



JOINT TARGETING FOR REFUGEES IN BASSIKOUNOU, MAURITANIA

Mauritania hosts over 89,000 Malian refugees (as of October 2022) in the department of Bassikounou, where Mbera camp is located.

Together with UNHCR, WFP, and the World Bank, the Government of Mauritania recently started **including Malian refugees in two national social protection programmes** for vulnerable households: Tekavoul (solidarity in Arabic), the national social transfer programme; and Inaya (concern in Arabic), the national health system.

With support from the [UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub](#), both UNHCR and WFP **humanitarian assistance** and Mauritanian **social protection programmes** have **adopted a joint UNHCR-WFP refugee vulnerability targeting approach** for determining refugee households' eligibility for assistance.

In tandem, since 2018 UNHCR and WFP have been undertaking a shift from blanket to **vulnerability-based assistance** to **prioritise the most vulnerable refugees** for food and other basic needs assistance.

INCLUDING REFUGEES IN THE TEKAVOUL SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMME







Tekavoul, the national social transfer programme of Mauritania, is a cash transfer programme that supports roughly 70,000 Mauritanian households living in extreme poverty.

The programme consists of **quarterly cash transfers** of MRU 1,500 (approximately US\$ 40), **conditional on recipients' participation in social promotion activities**. This outreach component is designed to promote knowledge of essential family practices and investment in early childhood development.

At the beginning of 2022, following UNHCR, WFP and World Bank technical and financial support, **7,395 refugee households were included in this programme**.

ENSURING AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH

Supported by UNHCR, WFP, and the **UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub**, the Social Registry of Mauritania undertook a **full census of 14,012 refugee households** in and around Mbera camp from April to June 2021. Data collected included:

-  Demographic information
-  Engagement in livelihoods activities
-  Food access
-  Adoption of coping strategies
-  Household expenditure
-  Community participation

This information allowed UNHCR, WFP and the Government of Mauritania to **assess the vulnerability of each refugee household** and identify the five key vulnerability dimensions, presented on the right-hand side, to define household vulnerability and its severity. These five dimensions were then validated through **consultations with refugees** before they were used to generate a vulnerability score for each household.



VULNERABILITY DIMENSIONS	
Dimension	Description
Food access	Food Consumption Score
Education	Years of education of household members
	Child school attendance
Dependency	Number of children and/or members who are older, have a disability or are chronically ill compared to able-bodied adult members of working age
Health and specific needs	Presence of persons with a disability or a chronic illness
Working capacity	Engagement in livelihoods activities
	Gender differences between working age adult members

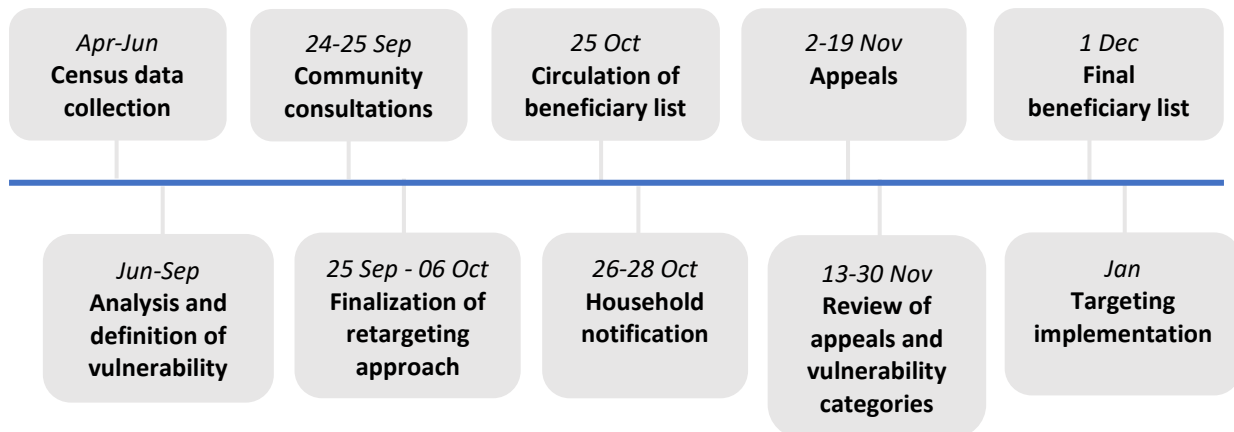
CONSULTATIONS WITH REFUGEES

Malina refugees in and around Mbera camp were consulted to gain their insights and feedback on various aspects of vulnerability and to identify any possible protection risks of the retargeting exercise. Eleven in-person key informant interviews and fourteen focus group discussions were held with refugees, conducted separately with men and women.

Refugees and key stakeholders were asked to describe **the most and least vulnerable households** in terms of **clear and observable characteristics**, such as, socio-demographic aspects, including asset ownership and engagement in livelihoods activities.

The findings confirmed the applicability of the five dimensions used to assess overall household vulnerability and their relevance in identifying the most vulnerable individuals and households.

TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE FINALIZATION OF RETARGETING APPROACH: 2021-2022



VULNERABILITY SCORE

The retargeting model combined the five dimensions into a **numerical score for every household**, with a higher score indicating higher vulnerability.

Thresholds were established to categorise households into **three vulnerability groups**; highly vulnerable, moderately vulnerable, and least vulnerable, capturing different socio-demographic profiles.

The Government of Mauritania agreed to increase the number of households to be included in Tekavoul from 5,000 to approximately 7,000 refugee households after preliminary analysis showed a larger than expected number of highly vulnerable households.

TARGETING APPROACH

While developing the retargeting approach, different targeting models were evaluated looking at various key issues, such as:

- The coverage of the population through available assistance: Tekavoul, and Tekavoul in addition to WFP food assistance

- The number of appeals that could result in eligibility status and assistance changes
- Potential changes in assistance generated by the retargeting

Households headed by a minor or composed only of minors were automatically included in the highly vulnerable group (Group 1) and thus eligible for Tekavoul assistance.

The retargeting approach was also **designed to allow for appeals and related changes** in eligibility status.

Social Registry data on refugee households were triangulated and linked with UNHCR's **proGres** data and field visits, helping to finalise the beneficiary list and refugees' eligibility status.

ASSISTANCE TURNOVER ANALYSIS

As an existing targeting exercise had been partially implemented in Mbera camp that involved categorising households in six different vulnerability groups, an **assistance turnover analysis** was conducted to better **understand and keep track of transitions in and out of assistance**, by comparing the previous and current targeting approaches.



FINAL BENEFICIARY FIGURES AND ASSISTANCE GROUPS - JANUARY 2022

Vulnerability group		N° HHs	% HHs	Assistance type
1	Highly vulnerable	7,395	53%	<i>100% coverage of food needs</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tekavoul • Inaya health coverage • WFP food and cash assistance (with 500 MRU deduction to account for Tekavoul assistance) • UNHCR multipurpose cash assistance
2	Moderately vulnerable	6,014	43%	<i>50% coverage of food needs</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not eligible for Tekavoul nor Inaya • WFP cash assistance only • UNHCR multipurpose cash assistance
3	Least vulnerable	558	4%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not eligible for Tekavoul nor Inaya • Not eligible for WFP food or cash assistance • Eligible for UNHCR livelihoods support
Total		13,967	100%	All households remain eligible for other forms of food assistance (e.g., school feeding, nutrition prevention and treatment)

COMMUNICATING WITH COMMUNITIES

In October 2021, key messages were shared on the **retargeting exercise, refugees' rights** and **how to provide feedback and complaints**. The campaign further shared the criteria for households' eligibility for assistance to ensure that refugees understood the different steps of the targeting process and their implications.

Information was shared through a variety of communication channels, including meetings with community leaders and volunteers, mobile loudspeakers, posters in public spaces, home visits and WhatsApp messages in local languages, ensuring messages were received and understood by all, including illiterate people, people with disabilities and older persons.

ALLOWING TIME FOR APPEALS

In November 2021, an appeal process was established to allow households to submit a request to have their eligibility and assistance status reviewed.

Appeals were received during a three-week window. Solicitations were received at the **registration centre**, while two **mobile teams** visited surrounding host villages to also receive

appeals from refugees living outside of the camp. Additionally, refugees were given the option to provide appeals through an **appeals helpline**.

In total, **25% of refugee households submitted an appeal** (3,437 households). 83% of appeals were submitted by households categorised as moderately vulnerable (Group 2) and the remaining 17% by households categorised as least vulnerable (Group 3). Based on the received appeals, **around 2,000 changes to the eligibility status of refugee households were implemented**, and the beneficiary list was finalised accordingly. The first Tekavoul assistance distribution then followed in January 2022.

LEARNING AND ADAPTING

Working closely with the Government, UNHCR and WFP are establishing a protocol for the assessment and targeting of new arrivals over the coming years. Moreover, a joint monitoring system is being set up to capture the outcomes of the retargeting exercise, and to ensure the continued protection of refugees living in and around Mbera camp.

