refugee households. Though this increases the risk of exclusion error, it may nonetheless also be possible to mitigate this risk to a large extent through public information campaigns that are designed to encourage refugees to come forward and 'self-target'.

PROMISING PRACTICE

In Turkey, WFP is working in partnership with the government and the Turkish Red Crescent to design and implement a large initiative called the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN). The stated goal of the ESSN is to provide assistance to *the most vulnerable one million* of an overall three million Syrian refugees in Turkey, the majority of whom are residing in urban areas. In order to target vulnerable refugees *into* the ESSN, WFP and its partners initially attempted to identify refugee households by carrying out door-to-door identification in those urban areas where large numbers of refugees were believed to be concentrated. This approach turned out to be extremely cumbersome and resource-intensive while revealing relatively small numbers of refugees.

Based on the learning from this experience, WFP and its partners then took an entirely different approach by setting up an application-based system, whereby people who believe they might be entitled to assistance under the ESSN are able to fill out an application form that can be collected at designated locations across the country. All applications are assessed systematically and, where necessary, record checks are subsequently carried out in order to verify the information that has been provided by the applicant. This alternative approach has proven much more cost-effective, while being fully integrated into the social protection system that the Turkish government uses for its own nationals.

Verification

Determining refugee status is the responsibility of countries of asylum and is often carried out with support from UNHCR, while determining how food assistance should be targeted in refugee situations is the joint responsibility of WFP and UNHCR. Additionally, WFP is responsible for ensuring that those individuals who have been identified as being entitled to food assistance through targeting are the same individuals who are subsequently *enrolled* onto WFP's operations and are actually *receiving* the assistance. The new refugee landscape poses a number of particular challenges in this regard. In the context of increasingly protracted refugee displacements, there is a concern that identity management systems are becoming increasingly vulnerable to fraudulent activity. Moreover, the implications of leakages are much more severe in the context of resource constraints.

At the same time, the new refugee landscape is also providing humanitarian agencies with some of the solutions they need in order to address these challenges. New technologies are increasingly enabling WFP and its partners to develop information technology (IT)-based identify management systems, most notably through the increased use of:

- **Beneficiary registration platforms.** UNHCR has developed a new corporate system – referred to as 'ProGres' – which is being used capture and hold data on refugees. WFP, for its part, has developed its own corporate system – known as 'SCOPE ' – which, in addition to possessing the same basic capabilities of ProGres, can also link transfer entitlements and deliveries to individual beneficiaries.

- **Biometrics.** UNHCR has developed a separate corporate system – referred to as BIMS – which is enabling the organization to capture and store biometric data taken from refugees. Meanwhile, WFP also has its own biometric data capacities linked to SCOPE.

By deploying these new technologies, WFP can not only minimize leakages but also reduce bottlenecks in the distribution process, both by reducing the amount of time it takes for one transfer to be distributed and also, in some situations, enabling refugees to redeem their transfer whenever they wish. Such capabilities create conditions that, on the whole, are much more dignified for refugees.

Nevertheless, two major challenges are also associated with these new technologies that need to be handled very carefully. The first is that the range of technologies and tools that are now at the disposal of WFP and UNHCR have created an ever greater need for effective coordination between the two agencies. For instance, it is potentially duplicative for WFP and UNHCR to be collecting the same basic data on refugee households and entering it into two separate databases. This is particularly difficult to justify, in view of the

commitments WFP and UNHCR have made under the Grand Bargain to increase cost-effectiveness. Recognizing this, UNHCR and WFP have been working at the corporate level to ensure that ProGres and SCOPE are inter-operable and have also finalized a new agreement on data-sharing.

The second challenge is that WFP's increasing reliance on beneficiary databases and biometrics comes with certain attendant risks related to data protection and privacy. For example, sharing data on refugee households with third parties may potentially undermine the principle of 'informed consent'. In response to these new risks, WFP has recently finalized its own corporate Guide to Personal Data Protection and Privacy[5].

PROMISING PRACTICE

In Somalia, WFP was involved in the humanitarian response to mixed-migration patterns out of conflict-affected Yemen that occurred over the course of 2015 and which comprised both Somali nationals who had chosen to return home, and Yemeni nationals who had been forcibly displaced out of their homeland and were seeking refuge in Somalia.

At the major arrival ports, all migrants were first registered in order to determine their status. Biometric data was also taken from them. Following this, migrants are were issued SCOPE cards that had been credited with a cash value and could be redeemed in a number of shops across the country. This system enabled returning Somali nationals to make the onward journey back to their home region without compromising their ability to access assistance. In doing so, it helped to minimize avoidable disorder and congestion at the major arrival ports.

---

[5] UNHCR also has a corporate policy on data protection.

3.2 "Right Assistance"
Meeting humanitarian needs

Refugee situations always present humanitarian needs, though the severity and exact nature of those needs will normally evolve over time, as well as being highly differentiated between different groups. During the 'arrival' phase, refugees may be experiencing life-threatening levels of food insecurity and undernutrition and be in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. However, they are also likely to have limited access to essential/related non-food items (NFIs), such as cooking utensils and fuel, as well as water. Ideally, rapid market and food security/nutrition assessments will be carried out in order to provide an evidence base for the design of an assistance strategy. WFP will need to decide which modality – or *combination* of modalities – is most appropriate. In some circumstances, WFP may need to have some form of 'stop-gap' solution at hand, such as high-energy biscuits (HEBs), ready-to-eat meals and ready-to-eat specialized nutritious foods (SNF)[6]. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of pregnant and lactating women (PLW), infants and young children, for whom appropriate food products may not be available on local markets.

Eventually, the situation will settle and this will provide an opportunity for WFP to review its approach. When reviewing its assistance strategies, WFP should consider household food needs. Ensuring household food security is not only critical for safeguarding the nutritional status of refugees but also provides a platform that households need in order to become more self-reliant over time. In some situations, it may be necessary for WFP to address household food needs using in-kind assistance, for example when food availability on local markets is scarce. When providing in-kind household food rations, WFP always has an obligation to ensure that they are nutritionally balanced according to international standards. Wherever appropriate, and at the earliest available opportunity, WFP should be looking for possibilities to provide food assistance in the form of CBT[7]. In traditional camp settings, it may be necessary to wait until market activity in surrounding areas has reached a certain level before CBTs can be introduced whereas, in urban situations, such conditions are likely to be present from the very early phases of displacement. When switching to CBTs, WFP must have some level of confidence that nutrition is not being compromised,

---

[6] Such as lipid-based nutrient supplements, low or medium quantity

[7] This is because many of the positive 'spin-offs' that are commonly associated with CBTs are critical to building self-reliance, e.g. providing greater agency to beneficiaries, promoting financial inclusion and increasing socio-economic interaction between refugees and host communities. Promoting self-reliance is discussed in greater detail below.

which can be obtained by carrying out nutritional surveillance among the population at large.

In addition to considering household food needs, WFP also needs to pay particular attention to the nutritional status of vulnerable refugees, in particular (PLW) and infants and young children up to 59 months. This is important not only from the perspective of saving lives but also to ensure that the mental and physical potential of children is not being compromised, which is particularly important in the context of increasingly protracted displacements. Depending on the context, other nutritionally vulnerable groups may include adolescent girls, older people and people living with chronic disease such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or Tuberculosis (TB).   Understanding and responding to the differentiated needs of these groups is key to upholding the principle of *reaching the furthest behind first*. In some situations, it may be necessary for WFP to carry out additional and more targeted interventions to address the needs of these particularly vulnerable groups. Programming options fall into three broad categories: 1) prevention programmes (often referred to as Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programmes, BSFP); 2) treatment programmes (often referred to as Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme, TSFP); and 3) *combined* prevention and treatment programmes. The decision about which approach to take would normally be taken jointly by UNHCR and WFP in consultation with the national authorities and drawing upon the organizations' joint guidelines which are, in turn, aligned to SPHERE standards. As a general rule, WFP should also link food-based nutrition interventions to complementary services related to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and health and, wherever possible, should include related behavior change communication (BCC) for nutrition.

PROMISING PRACTICE

In Rwanda, WFP and UNHCR work closely on a number of nutrition related refugee interventions, building on each other's comparative advantages. In one programme that focusses on the prevention and treatment of undernutrition, WFP provides technical assistance, training and specialized nutritious food products while UNHCR recruits implementing partners and covers operational cost. The two agencies also work together in order to promote healthy nutrition behaviour among refugees and co-finance and conduct an annual Standardized Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) within all refugee camps.

Promoting self-reliance

While meeting humanitarian needs will always be at the core of WFP's work with refugees, the new refugee landscape also calls for a much greater focus on enhancing self-reliance. In the context of increasingly protracted displacements, the limitations of the traditional 'care and maintenance' model of refugee assistance have been laid bare and there is a growing interest in exploring alternative ways for assisting refugees in countries of asylum that are more suited to longer term time-frames. WFP regards this challenge first and foremost as one of how to create more dignified conditions for refugees in countries of asylum through more coherent efforts that cut across the humanitarian-development nexus, though it should also be acknowledged that, in the context of growing resource constraints, there is a need to break the cycle of dependence of refugee populations on humanitarian assistance.

The global MOU between WFP and UNHCR already indicates that the scope of the inter-agency partnership encompasses both the provision of food assistance and the promotion of self-reliance. In practice, however, the focus of joint agency efforts to date has been mainly on the former element with comparatively little attention having been paid to the latter element. In order to give more emphasis to this important issue, WFP and UNHCR signed a new 'Joint Strategy on Enhancing Self-Reliance in Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Refugee Situations', which was officially launched on the margins of the UN Summit on Refugees and Migrants in September 2016. The Strategy calls for renewed inter-agency commitment to promoting refugee self-reliance and indicates how WFP and UNHCR will work together, in partnership with others, to progressively build the self-reliance of refugee populations over multi-year time-frames.

While recognizing that meeting humanitarian needs provides an essential platform for promoting self-reliance, the strategy also calls for greater efforts to:

- **Strengthen livelihoods.** To the extent that the legal and policy framework in the country of asylum permits, WFP should work with UNHCR and other partners to explore different possibilities for increasing human, natural, physical, economic, and social capital. This requires a robust analysis of refugees' existing knowledge, skills and capacities, as well as livelihood values chains and labour markets in the surrounding area. Based on this analysis, WFP should work with partners to strengthen the livelihoods assets of refugees over multi-year time-frames, for instance through Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) programmes and by providing children and youths with new education and training opportunities.

- **Create an enabling environment for self-reliance.** Alongside this, WFP should work with governments, humanitarian and development partners to create an enabling legal and policy environment that allow refugees to use their livelihood assets for productive purposes and, in doing so, become more self-reliant over

time. This can be achieved by producing analysis that shows the positive impacts refugees have on host communities and countries, as well as through policy dialogue and south-south and triangular cooperation. On its CBT programmes, WFP should also explore ways to strengthen the broader financial ecosystem.

In order to do this, the two agencies should jointly assess the self-reliance context. This requires a comprehensive assessment to be undertaken of refugee vulnerabilities and capacities as well as the opportunities and constraints in the local context. Based on this analysis, WFP and UNHCR should then develop multi-year self-reliance strategies, which include identifying clearly-defined 'self-reliance pathways' and the right combination of interventions. Once implementation of the self-reliance strategies has started, progress should jointly be monitored and evaluated on a continual basis.

The success of these efforts will ultimately depend on the level of commitment from the governments of countries of asylum and the extent to which additional/flexible funding can be mobilized from donors. Furthermore, it is also very important to acknowledge that – even in the best of circumstances – enhancing refugee self-reliance is extremely challenging and expectations will need to be managed accordingly.

PROMISING PRACTICE

In Uganda, WFP jointly launched a new programme with UNHCR and other partners in 2014 to enable refugee farmers to engage more actively and profitably in the thriving agricultural economy outside the refugee settlements. Having received land for cultivation by the host government, refugees are now being given training in post-harvest handling and storage equipment.

In addition, farmers from the host community are also being provided with the same assistance as refugees. Through this more inclusive approach, UNHCR and WFP are also reducing tension between the two communities and ensuring that the benefits are shared more equally.

3.3 "Right Way"

Protection

The 1951 Refugee Convention guarantees refugee protection under international law. Countries of asylum have the primary responsibility for ensuring the protection of refugees, though they often carry out this function with the support of UNHCR. WFP's food assistance and self-reliance work falls within this broader protection framework. In practice, protection concerns will vary considerably depending on the legal and policy framework in the country, the phase of displacement and the characteristics of the operational context. Furthermore, there will always be particularly vulnerable members of the refugee community, such as disabled persons. Regardless of the context, however, WFP needs to ensure that its activities at minimum do not expose people to further harm while, to the extent possible, contribute to the overall protection of refugees. WFP focuses on three aspects of protection:

- **Safety.** Due consideration needs to be given to the safety of refugees. This includes safety on the journey to and from WFP activities/services, such as food distribution centres and training centres. Assistance must be provided in a timely manner and in accordance with impartially assessed needs to ensure that it does not become a source of tension between communities or households. Food assistance must also seek ways to prevent vulnerable people from being pushed into dangerous coping mechanisms, such as survival sex and other forms of exploitation.

- **Dignity.** Refugees assisted through WFP programmes should be treated with respect. Refugees should never be considered as objects of charity or disenfranchised through their participation in WFP activities. Due regard should be paid to refugees own strategies for meeting their food assistance needs and assistance should, to the extent possible, build on people's existing capacities. Assistance should be designed taking into account the opinions of affected people and involve them in decisions that affect their lives.

- **Integrity.** In addition to their food and nutritional needs, people receiving assistance from WFP have a range of personal characteristics that may affect their access to or ability to benefit from WFP's assistance. WFP programmes should take account of people's diverse needs and capacities to prevent that programmes inadvertently discriminate against certain groups or individuals. Furthermore, WFP must respect the full range of rights that affected people have and, to the extent possible, support these through its programmes.

In programmes that involve new technologies, such as biometrics and SCOPE, particular attention must be paid to data protection. All programmes should meet the minimum standards as outlined in the Guide to Personal Data Protection and Privacy[8].

<div style="background:#1878C0; color:#fff; padding:1em;">

PROMISING PRACTICE

In Kenya, refugees in Dadaab camp rely mainly on firewood for the preparation of their food. However, environmental depletion and recurrent drought has contributed to increasing scarcity of firewood in the locality. Competition for firewood has led created tensions between refugees and the host community. It has also meant that women and girls can spend hours traveling long distances to collect firewood, thereby exposing them to greater risk of gender-based violence.

In response to this challenge, WFP's Safe Access to Fuel and Energy (SAFE) initiative addresses protection issues by providing and training refugees in the production of fuel-efficient stoves and briquettes. As a result, they now leave the camp in search of firewood less frequently than was the case in the past. The initiative also includes sensitization on gender-based violence and helps refugees identify better protection strategies, for example by moving out of the camps in groups. Taken together, these changes are helping to create a much safer environment for women and girls in Dadaab camp.

</div>

---

[8] UNHCR also has a corporate policy on data protection.

Accountability to affected populations (AAP)

In refugee contexts, WFP must ensure it undertakes activities in a manner that is accountable to affected populations. This is very much in keeping with the concept of the *participation revolution*, which is a major component of the Grand Bargain. WFP is accountable to affected people both for achieving hunger results and for the way in which programmes are implemented. Integrating AAP considerations into refugee operations means ensuring that refugees, and host communities to the extent they are affected, are involved in decisions that affect their lives. WFP can be more accountable to affected populations in refugee contexts by giving greater attention to three important elements:

- **Information provision**. Country offices should ensure that it is providing accurate, timely and accessible information to refugees about WFP's assistance, including programme objectives, targeting criteria, and the refugees' entitlements and rights. Refugees want and need information that everyone can understand regardless of their age, gender or diversity characteristics. This can be done through, for example, the use of radio, mobile phones, posters, leaflets, community meetings, helpdesks, and in some circumstances even through social media. Host community members should also be provided with information about WFP activities to the extent that they are affected by such activities.

- **Consultation.** Country offices should ensure that it is enabling refugees, including the most marginalised, to play a role in the design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of a programme. This can be done through community consultations and focus group discussions with refugee women, men, girls and boys, making sure that the most vulnerable and marginalised have a voice. In practical terms, it means asking people for their views and ideas, agreeing on an appropriate response, then acting on the agreements, checking with them if it is working, and revising if necessary.

- **Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms.** Country offices should provide some kind of mechanism for refugees, as well as affected host community members, to voice complaints and provide feedback on areas relevant to WFP operations in a safe and dignified manner. A formal complaints and feedback mechanism (CFM) must include established procedures for recording, investigating, taking action and providing feedback to the complainant. A CFM can be implemented either directly by WFP or by a WFP partner that reports to WFP on the information generated by the system. CFMs can take a range of forms, from simple complaints and feedback boxes and complaints and feedback desks to hotlines that allow affected people to call-in with their concerns and comments.

PROMISING PRACTICE

In Egypt, WFP launched a dedicated Facebook page in 2014 for the many Syrian refugees who are dispersed across the country. WFP uses the page as an additional channel for communication for disseminating important messages to the refugees, e.g. regarding the importance of keeping their contact information up-to-date. Syrian refugees, for their part, can use the Facebook page in order to raise queries and voice complaints, all of which receive a response from WFP staff members within three working days.

The Facebook page attracted an average of 4,000 visitors per day. Its success demonstrates the importance of having a number of different ways for communicating with beneficiaries as well as the value of consulting with beneficiaries to establish their preferred method of receiving information in a timely manner.

Conflict-sensitivity and peacebuilding

The vast majority of refugees that WFP assists are living in close proximity to - or even *within* - host communities that are, in one way or another, affected by the presence of refugees. In most instances, the host community will have needs of its own that are not being adequately served by either their government or the international community. This creates a risk of conflict between refugees and the host communities, which needs to be taken into consideration in the design of assistance strategies through a greater focus on:

- **Avoiding to do harm.** To the extent possible, WFP must ensure that efforts are made to assist both refugee and host communities in a more equitable manner. Such measures should help to eliminate perceptions of bias, which is a common source of resentment. Providing school feeding in local schools could be an important complement to WFP's refugee assistance in both camp and out-of-camp settings. Alongside this, steps can be taken to mitigate any negative impact that a refugee presence has had on host communities. In camp situations, this may mean finding sustainable solutions to refugees' fuel needs through, for example, the production and distribution of fuel-efficient stoves to refugee households through WFP's SAFE programme.

- **Peacebuilding at the local level.** There is often potential for WFP assistance to play a meaningful role in terms of promoting peaceful coexistence between refugee and host communities. In the right context, the use of market integrated delivery modalities, such as CBTs, may bring greater economic benefits to the host community. When promoting self-reliance, it may be possible to provide trainings to mixed groups or establish mixed saving schemes or workers' collectives. Furthermore, on food assistance for assets (FFA) programmes there may be an opportunity to focus on developing assets that promote greater social interaction between refugee and host communities while also addressing hunger needs, such as communal irrigation infrastructure.

PROMISING PRACTICE

In Chad, WFP and partners are pioneering a new programming approach in the Lake Chad Region that is trying to identify and secure win-win outcomes for displaced populations and host communities. The programme builds upon the Three-Pronged Approach (3PA) and resilience principles, and is part of a larger initiative that is supported by the European Union.

Under the initiative, WFP and partners brought together members of the displaced and host community as part of a Seasonal Livelihood Programming (SLP) exercise, which enhanced the collective understanding of the relatively complex context and paved the way for an integrated, medium-term programme involving both communities. Following this, WFP and partners carried out Community-Based Participatory Planning (CBPP) exercises at the community level in villages that were hosting large numbers of displaced persons, which helped stakeholder to identify local needs and shared priorities and develop a medium-term action plan for asset creation, livelihood strengthening and complementary activities.

Part 4: Partnering for improved outcomes

4.1 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

In most situations relating to refugees, WFP acts in partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the main terms of which are set out in a joint global Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). WFP's primary role in refugee contexts is to assist where there is a sizeable population that is vulnerable to food insecurity and undernutrition. According to the UNHCR/WFP MOU, the two agencies will jointly assess food and nutrition assistance requirements, as well as self-reliance opportunities, and decide upon appropriate programme modalities and distribution to meet these requirements.

The UNHCR-WFP partnership is formalized through mechanisms at the global and country level.

- **Country level.** UNHCR and WFP are both members of the broader United Nations Country Team (UNCT). In addition, the two agencies have formal bilateral coordination arrangements through the Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) and the Joint Plan of Action (JPA) mechanism. A JAM is conducted to assess the food and non-food needs of refugees and other communities of concern. A JAM is conducted, if there is a new influx of refugees following a crisis, to assess the food security and self-reliance of long-term refugees and to lay the groundwork for voluntary repatriation and reintegration. A JAM report should be produced no later than one month after the mission and will provide the basis for any necessary adjustments to joint activities and the JPA. The JPA is based on JAM recommendations and should be developed at the outset of each joint refugee operation and updated at least annually. The JPA will set out mutually agreed goals, objectives, responsibilities, indicators and implementation arrangements.

- **Global level.** UNHCR and WFP also have formal bilateral coordination arrangements by means of the global MOU. The MOU sets out the objectives and scope of collaboration and establishes the division of responsibilities and arrangements between the two agencies. It includes addenda pertaining to CBT programming and data-sharing. Furthermore, UNHCR and WFP have a corporate-level agreement related to targeting as well as the Joint Strategy on "Enhancing Self-Reliance in Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Refugee Situations". Regular high-level meetings take place, co-chaired by the UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner for Operations and the WFP Deputy Executive Director/Chief Operating Officer. During these meetings, overall implementation of joint activities and major strategic operational or policy issues are reviewed and discussed.

4.2 Other partnerships

In addition to the close collaboration with UNHCR, WFP also works closely with a number of other partners. These include:

- **Affected populations**: The most fundamental partnership for WFP is with the people it serves. Therefore, affected populations, including both refugees and host communities, should be involved in the design, monitoring and evaluation of programme activities from an early stage.

- **Governments.** Government partners are involved in all levels of WFP's work, including resource mobilization, implementation of activities, policy development and advocacy. In refugee contexts, partnerships with host governments are especially crucial as they are responsible for the legal and policy frameworks through which the needs of refugees are met.

- **Other UN agencies.** Depending on the situation in question, UNHCR and WFP may work together with other UN agencies. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is often provides assistance to refugee communities and are often a key counterpart of WFP with respect to the delivery of nutrition programming. Moreover, because of its increasing focus on self-reliance programming WFP increasingly finds itself working in partnership with development-oriented actors such as the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Notwithstanding the UNHCR refugee coordination model, WFP normally also has some level of interaction with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

- **Non-governmental organizations (NGOs).** On the majority of refugee programmes, WFP and UNHCR work closely with international or national NGOs, who not only oversee operational delivery but also contribute to programme development. A tripartite agreement is used to document the terms upon which this partner will be entrusted with the distribution of food assistance. NGO partners are jointly appointed with UNHCR and report directly to both agencies.

- **Private sector.** In many situations, partnerships with the private sector can provide a complementary, yet critical, support to WFP's refugee operations. In addition to cash support, examples of recent private contributions include expertise to enhance WFP's logistics and fundraising capacities and collaboration on innovative electronic payment systems such as electronic vouchers and mobile phone cash transfers.

- **Research-based and academic institutions.** In certain refugee settings, additional research may be needed in order to help guide programmes and/or assess the impact of such programmes. In such cases, WFP together with UNHCR and other humanitarian partners work together with research-based and/or academic institutions.

PROMISING PRACTICE

In Lebanon, WFP and UNHCR have been working with the American University of Beirut to develop a formula that will help to expedite the identification of the most vulnerable refugee households eligible for food assistance. The formula draws upon the extensive information collected by the two agencies and other partners since the beginning of the Syrian crises.