



Enhancing Self-Reliance in Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Refugee Situations

Background

Almost half of all refugees in the world today are caught in protracted situations. In many cases, there are limited prospects for durable solutions, and refugees remain dependent on ongoing international humanitarian assistance. Given the trends in conflict, it is likely that increasing numbers of refugees will face similar circumstances in the future. Yet a traditional humanitarian assistance approach undermines their dignity and may not be financially sustainable in the long term.

In this context, jointly commissioned UNHCR/WFP Impact Evaluations examined the agencies' efforts to support refugees' self-reliance in food security and nutrition and found that there were opportunities to take a more concerted and strategic approach. In response, UNHCR and WFP are launching a 'Joint Strategy for Enhancing Self-Reliance in Food Security and Nutrition in Protracted Refugee Situations'. The strategy is applicable to all situations in which UNHCR and WFP are jointly assisting refugees in protracted situations and focuses on self-reliance in terms of food security and nutrition.

Objectives

UNHCR and WFP have a shared vision, in which refugees in protracted situations live in dignity and progressively attain greater self-reliance in food security and nutrition, while working to achieve the ultimate goal of durable solutions. The strategy has two complementary objectives:

- 1. Strengthen livelihoods while ensuring basic food and nutrition needs are met:** In order to become self-reliant in food security and nutrition, refugees require strengthened livelihoods that enable them to meet more of their food and nutrition needs on their own in their particular context. It is recognized that increasing self-reliance takes time and that continued humanitarian assistance will provide a critical foundation for these efforts.
- 2. Encourage an enabling environment for increased self-reliance of refugees:** While it is important to strengthen livelihood assets, refugees must be able to utilize these assets in an enabling environment if they are to become self-reliant in food security and nutrition. UNHCR and WFP will engage with governments, host communities, and humanitarian and development partners to expand the opportunities and reduce the constraints for refugees.



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Partnerships & Coordination

In order to deliver this Joint Strategy, UNHCR and WFP will work in partnership with a wide range of different stakeholders including but not limited to: refugees, host communities, governments of countries of asylum, humanitarian and development donors, wider UNCTs, academic and research institutions, non-governmental organizations and broader civil society, and the private

sector. UNHCR and WFP will also seek to work directly with other UN agencies, especially those specialized in protection, decent work, development and gender issues, in order to deliver this strategy. The existing global MOU between UNHCR and WFP outlines clear coordination commitments and mechanisms, which can be activated for the purpose of implementing this strategy.

EXAMPLE: WORKING WITH BOTH REFUGEE AND HOST COMMUNITIES IN UGANDA

For over five decades, Uganda has been generously hosting refugees and asylum seekers. Refugees in Uganda have some of the best prospects for self-reliance. The challenge, however, is to convert this potential into reality. UNHCR, WFP and partners have been working together to help refugees take advantage of these opportunities and ensure that host communities benefit too.

In 2014, UNHCR and WFP jointly launched a new programme to enable refugee farmers to engage more actively and profitably in the thriving agricultural economy found 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. Farmers from the host community

are also being provided with the same assistance. Through this more inclusive approach, UNHCR and WFP are reducing tension between the two communities and ensuring that the benefits are shared equally.

At the same time, UNHCR is working with the Government of Uganda, the World Bank and other partners to strengthen the self-reliance and resilience of both refugees and host communities through another project, the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment initiative (ReHoPE), a self-reliance and resilience strategic framework for refugee and host communities, which aims to facilitate the gradual transition from humanitarian to development programming in refugee-impacted districts. This goal will be achieved through joint analysis, collective advocacy, integrated service delivery, and joint resource mobilization.

Way Forward

UNHCR and WFP will work in close partnership with a range of stakeholders to develop country level strategies and implementation plans. Through these, UNHCR and WFP will contribute to wider efforts to address the challenges of protracted displacement and provide a positive example of how to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus and better support millions of refugees worldwide.

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September 2016