



## LESSONS ON UNHCR-WFP COLLABORATION IN RWANDA July 2020 - December 2021

### SUMMARY

In 2020 and 2021 UNHCR-WFP collaborated on transitioning from status-based blanket assistance to a needs-based targeted approach to the provision of humanitarian food assistance for refugees in camp settings in Rwanda. This was conducted in close consultation with the Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) of the Government of Rwanda and with support from the [UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub \(“the Joint Hub”\)](#). This document captures key lessons from the targeting exercise and supporting activities harnessed from over thirty interviews and group discussions with UNHCR and WFP staff, MINEMA representatives, and with refugees.

#### REFUGEES IN RWANDA

Rwanda has been welcoming refugees for over two decades and hosts approximately 126,000 refugees (Nov 2021, UNHCR), 90% of whom live in six refugee camps.

Rwanda is a protracted refugee context: Refugees are mainly from the DRC, the majority of whom have lived in Rwanda for almost 24 years, and from Burundi, where recent voluntary repatriations of some Burundian refugees have taken place.

The Government of Rwanda boasts a progressive refugee protection framework and policies. This enabling environment includes refugees having freedom of movement and the right to work.

The Government has also promoted the financial inclusion of refugees through the National Financial Inclusion Strategy of Rwanda.

#### NEEDS-BASED TARGETED ASSISTANCE

Until 2021, for many years UNHCR and WFP assistance for food and basic needs in Rwanda had been provided as blanket assistance (provision for all) for refugees’ living in camps.

Factors that contributed to implementing a new targeting approach, included:

- An acknowledgement that while there are still high levels of vulnerability, not all refugees in Rwanda are vulnerable and need long-term humanitarian assistance.
- A shared commitment to graduating camp-based refugees out of dependency on humanitarian assistance programmes.
- Funding cuts and donor pressure for a shift to targeted assistance.
- Support, engagement, and recommendation from MINEMA, influenced by rations reductions.



### CONTEXTUAL CHALLENGES

The targeting process in Rwanda was completed within the context of severe funding shortfalls for WFP food assistance, with 60% food ration cuts implemented in February and March 2021. These funding constraints led to an **acceleration of the timeline** for the targeting implementation.

Despite a favourable regulatory environment, there is a lack of livelihood opportunities for refugees, and in particular refugees living in camps that are far from urban areas.

The targeting approach was developed during the **COVID-19 pandemic**, which had a significant impact on the following:

- Refugee livelihoods and needs, with **job and income losses** being experienced.
- UNHCR and WFP operational capacity, with **restrictions on movement**, and in-person meetings affecting the implementation of activities and coordination.
- Capacity for community engagement, with **restrictions on gatherings and visits** to and in refugee camps.

In Rwanda, there had been **past security incidents** related to refugee resistance to cuts in assistance. This resulted in **cautiousness and hesitance** on the targeting process and related security risks, which **slowed decision making**.

This was the first time that either agency had undertaken such a comprehensive exercise in Rwanda, and **technical capacity, experience, and awareness on targeting was limited**.

In addition, there was **limited available documentation** on targeting experiences from other contexts.

The UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub was seen to be instrumental throughout the process, but was also a **new initiative**, with Rwanda being one of the first Joint Hub supported countries.

### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The collaboration between UNHCR and WFP resulted in the following key outputs:

An evidence-based **shift from blanket to needs-based targeted food assistance** for refugees in camp settings based on three categories of vulnerability. This allowed a **more efficient use of resources**, with the provision of a full food assistance package for refugees with the highest vulnerability.

**Protection mainstreamed and prioritised** throughout the targeting process, with time and resources invested in community engagement, the successful management of risks, and the management of appeals and other feedback and complaints. This included the **avoidance of any security incidents**, which had been identified as a significant risk.

Activities throughout the targeting process were **conducted jointly**, and were achieved within a **very short timeframe**, despite many contextual challenges.

Two **UNHCR-WFP Joint Post-Distribution Monitoring and Vulnerability Assessments** were undertaken. Built upon the previously separate monitoring exercises of both agencies, these exercises were conducted to gain representative findings to inform targeting alongside collecting data on corporate indicators. The results provide a comprehensive overview of household needs, livelihoods, and vulnerability in all six refugee camps in Rwanda and the second monitoring exercise enabled a **comparative analysis of the targeting effectiveness** and changes of key outcome indicators over time.

Throughout the targeting process there was close **coordination and partnership with the Government of Rwanda**, ensuring government buy-in, guidance, and support to joint activities.

UNHCR and WFP country offices both made **significant changes to traditional ways of working**, with an increase in joint activities, and with staff undertaking a range of new

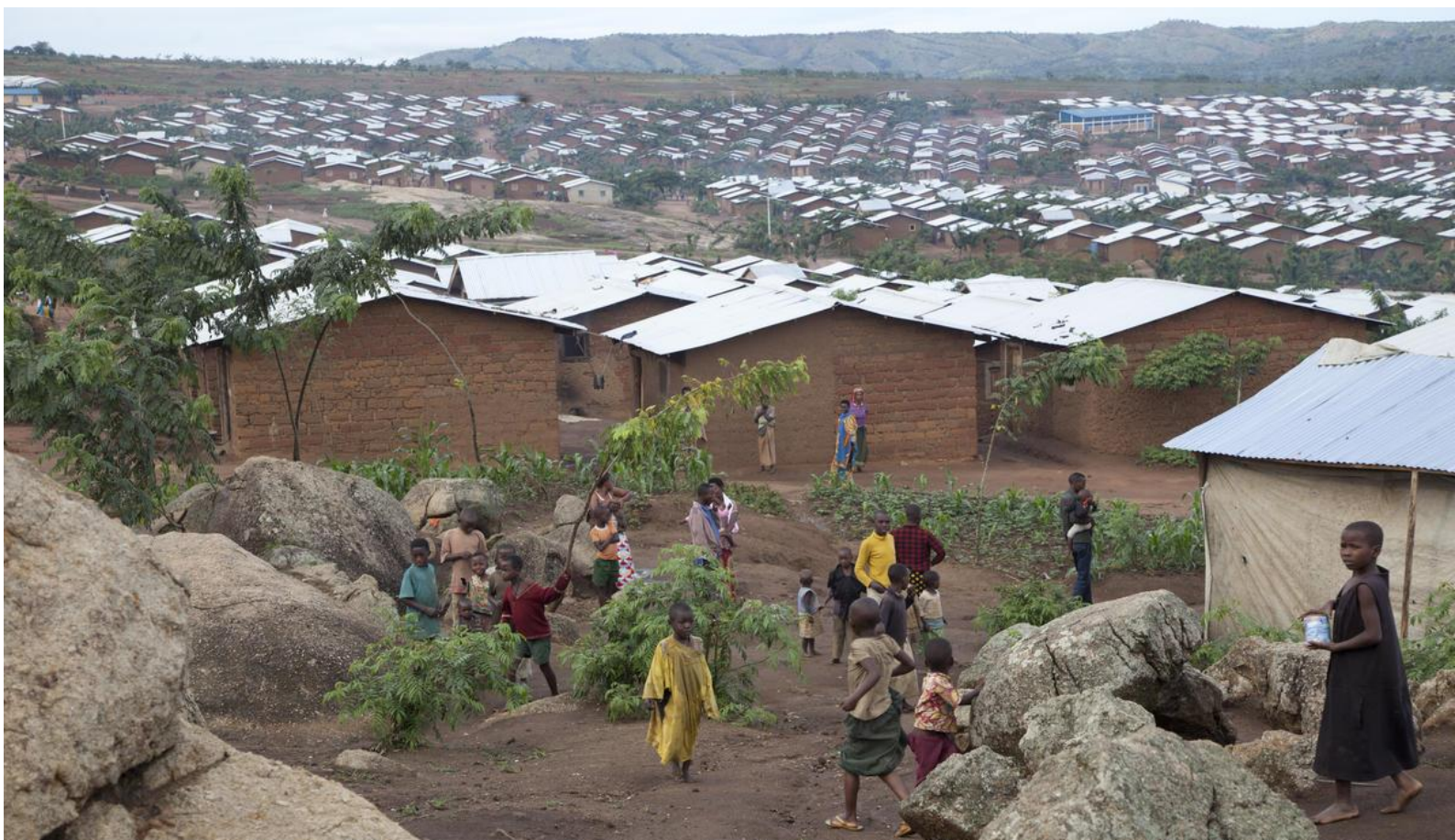
activities, and incorporating new tools and approaches in their daily work.

#### KEY CHALLENGES

There was a strong consensus across teams that the targeting exercise and work on **longer-term transition planning** for self-reliance and refugee inclusion was not sufficiently linked or explored between the two agencies, despite initial planning for this activity.

While the targeting exercise was implemented for WFP food assistance, based on technical recommendation from the Joint Hub, UNHCR decided to postpone **aligning the approach for NFI cash assistance** due to several factors, including the economic effects of COVID-19 lockdowns and the NFI provision including sanitary items necessary during a pandemic.

Due to the funding constraints on WFP food assistance, based on a strong recommendation from the Minister of MINEMA, the timeline for the implementation of the targeting was brought forward. While the **shortened timeframe** was successfully managed, it was felt that it **negatively impacted on the level of communication and consultations with communities**, and thus accountability to affected persons.



## COORDINATION

There was **close collaboration throughout the targeting process** between UNHCR, WFP and the Joint Hub. Given the fact that many of the activities involved were new to the Rwanda country office teams, there were other competing priorities and limited capacity, the **Joint Hub took a proactive role** for many activities.

Despite the close coordination, there were **differing understandings of the objectives, scope, and processes** of the exercise both between and within UNHCR and WFP country office teams. This included a lack of clarity on:



How some deliverables would be linked to the targeting, such as the **development of a transition plan incorporating self-reliance, livelihoods programming.**



The **roles and responsibilities** of different functions throughout the process.

If the targeting process will be integrated into daily operations and how this can be achieved

While some colleagues were highly engaged throughout, there was a **lack of engagement and ownership from certain functions**. Involving some key team members was a challenge, especially at the field level, with the Joint Coordinator supporting communication amongst UNHCR and WFP teams internally.

There were many new approaches and tasks that were **unfamiliar to certain functions**, and this required **learning on the job**, developing new tools and guidance, and changing working practices.

It was **difficult for non-technical** (statistics/survey methodology related) **colleagues to engage in technical discussions**, despite their engagement being essential to the process.

This was a time-consuming initiative, especially for designated focal points, and the **time**

**needed to engage in comprehensive processes and reach joint agreements was underestimated.**

Despite Joint Hub staff leading many activities, the **rigorousness of exercises** was often seen as **too onerous** for many colleagues, including the engagement on technical details that was required to follow and input in processes.

## MANAGING THE COORDINATION

A key success factor was the recruitment of a **Joint UNHCR-WFP Coordinator**, based in Rwanda, who facilitated and managed the collaboration throughout the targeting process, alongside **designated focal points from UNHCR and WFP.**

The coordinator and focal points were crucial in involving relevant colleagues and ensuring ownership of the process. The coordinator acted as a link between the Joint Hub team, and UNHCR and WFP country office teams in Kigali, and the field.

In addition, the coordinator played a key role in the coordination of the targeting process with MINEMA, the Ministry in charge of emergency management.

While the coordinator acted as a bridge and convenor between the two agencies, it was felt that there were two areas that could have been further supported:

1. Strategic planning and coordination at the senior management level
2. Further provision of technical advice

## COORDINATION SUPPORT PROFILES

UNHCR-WFP joint in-country positions depend on the nature of the collaboration and functions in place within the country office. Additional technical profiles could provide hands-on support to certain activities (such as vulnerability analysis), particularly in country offices where there is lower capacity in some technical areas.

## THE UNHCR-WFP JOINT PROGRAMME EXCELLENCE AND TARGETING HUB

Many joint deliverables would not have been achievable without Joint Hub support. In this regard, the Joint Hub has fulfilled two roles:

1. **Coordination**; bringing actors together, facilitating dialogue, and managing and advancing joint processes.

The neutral role of the Joint Hub was also greatly appreciated (although the Joint Hub was at times perceived as siding with one or the other agency).

2. **Technical role**, for example by leading certain activities such as the development of an assessment methodology, sampling, questionnaire design, training, analysis, and targeting.

The Joint Hub **filled key technical gaps** where skills sets were not present or weren't available or utilized due to competing priorities.

There has been great appreciation for the **technical rigor and quality of the Joint Hub's work**.

Success factors included:

- Dedicated Joint Hub staff time, including in-country missions to advance technical workstreams.
- A **proactive approach**, consistently providing country offices with options supported by rigorous analysis, offering solutions rather than problems.
- **Flexibility** on undertaking additional tasks such as giving trainings, presentations, or drafting documents.
- Provision of **additional staff capacity** and **budgetary support**.
- **Thorough documentation** on options and decisions taken for each step of the targeting process.

Country office team engagement (speaking the same technical language) was an issue throughout, which reflected the dual

## JOINT HUB SUPPORT MISSIONS

The in-country UNHCR-WFP Joint Coordinator and Joint Hub technical experts worked alongside country office focal points during the different stages of the targeting process. While in-country missions were not possible during most of the period, the following two missions were held:

### 1. Joint Data Analysis

The Joint Hub facilitated a joint analysis mission on the second UNHCR-WFP Joint Post Distribution Monitoring exercise to conduct the analysis and support knowledge transfer between colleagues. In addition to the Joint Hub, colleagues from both UNHCR and WFP Headquarters and Regional Bureaus joined the mission, as a best practice exercise.

### 2. AAP and Learning

The Joint Hub conducted a mission to support learning on AAP, including the roll-out of the appeals process and community engagement, alongside a broader learning mission to review the overall joint implementation that resulted in a joint planning workshop for 2022.

## LAUNCHING FUTURE JOINT ACTIVITIES

It was broadly felt by colleagues that for future joint exercises in other country contexts that an initial mission, or joint workshop at the onset of Joint Hub support could help with the following:

- Clarify roles and responsibilities
- Ensure involvement of key stakeholders
- Building capacity and outlining capacity needs
- Build relationships and trust
- Build consensus on activities and approaches – providing more space for listening to different opinions and exploring options, and ensure strategic engagement and transition planning

responsibility of both the Joint Hub to translate technical work into less complex language, and the responsibility of the country offices to be able to engage in technical discussions.

The Joint Hub provided financial support to joint exercises, including for **temporary appeals staff** to support the appeals process linked to the implementation of the new targeting approach.

While the Joint Hub played a temporary role and was seen as having a significant responsibility for the success of this joint process, there were issues in **long-term planning** on staffing and resources needed for the integration of this work, which could have been factored in earlier on.

## CAPACITY

Significant **understanding and capacity has been enhanced** in areas such as knowledge of the targeting process, joint assessments, community consultations, and appeals.

**Additional capacity building** was highlighted as a particular need, especially considering regular staff turnover and remaining gaps.

Recommendations from country office staff were made for **increased resources to support capacity building** – such as the provision of examples from other operations to support country offices' understanding of available methodologies and approaches, as well as a Targeting Learning Programme.

It is **not possible to build certain technical capacity** without significant investment (such as for analysis to inform the development of the targeting criteria).

Some types of support from the Joint Hub are being **incorporated into new ways of working**, such as joint post-distribution monitoring with both agencies' corporate indicators, and joint appeals processes.

For some activities that are highly technical and less frequent (such as the development of a new targeting model) there will **continue to be a need for additional external support**.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

At the beginning of the engagement there could have been clearer outlining of **roles and expectations for each stage** of the process for each technical activity.

For several key colleagues in UNHCR, many of the activities that needed to be implemented during the targeting process were seen as **additional activities outside of their regular duties**, and in addition to UNHCR's usual way of working and operations management cycle.

There was a **different understanding of the targeting process** between UNHCR who viewed this exercise as a pilot initiative, with additional activities, and WFP who viewed this as a new way of working.

The **engagement of senior management** at the kickoff stage and through systematic check-ins ensured decision making and follow up, but this could have been strengthened.

There is a need for joint work to be **mainstreamed in staff ToR's**, increased internal coordination, and for enhanced **senior management oversight and follow-up**.

Starting any joint exercise with a kickoff mission or joint workshop that involves senior management and that provides an overview of the process, expectations, and examples of results from other countries would be beneficial in ensuring:

- A joint understanding of goals
- An understanding of the level of engagement required for different functions at different stages of the process
- Ownership of the process
- Integration of activities into roles
- Management buy-in and oversight
- Flag what will be coming up, giving an overview of upcoming decisions to be made in advance.



## LESSONS ON UNHCR-WFP COLLABORATION IN RWANDA ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING

In December 2020, a **UNHCR-WFP Joint Post-Distribution Monitoring and Needs Assessment (JPDM)** exercise for refugees in Rwanda was undertaken with support from the UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub.

The assessment aimed to generate updated information on household needs, livelihoods, and vulnerability in all six refugee camps in Rwanda by **optimizing the available monitoring resources of UNHCR and WFP**. A household survey and qualitative data collection were employed to monitor the effects of food and non-food cash assistance on refugees' food security outcomes and basic needs, the impact of COVID-19 on households, and their income and livelihoods situations.

The findings showed that **71 percent of camp-based refugee households in Rwanda remained highly vulnerable**, measured by combining three indicators on economic vulnerability, food consumption and livelihoods resilience.

The assessment **informed the development of eligibility criteria and a needs-based targeting approach** for the provision of food assistance to highly vulnerable and moderately vulnerable groups implemented in May 2021.

Following the implementation of the new targeting approach a second UNHCR-WFP Joint Post-Distribution Monitoring exercise was conducted in September 2021.

The objectives of this assessment were to ensure corporate continuity in monitoring refugees' food security, basic needs, and income and livelihoods, to **gain insights on the targeting implementation four months after its roll-out**, and to assess the targeting effectiveness, eligibility criteria, and potential adjustments in the targeting approach.

The JPDM provided a strong **understanding of the vulnerability and needs** of the refugees in each camp and enabled the identification of the eligibility criteria for targeted assistance.

## KEY FINDINGS

By combining two monitoring exercises, the country offices were able to **reduce duplication** and carry out activities that were more **cost effective**.

The Joint PDM has resulted in a **rigorous, replicable, and adaptable tool** that has yielded **high-quality representative data** as well as reliable results, which are also **comparable over time**.

The new approach has been highly appreciated by both agencies, with a consensus to **continue this approach to monitor key outcome indicators for refugees** receiving different assistance packages.

The continuation of the JPDM will provide information on the **impact of the targeting approach** over time as well as the potential need to **review and adapt the targeting approach** to new circumstances and needs.

### TECHNICAL ASPECTS

**Minimum core corporate indicators** utilized by both agencies that fell under the scope of the assessment were identified at the initial stage of questionnaire drafting.

For both assessments, a statistical approach to sampling was employed. For the second JPDM, a stratified, random sampling design was utilized that was representative for the populations per camp, and per targeting eligibility tier, to allow comparisons by location, and across eligibility groups.

A key component in support of this work was an initial thorough **secondary data analysis** that was conducted by the Joint Hub and provided an overview of the information at hand and gaps that could inform any targeting approach.

Collaboration across the agencies on this exercise was a **lengthy process** where there had to be **compromises by each agency on the data** that was collected.

This was due to limits on the length of the assessment – examples include additional livelihoods data and **additional sectoral data** that would have been collected through individual agency surveys. However, it was felt that the added benefits outweighed these considerations.

### OUTLINING UNHCR AND WFP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN JOINT ASSESSMENTS

For the second Joint Post Distribution Monitoring exercise, **roles and responsibilities were revised and clearly defined**, building on the experience of the first implementation.

Roles were divided into the following four areas of responsibility:

1. **Questionnaire manager** (UNHCR Information Management Officer) managed the coding of questionnaires in KoBo Toolbox.
2. **Field mission leader** (WFP Monitoring and Evaluation Officer) supervised the data collection and reporting any changes needed to improve the questionnaire.
3. **Data quality assurance** (Joint Hub Assessment Officer, with UNHCR IMO and WFP M&E) checked the incoming data on a regular basis and developed data quality protocols to be used in the field.
4. The UNHCR Joint Country Coordinator and WFP M&E Officer conducted **spot checks for additional supervision and guidance** during data collection, including whether additional changes were needed.

This clear designation of roles enabled an effective implementation of the JPDM, utilising the skills and resources of both agencies.



## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

There was collaboration across UNHCR and WFP multi-functional teams, with a strong initial **reliance on the Joint Hub for technical support** and leadership of the activities.

For both exercises, the Joint Hub led on the methodology design, with close engagement throughout the process with both country offices' multi-functional teams.

The analysis of the data collected for both JPDM's were mainly limited to the Joint Hub, and WFP. This reflected the **general lack of statistical background of most UNHCR functions**, but also points to an area for future engagement for UNHCR, and the **role of the UNHCR Regional Bureau in providing support and capacity building** to the analysis of quantitative data.

Colleagues from both agencies took great time and effort to **engage on a statistical level on the data and methodology**, however this was a challenge at times and there were frequent **disagreements on several areas of the approach**, including:

- The representativeness of findings.
- The analysis that was undertaken by the Joint Hub for the development of the eligibility criteria, including the testing of combinations of criteria, and the relationship between the use of economic data in the assessment and the criteria.

Many colleagues were highly engaged during the assessment process, but there was **limited engagement from certain functions**, particularly during the implementation, analysis, and reporting stages.

**Technical ownership** of some aspects of the process has remained low, such as the longitudinal aspects of the second JPDM.

WFP ensured the speedy recruitment of enumerators for both exercises despite delayed decisions in the planning for the first JPDM, and the narrow preparatory window for the second JPDM.

## SECOND JPDM FINDINGS

Since the first JPDM, and the implementation of the new targeting approach, **overall vulnerability among households reduced** in terms of livelihood resilience, economic capacity, and food access:

- **Refugees with high vulnerability reduced** from 71 to 59 percent of households, while
- **Refugees with less vulnerability increased** from 9 to 16 percent of households

There was also an **increase in the share of refugee households that have sufficient economic capacity to meet their essential food and non-food needs** using their own resources, with an increase from 17 to 36 percent of households.

There was also an increase in refugees engaging in income generating activities from 40 to 49 percent.

## LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS

By running the JPDM several times, UNHCR and WFP have been able to statistically estimate changes in key outcome indicators for the same households measured over time, from the baseline (December 2020) to end-line (September 2021). This approach informs the effectiveness of the targeting approach, with the following key findings observed so far:

- The three vulnerability groups show stability/ improvement in most indicators
- The moderately and least vulnerable groups show higher food coping strategy adoption than in December 2020
- The observed stability and improvements suggest the effectiveness of the targeting and tiered assistance approach

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As the assessment design, implementation and analysis involve **frequent joint decision making throughout**, feedback and decision making must be timely, to avoid delaying processes.

The JPDM process should be linked to the targeting process and reflect updated information needs to guide targeting implementation.

**Community involvement** including sensitization, results sharing, and consultation should be strengthened

JPDMs that are conducted following the implementation of a targeting exercise require **extra scrutiny in the creation of lists for households to be surveyed**, particularly for those households that will be interviewed again to understand changes over time. Therefore, a UNHCR registration focal point needs to provide timely support.

The JPDM process (planning, data collection and dissemination of findings) should involve a wide range of implementing partners and refugee leaders to ensure better communication, and improved ownership of the recommendations.

There is a significant role that the Regional Bureaus can play in providing technical

support, addressing capacity gaps, and to ensure technical quality and the sustainability of work.

Possible Regional Bureau and Joint Hub presence in the field during the data collection and analysis phases could also help to build capacity.

Future joint monitoring exercises should be **aligned with other periodically conducted assessments and surveys**, such as WFP's Standardized Nutritional Survey (SENS) and UNHCR participatory assessments.

Close and regular monitoring of key outcome indicators, as per corporate requirements, should continue to **validate and monitor the long-term effectiveness of the targeting approach**. A specific focus should be placed on:

- 1) Non assisted households and households receiving half rations
- 2) Variations between camps, and
- 3) Female headed households.

Monitoring exercises should aim to triangulate qualitative and quantitative data to capture a wholistic understanding of the overall well-being of the refugee population and with a view to further strengthen the targeting approach which includes the reduction in inclusion and exclusion errors.



## JOINT PROGRAMME EXCELLENCE AND TARGETING HUB





## LESSONS ON UNHCR-WFP COLLABORATION IN RWANDA RISK ASSESSMENT AND MITIGATION


The [UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub](#) facilitated the development of a detailed risk assessment to **inform the design and implementation of a targeting strategy** for food and basic needs assistance in Rwanda, in close consultation with the country offices and field teams and whether targeting was appropriate in the Rwanda context.


The risk assessment helped **identify risks** and strategies to **eliminate, reduce or mitigate** the probability or impact of risks, where a risk is defined as the exposure (of someone or something) to danger, harm, or loss.

The risk assessment looked at:

 Contextual Risks: Political, economic, and social risks

 Protection Risks: Causing unintended harm to persons of concern

 Programmatic Risks: Factors that can result in failure to achieve objectives

 Institutional Risks: To WFP and UNHCR (security, reputation, legal, political)

The Joint Hub facilitated the development of a **detailed risk register and summary** for the targeting exercise that detailed the contextual, protection, programmatic and institutional risks in a thorough and comprehensive manner.

The **process was consultative**, drawing on expertise and inputs from a range of colleagues in different functions from both agencies.

The risks and corresponding mitigation measures were incorporated into existing corporate risk assessment procedures and registers.

One of the uses of this process was in highlighting key mitigation activities that needed to be implemented in a timely fashion.

Having these risks and mitigation measures outlined at an early stage of the targeting process helped to expedite activities, such as activities linked to accountability to affected people that would address certain risks.

The identified risks and corresponding mitigation actions were a useful justification

for action to ease bottlenecks in the process, in particular those relating to information sharing, community engagement and the appeals process.

While the document has been used as a reference during the targeting strategy development and implementation by some

colleagues, this was not fully utilized, or regularly updated and monitored.

Field level risks mitigation was applied by field offices; however, some field offices were not aware of this exercise, and additional information sharing on this activity could have been conducted.

EXAMPLE: PROTECTION RISKS IDENTIFIED FOR THE TARGETING STRATEGY IN RWANDA				
Risk	Risk Level	Impact	Risk Response & Mitigation Plan	Risk Owner
Spreading of <b>rumors and misinformation</b> among refugees	HIGH	Conflict, retaliation, and unrest in camps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timely community sensitization and community consultations</li> <li>Consistency of messaging</li> <li>Approvals on communications by government stakeholders</li> <li>Sensitization of host communities</li> </ul>	<b>UNHCR</b> Protection, Field offices <b>WFP</b> Refugee Response Program <b>MINEMA</b>
<b>Inadequate access</b> of refugees to complaints, feedback, and <b>appeals mechanisms</b>	HIGH	Reduced ability to resolve exclusion errors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appeals mechanism with standard operating procedures and implementation plan</li> <li>Planning for expected increase in CFM capacities considered</li> <li>Consultation with management on additional resources / personnel</li> </ul>	<b>UNHCR</b> Protection & Sr Management <b>WFP</b> Protection, Programme, Sr Management
Exclusion of vulnerable refugees in need ( <b>exclusion error</b> )	MEDIUM	Vulnerabilities exacerbated and increased reliance on negative coping strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inclusion of protection buffer in targeting criteria</li> <li>Community consultations on eligibility criteria</li> <li>Robust appeals mechanism</li> <li>Post-distribution monitoring</li> </ul>	<b>UNHCR</b> Protection, Cash, Livelihoods, Registration and Field offices <b>WFP</b> Programme, VAM, Protection
Increased exposure to <b>intra-household conflict</b>	MEDIUM	Increase in domestic violence / SGBV cases among ineligible refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor ineligible households (especially persons with specific needs)</li> <li>Strengthen referral mechanisms and protection services</li> </ul>	<b>UNHCR</b> Protection <b>WFP</b> Protection <b>MINEMA</b>
Exposure to <b>sexual exploitation and abuse</b>	MEDIUM	Physical and psychological harm to persons of concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PSEA focal points appointed</li> <li>Training on zero tolerance on SEA for persons of concern, and partners</li> <li>Sensitize refugees and host communities on SEA complaints mechanism</li> </ul>	<b>WFP/UNHCR</b> Senior Management, PSEA Focal Points, Protection, HR





## LESSONS ON UNHCR-WFP COLLABORATION IN RWANDA

### TARGETING APPROACH

The UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub has been providing support to UNHCR-WFP collaboration in Rwanda on the shift from blanket assistance to a needs-based, targeted approach to humanitarian assistance for refugees in camp settings, in close consultation with the Government of Rwanda.

The development of the targeting strategy started in July 2020, and was implemented in May 2021 with the following objectives:

 **Identify vulnerable refugee households** in need of humanitarian assistance and **less vulnerable refugees with higher capacities** who would benefit from livelihoods support; and

 Ensure the greatest **protection outcomes** through strong **community participation, communications** with refugee communities, and **risk analysis** to inform the approach.

The targeting approach followed the targeting steps established in the [UNHCR-WFP Joint Targeting Guidance](#) and was tailored to the context of refugees in Rwanda.

The approach was based on a **combination of geographical, categorical, and community-based targeting** while protection aspects were mainstreamed along all the steps of the targeting approach.

Analysis led by the Joint Hub technical team and conducted together with UNHCR, and WFP identified **eight eligibility criteria** associated with the **three different groups** of households categorized as highly, moderately, and least vulnerable.

The targeting strategy was developed using the combination of these criteria alongside the **working capacity** of refugees.

A targeting governance model was established, with members from UNHCR, WFP and MINEMA to oversee targeting implementation and the management of ongoing activities.

## HIGHLIGHTS

The targeting approach was based on a **robust analysis of vulnerability** using data from UNHCR's proGres database, UNHCR-WFP Joint Post-Distribution Monitoring, community consultations, and additional secondary data that covered protection needs and reliance on high risk coping strategies.

The application of the targeting strategy for WFP food assistance enabled a **basic safety net**, of a full assistance package, for the most vulnerable.

While originally planned as a targeting strategy for UNHCR and WFP assistance for food and non-food items, UNHCR has continued with geographical targeting only, providing cash for non-food items to all refugee households in camp settings, as this was factored into the targeting approach under a technical recommendation.

The decision for UNHCR to continue to provide cash for non-food-items items (such as soap) to all households was made due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, the increased importance of sanitary items, and to provide some continued assistance to those no longer deemed eligible for food assistance.

While WFP provided additional one-off support to all households in August 2021 due

to the COVID-19 impact on households, it was felt by some colleagues that by only using the targeting approach for WFP cash for food assistance and not for UNHCR's cash for non-food items this **undermined the rationale** for the shift from blanket assistance to a needs-based approach.

Additionally, it was felt by some colleagues that this gave **mixed messages** to refugees, partners, and donors, and did not show an alignment of UNHCR and WFP in the approach.

It has been reported by refugees, and field staff, that there has been a noticeable **mindset shift amongst some refugees** due to the implementation of the targeting approach, with an **increased interest and activities around self-reliance and engagement in livelihood activities**.

For example, it was noted that there was a **significant increase in interest and enrollment in technical and vocational training opportunities**.

Protection was mainstreamed throughout the targeting process, and community members were consulted on the proposed eligibility criteria to ensure they reflect vulnerability as defined by the refugee communities and to identify any potential protection risks of the targeting exercise.

## VULNERABILITY GROUPS AND ASSISTANCE PACKAGES

### HIGHLY VULNERABLE

#### 100% FOOD ASSISTANCE

- One or more members falling under protection criteria or,
- Two or more socio-demographic criteria, or
- One socio-demographic criteria but without any adult male members aged 18-59 years able to work.

### MODERATELY VULNERABLE

#### 50% OF FOOD ASSISTANCE

- One socio-demographic criteria and no other criteria with adult male working capacity in the household, or
- Households not meeting any of the above criteria, but without any adult male members aged 18-59 years able to work.

### LEAST VULNERABLE

#### NO FOOD ASSISTANCE

Households that do not meet any of the eligibility criteria and have one or more male members aged 18-59 years who are able to work.

## COORDINATION

The UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub took the lead in conducting the analysis, developing scenarios for the application of different targeting approaches, and on the development of the criteria, in close collaboration with UNHCR and WFP country offices.

Great care was taken to **document and explain processes and decisions** during the analysis phase; however, it was felt by some colleagues that many meetings featured presentations rather than active discussions. This was exacerbated by differences in technical levels, institutional focuses, and remote working.

It was felt by some colleagues that explanations on why some approaches were taken were not easy to understand, with suggestions in the future for practical examples to help illustrate arguments. In addition, many colleagues mentioned needing to have **time to process information before discussions**, so that a better understanding could be reached before discussions.

In general, a **limited technical knowledge** made engagement in the analytical process difficult for many key staff members.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

There have been **challenges in understanding the reasoning behind the criteria** amongst refugees, the government, and UNHCR and WFP field office staff. Despite communication on this, there has been a need for consistent dialogue on how the eligibility criteria were developed.

The criteria have been seen as limited and unfair by refugees, as assets and income are not included as a specific criterion and there is not an understanding of how economic data was incorporated. Additional criteria that have been consistently questioned by refugee households include households with female children, and single households with children below 5 years.

## ANALYSIS TO INFORM CRITERIA

Based on the [WFP Essential Needs Analysis \(ENA\) framework](#) to approach household-level vulnerability, refugee households surveyed in the first JPDM exercise were grouped into three vulnerability categories.

A profiling exercise was then conducted to identify eligibility criteria that – either individually or in combination – enabled the classification of all camp-based refugee households registered in UNHCR’s ProGres database.



The socio-demographic criteria were based on **statistical testing of optimal inclusion-exclusion error combinations**.



Protection criteria were added to ensure the approach was protection-sensitive and **inclusive of people with specific protection needs**, based on field experience and related protection expertise.



The analysis looked at the percentage of the population that were vulnerable to **food insecurity, economic vulnerability**, and the use of **negative coping strategies**.



JPDM



UNHCR  
proGres

For households identified as most vulnerable in the Joint Post-Distribution Monitoring analysis, **characteristics in proGres were analysed** to understand the socio-demographic characteristics of these vulnerable households.

This analysis defined the eligibility criteria using existing data fields in proGres that were available for all households.

Many Field Office colleagues highlighted some instances of inclusion and exclusion errors that they had observed: where non-vulnerable households were included in the assistance while some vulnerable households were not.

There are differing views and understandings on the **use of economic data to inform the criteria**, with many WFP, UNHCR and MINEMA colleagues raising requests for the inclusion of specific economic criteria, such as wealth/assets, and employment or economic activity, which is currently not available for all refugee households.

During community consultations, refugees emphasized that they felt that the livelihoods situation of refugees should be included in the criteria. However, this data is not available for all refugees in proGres, UNHCR's database. In addition, the use of livelihoods data to inform the development of eligibility criteria was not understood by refugees or some colleagues.

There are differing views on the **possibility to collect economic information (such as assets and livelihood situation) for households** to deal with design inclusion errors (those less vulnerable but who are still included according to criteria). Differing proposals include:



Conducting a full census or **verification exercise for all households**, with the inclusion of economic questions. Although this would entail significant resource costs and has the potential for significant response bias.



Collection of economic data for subsets of the population, such as **information on refugees engaged in economic activities**, like trading or employment that could be obtained from different sources.



Community based targeting as a **complimentary method to help identify inclusion and exclusion errors**. Although there is also the potential for bias, it was felt that

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

### SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC



Households that have a high number of dependents (dependency ratio  $\geq 2$ )



Single headed household with children below 5 years



Single female headed household



Household head with no education



Household with 8 or more members



Household with 2 or more female children aged 0-17 years

### PROTECTION



Household with 1 or more disabled or chronically sick members



Household with member at risk based on UNHCR classification (such as an unaccompanied minor, or older person living alone)



Working capacity: Presence of adult men in working age (18-59 years) able to work.

this could be used if data is triangulated with other sources.



## ADDRESSING TARGETING ERRORS

Possible future approaches for addressing targeting errors that have been proposed includes:



A communication campaign that encourages self-reporting, and a process for verification of certain households.



The analysis of monitoring data and other sources to identify:



- Additional criteria for addressing inclusion and exclusion errors.



- Lists of households to be verified.

While the inclusion of protection related criteria enabled the capturing of protection related vulnerability in the targeting approach, based on all surveyed households from the second Joint Post-Distribution Monitoring, **inclusion errors increased due to use of additional protection-related eligibility characteristics.**

One possible area for further analysis related to the cost-effectiveness of undertaking this exercise, as a clear divergence of opinions amongst colleagues was apparent.

## ASSESSMENT FINDINGS ON THE TARGETING APPROACH

According to the second UNHCR-WFP JPDM conducted in September 2021, **the targeting approach has been effective in reaching the most vulnerable.** In particular, the monitoring found that:

- There has been an **improving or stable trend in key outcome indicators** across the three eligibility groups among surveyed households
- 82% of surveyed households' level of overall vulnerability has been stable or improved
- Of the most vulnerable who have been assisted, households remained stable, while 22% improved in terms of level of overall vulnerability.

In the future, a full in-person orientation for field offices and partners on the targeting approach and criteria would help to increase understanding of the formulation of the criteria, and analysis that supported this selection.





## LESSONS ON UNHCR-WFP COLLABORATION IN RWANDA COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

To support the targeting exercise moving from blanket to targeted food assistance based on the needs of refugees in Rwanda, UNHCR and WFP ensured the participation of persons of concern in the development of the targeting approach in an inclusive and transparent manner.

The consultations addressed three main goals:



The **validation of vulnerability findings** from quantitative analysis,



To collect feedback and perceptions in the **development and finalization of eligibility criteria** and targeting approach, and



The identification of possible **protection risks** of the targeting exercise and appropriate **mitigation strategies**.

The consultations were conducted and consolidated by UNHCR and WFP staff and analyzed by the Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub.

Community feedback was used to **capture essential aspects of vulnerability** within the

community that should be considered when finalizing the eligibility criteria and the targeting model.

The findings from the community consultations and recommendations **helped finalize the eligibility criteria and targeting approach**.

Moreover, community feedback on preferred communication channels fed into the **establishment of an appropriate joint appeals mechanism** as well as the preparation of an **information sharing campaign** to inform refugees and asylum seekers about the upcoming changes.

Community representatives such as refugee executive committee members, quartier leaders, women leaders, youth leaders as well as other community members were consulted both in group and individual settings through:



**Focus group discussions** (FGDs), conducted with men and women separately, and








**Key informant interviews** (KIIs), conducted with key community actors and representatives.

In total, **41 community consultation sessions were held in March 2021**, involving over 200 participants. The consultations took place in all six refugee camps in Rwanda, with each location involving one focus group discussion with women, one focus group discussion with men, and multiple key informant interviews.

### VULNERABILITY CHARACTERISTICS

The following vulnerability categories were highlighted by the communities, and included as part of the final eligibility criteria:

-  People with disabilities
-  Serious medical conditions
-  Older persons with no support
-  Households with many members
-  Households headed by a minor, or by a single head

The collected feedback data was analysed to illustrate how frequently certain key issues, such as a vulnerability characteristic or a protection risk, were mentioned across the consultation sessions.







### INFORMING ACCOUNTABILITY APPROACHES

Community feedback on preferred communication channels informed the **establishment of a joint appeals mechanism** and an **information campaign** on targeting.

### VULNERABILITY CHARACTERISTICS

The consultations confirmed the **validity of the proposed eligibility criteria**, which considered aspects related to education, marital status, dependency, household size, protection, and specific needs.

A **linkage of the targeting with livelihoods** was concluded as the ultimate need.

KEY AREAS	COMMUNITY CONSULTATION QUESTIONS
 Vulnerability	<p>How do refugees perceive <b>current food assistance</b>?</p> <p>What are the <b>most vulnerable groups</b> in the community?</p> <p>Do the <b>eligibility criteria</b> capture the most vulnerable groups?</p>
 COVID-19 impact	<p>What <b>impact has COVID-19 had/will have</b> on the community?</p>
 Protection risks	<p>What are the potential <b>protection risks</b> and challenges resulting from <b>changes to current assistance</b>?</p>
 Information sharing	<p>What are the most <b>preferred information sharing channels</b> for refugees?</p> <p>What <b>challenges</b> do refugees face when accessing information?</p>
 Feedback mechanisms	<p>What is the <b>level of awareness</b> of feedback mechanisms?</p> <p>What <b>challenges</b> do refugees face regarding feedback mechanisms?</p>
 Livelihoods	<p>What are the most common <b>livelihood-related challenges</b> experienced?</p> <p>How do <b>livelihood-related considerations</b> inform assistance and support?</p>

Participants also highlighted other important aspects linked to vulnerability, such as a household's **employment status**, which could unfortunately not be considered in the targeting model since this information is not available in proGres.

However, it was felt by some staff that due to the COVID-19-related logistical limitations and a tight timeframe, this was more of a 'tick-box exercise', and that **not enough time was given to the consultation process**.

### TIMEFRAME AND LOGISTICAL ISSUES

The consultations were completed during a difficult period for community participation, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering that this covered new topic areas, and the challenging context, this was a remarkably **quick process**, given timeline constraints.

**Planning across both agencies and with field offices was comprehensive**, with regular meetings and collaboration on the development of terms of reference, tools, the eligibility criteria (to be presented to consultation participants), and discussion templates, and the facilitation of two half-day trainings in advance of the consultations.

Participation of heterogeneous groups in focus group discussions was ensured through an **Age-Gender-Diversity (AGD) approach**.

Due to the short timeframe from WFP budgetary constraints, and the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, the **consultations were conducted in limited capacity**, with fewer intended consultations held. In some camps, the consultations were completed within one day, rather than two days as had been planned.

There were **difficulties in reaching joint agreements** between the two agencies on the targeting approach and eligibility decisions, which led to delays and a shortening of the timeframe for the planning and conducting of the community consultations.

Refugees indicated a preference for consultations to be done more widely and ideally at household, village or quartier level.

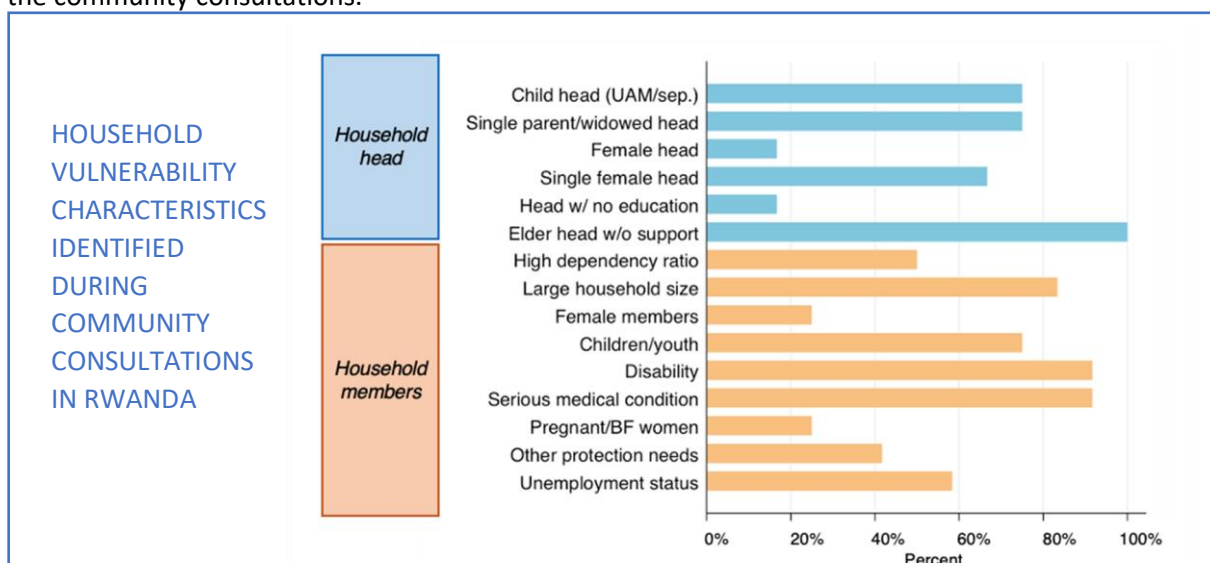
More time was needed for planning and to **tailor the exercise to the local context**. In addition, there was only a one-week timeframe for the analysis, which was done via manual data entry and coding in MS Excel.

Many of the **usual communication channels were not allowed** to convene consultation participants due to COVID-19 restrictions, such as town halls, mass meetings, coordination meetings, and sector meetings.

In addition, **communication through refugee leaders was not an effective approach**, as information didn't trickle down to community members.

There could have been **greater alignment between the community consultations and UNHCR participatory assessments**. Information on past UNHCR participatory assessments was not available during the planning and implementation stages of the consultations.

While the Joint Hub did not support participatory assessments during this time as this was not a joint effort, questions on targeting were included in the 2021 UNHCR participatory assessments, such as on inclusion and exclusion error discussions that were provided by the Joint Hub.



## FACILITATION OF CONSULTATIONS

UNHCR and WFP Field Offices mobilized available staff to conduct the focus group discussions within a limited timeframe, however **some of the facilitators were not part of the training and orientation sessions**, which meant that they were not sufficiently briefed and trained on the targeting approach and key information to share during the consultations.

There was an observed tendency that **individuals holding social influence controlled the discussions** (such as community leaders, and traders). For future exercises, **key informant interviews could be held separately with community leaders**, to allow other voices to be heard during the focus group discussions.

During the consultations, some of the questions were felt to be repetitive by participants, such as on perceived vulnerability and livelihoods.

During the implementation, each notetaker typed up their handwritten notes of discussion responses. No observation or debrief notes were taken, which could have enriched the qualitative analysis.

In follow-up consultations following the targeting implementation, refugees tended to present a unified position against needs-based targeting, advocating for blanket assistance,

with the **claim that all refugees are equally vulnerable**. However, when probed further, and explanation on the context was provided, refugees tended to agree on the need for a needs-based targeting approach and that there were **different levels of vulnerability**.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Prioritize timely decision making, in particular during the planning phase, to minimize delays and ensure that protection principles and accountability to affected people are prioritised.

Ensure meaningful involvement of field colleagues, partners, and camp managers from the beginning of the process.

Standardize logistics, such as the printing of materials and provision of refreshments, well in advance.

Conduct **regular consultations and listening sessions** at quartier, village or “10 houses” (Nyume kumi) level in collaboration with partners to discuss concerns, share information and consult refugees on how to improve the targeting approach.

Train partners on targeting-related key messages before community consultations and listening sessions.

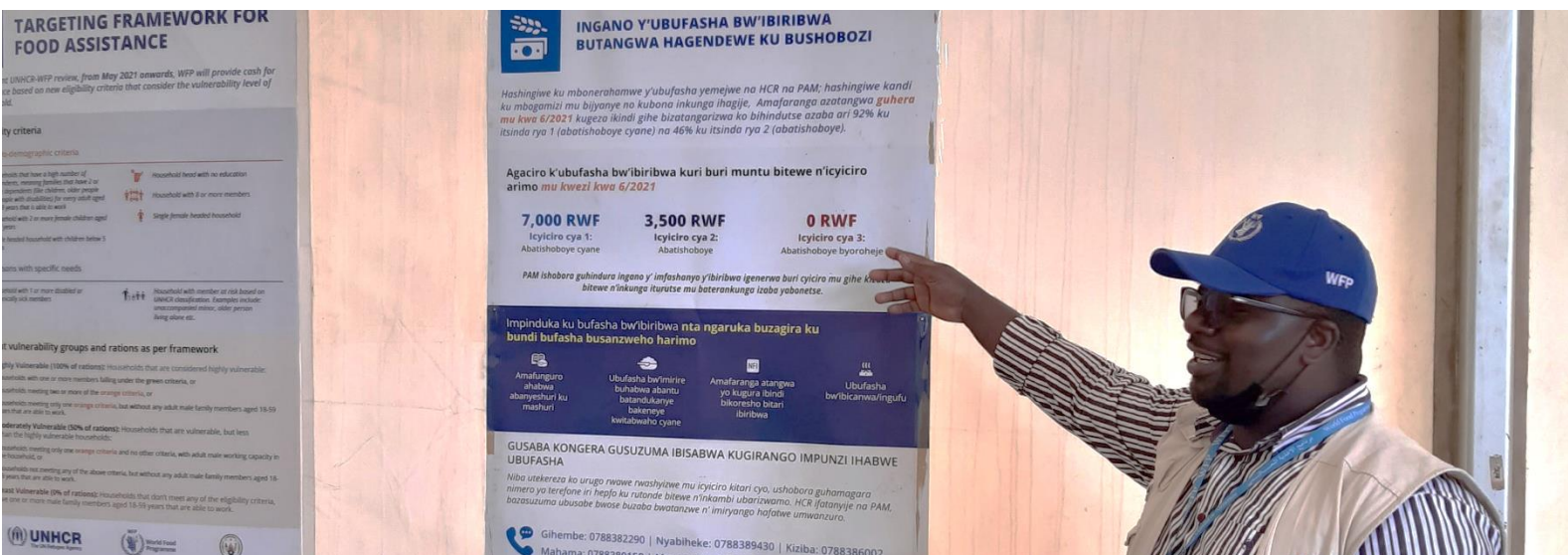


**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency








**World Food Programme**

## JOINT PROGRAMME EXCELLENCE AND TARGETING HUB



## LESSONS ON UNHCR-WFP COLLABORATION IN RWANDA INFORMATION SHARING

To support the move to needs-based targeted assistance for refugees in Rwanda, consistent key messages on the targeting exercise, refugees' existing rights, the joint appeals mechanism as well as other existing complaints and feedback channels were shared through several channels:

-  Refugee committees,
-  Community mobilisers,
-  Humanitarian field staff,
-  Posters and leaflets
-  SMS, and
- Limited community meetings, due to the COVID-19 pandemic,

While key messages were shared with refugees during community consultations on the targeting exercise in mid-March, a broader information sharing campaign was carried out before the start of the implementation of the new targeting approach.

A **joint community engagement strategy** detailed the key messages shared and the communication channels used. Messages were

agreed upon with UNHCR and WFP country and field offices and were updated to make sure that they reflected any changes to the targeting approach. This ensured that refugees and partners, including Rwandan authorities and NGO partners, were informed about the targeting exercise and its different steps.

Decision making was influenced by previous demonstrations and security incidences in 2018 that related to proposed changes in assistance provision to refugees in Rwanda, and a major success in the rollout of this new approach was **the lack of any security issues**.

Concerns over security and COVID-19 had a significant impact on decision making, and this contributed to some limits on information sharing. As per the September 2021 JPDM, there was evidence of **limited knowledge of the targeting approach** among refugees:

**84%** of refugees **did not understand how households were selected for assistance**

**64%** of refugees were **not aware of their entitlements**, and only

**49%**

of refugees were **aware of how to make an appeal** regarding their assistance eligibility

### TIMELINESS OF MESSAGING

**Messaging was delivered late**, with refugees not receiving timely information. This was due to several factors, including:



Delays in decision making, with the agencies unable to agree on how to proceed. This delayed communication with communities on the new targeting approach and individual eligibility decisions.



A longer than anticipated procurement process, which meant delays in communication materials being ready on time. Many of the materials arrived after the implementation had started.



Even when dispatched, in some Field Offices materials were not displayed or disseminated in a timely manner. These camps also reported higher complaints from refugees.

### COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

During the planning and implementation phases, there was close collaboration between UNHCR and WFP on the development of materials, with UNHCR initiating the development, and WFP finalizing the materials. Inputs from various units were incorporated in a highly collaborative process. In addition, quality in-house graphics from WFP helped to save resources.

Given that the information sharing was done in very limited capacity, efforts were made to **include as much information as possible on the posters**. As such, the materials were very 'text-heavy', with colleagues reflecting that the posters could have been more pictorial.

In addition, not all the translation was accurate, despite cross-checks done by teams, and

errors were identified only at the time of dissemination. In some camps, the posters were taken down immediately by unknown persons.

**Without testing materials in advance**, an opportunity was missed to have the most effective materials that communicated messages in a clear and easy to understand way.

Colleagues felt that **the language used to explain the targeting process, eligibility criteria and approach has been very technical**, and could be more accessible. It was felt by colleagues that the current messaging doesn't speak optimally to non-technical people.

### NOTIFICATION ON ELIGIBILITY

SMS notification was used to notify refugees of their eligibility status which meant that the wider population was informed within a few hours.

There were **significant challenges in deciding appropriate communication channels and messaging on eligibility**. Various channels of notification were conceived, such as through letters, lists on notice boards with unique identifier numbers, or in-person updates but no consensus was reached.

Following media reports that highlighted how refugees were not being notified about imminent targeted assistance, decision making was expedited, and SMS notification was selected as the only channel to communicate eligibility to households with phone numbers registered in proGres. This decision was made in part due to the possibility of other channels increasing the risk of the spread of COVID-19.

However, many **households did not have their phone numbers updated in proGres**, and this meant that a significant number of **households did not receive information on their eligibility status**. This in turn led to a high number of inquiries to the newly set up joint appeals mechanism.

The delays in decision making on channels meant that **refugees were informed about**


their eligibility status with little warning, giving them almost no time to prepare for a reduction in their assistance package.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Share key information through refugees' preferred communication channels, including mass meetings (to the extent possible during the current pandemic), posters and leaflets (with visual messages rather than lots of text), SMS, mobile loudspeakers/ megaphones,

Ensure all colleagues are well informed and able to explain key information relating to targeting. Include a simple presentation outlining each step of the process and what this means, so that all stakeholders speak the same language and can share the same messaging using non-technical language.

In relation to notifications on eligibility status:

 Refugees must be informed on changes in their eligibility status,

quartier/village leaders and home visits (for the most vulnerable).

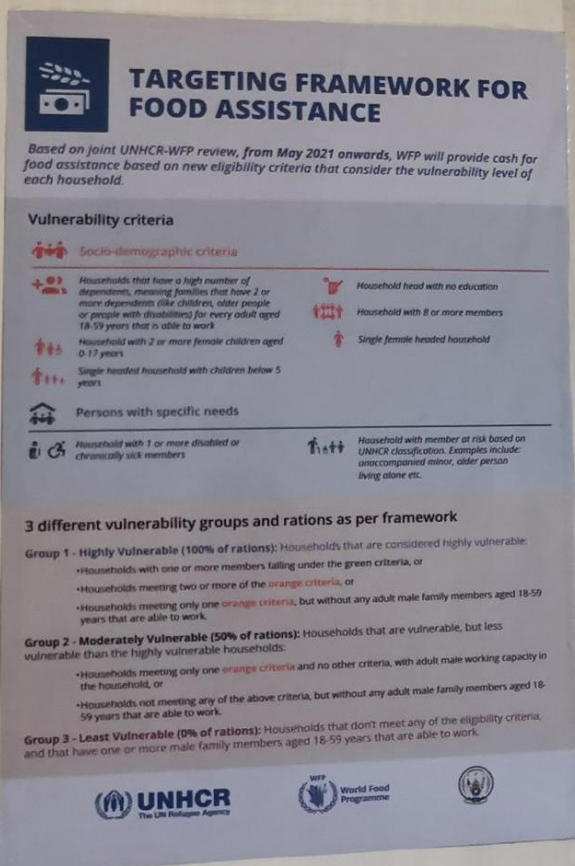
Continuously remind refugees of the importance of updating their information in proGres, including their mobile phone numbers.

Invest in close dialogue with community leaders and regular meetings with refugees to ensure that messages are reaching intended groups.

whether through a successful appeal or changes in their household demographics or a protection status in proGres. As this is not currently being done.



Notification on eligibility needs to be given in as much advance as possible prior to implementation so people have time to prepare themselves for the change.



**TARGETING FRAMEWORK FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE**

Based on joint UNHCR-WFP review, from May 2021 onwards, WFP will provide cash for food assistance based on new eligibility criteria that consider the vulnerability level of each household.

**Vulnerability criteria**

**Socio-demographic criteria**

- Households that have a high number of dependents, missing families that have 2 or more dependents (like children, older people or people with disabilities) for every adult aged 18-59 years that is able to work
- Household with 8 or more members
- Household with 2 or more female children aged 0-17 years
- Single female headed household
- Single-headed household with children below 5 years

**Persons with specific needs**

- Household with 1 or more disabled or chronically sick members
- Household with member at risk based on UNHCR classification. Examples include: unaccompanied minor, older person living alone etc.

**3 different vulnerability groups and rations as per framework**

**Group 1 - Highly Vulnerable (100% of rations):** Households that are considered highly vulnerable.

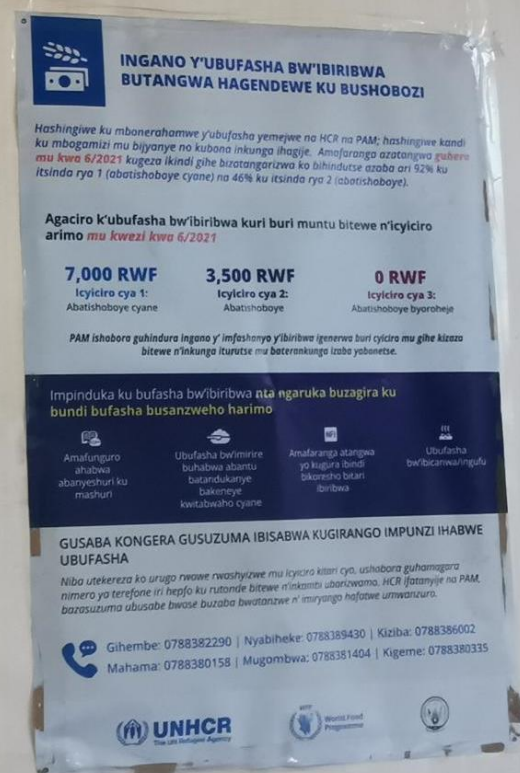
- Households with one or more members falling under the green criteria, or
- Households meeting two or more of the orange criteria, or
- Households meeting only one orange criteria, but without any adult male family members aged 18-59 years that are able to work.

**Group 2 - Moderately Vulnerable (50% of rations):** Households that are vulnerable, but less vulnerable than the highly vulnerable households.

- Households meeting only one orange criteria and no other criteria, with adult male working capacity in the household, or
- Households not meeting any of the above criteria, but without any adult male family members aged 18-59 years that are able to work.

**Group 3 - Least Vulnerable (0% of rations):** Households that don't meet any of the eligibility criteria, and that have one or more male family members aged 18-59 years that are able to work.

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**INGANO Y'UBUFASHA BW'IBIRIBWA BUTANGWA HAGENDEWE KU BUSHOBOZI**

Hashingwe ku mbonerahamwe yubufasha yemejwe na HCR na PAM; hashingwe kandi ku mbogamizi mu biyanyane no kubona inkunga ihagije. Amasuranga azatangwa gubera mu kwa 6/2021 kugeza ikindi gihe bitangarizwa ku bishuri azaba ari 92% ku itsinda rya 1 (abatishoboye cyane) na 46% ku itsinda rya 2 (abatishoboye).

**Agaciro k'ubufasha bw'ibiribwa kuri buri muntu bitewe n'icyiro arimo mu kwezi kwa 6/2021**

<b>7,000 RWF</b> Icyiro cya 1: Abatishoboye cyane	<b>3,500 RWF</b> Icyiro cya 2: Abatishoboye	<b>0 RWF</b> Icyiro cya 3: Abatishoboye byarabwoye
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PAM ishobora guhindura ingano y'ubufasha y'ibiribwa igenerwa kuri icyiro mu gihe kizaza bitewe n'inkunga iturutse mu baterankunga izaba yabonetse.

**Impinduka ku bufasha bw'ibiribwa nta ngaruka buzagira ku bundi bufasha busanzweho harimo**

- Amafunguro atabwo abanyeshuri ku mashuri
- Ubufasha bw'imirire buhatwaho abantu bakandukanye bakomeye kwitabwaho cyane
- Amafaranga atangwa yo kugira ibikorwa bikomeye bitari ibiribwa
- Ubufasha bw'ibikorwa/ingufu

**GUSABA KONGERA GUSUZUMA IBISABWA KUGIRANGO IMPUNZI IHABWE UBUFASHA**

Niba utekereza ko urugo rwawe rwashyizwe mu icyiro kitaro cyo, ushobora guhamagaza n'imero ya telefoni iri hejya ku rutonde bitewe n'inkamata ubarokoyemo. HCR ifatanyije na PAM, bazasuzuma ubuzabwo buzaba bwatanzwe n'imiryango hejyane umwarokoye.

Gihemba: 0788382290 | Nyabikehe: 0788389430 | Kiziba: 0788386002  
Mahama: 0788380158 | Mugombwa: 0788381404 | Kigeme: 0788380335

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## LESSONS ON UNHCR-WFP COLLABORATION IN RWANDA APPEALS AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

A UNHCR-WFP joint appeals mechanism was developed in support of the implementation of a UNHCR-WFP joint targeting approach for food assistance to refugees in Rwanda.

The joint appeals mechanism has supported:



The correction of any **implementation exclusion errors**, whereby households who have been wrongly excluded from assistance due to outdated, missing or incorrect information in proGres can have their records updated and then be included



Ensure that changing situations in households are addressed

The appeals mechanism allows beneficiaries to appeal decisions on their eligibility for assistance.

**Dedicated targeting helplines** were set up by UNHCR for each camp. Refugees were encouraged to call these targeting helplines considering the COVID-19 pandemic.

Refugees could also approach appeals desks which were established in all camps.

UNHCR and its partners **reassess the eligibility** of the households that appeal through the case management process.

The results of the case management processes are presented to **joint appeal panels**, set up for each camp, with representatives from WFP, UNHCR and MINEMA, who make final decisions on household eligibility.

### ADDITIONAL STAFFING FOR APPEALS

Appeals desks in the camps were supported by temporary staffing to accommodate for the large number of appeals that follows an immediate implementation of a new targeting strategy. In total, **12 temporary appeals staff were hired and trained**, with financial support provided by the UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub.

There were some **delays in recruiting additional appeals staff**, with the need for this recruitment to have been planned further in advance, including ensuring the necessary funding is in place.

There have been differing views among colleagues on how long temporary appeals staffing needs to be maintained, and how to

balance peaks in appeals alongside the different stages of targeting implementation. More learning on this topic and examples from other country offices could help to guide future planning and decision making in relation to additional appeals staffing needs.

Having the additional staffing for appeals desks was an important success factor for several reasons:



Refugees have preferred to share their targeting-related questions and appeals face to face at help desks.



In addition to the recording of appeals, help-desk staff have been able to provide basic information, and have been a contact point for refugees with questions on the targeting approach.

**Comprehensive guidance** was developed by the UNHCR Rwanda office for the handling of appeals and the management of appeals data in UNHCR's proGres database. Depending on the context, this guidance could be adapted by other country offices that follow a similar appeals process involving UNHCR case management.

Alongside this, newly recruited staff were trained on the appeals guidance, the appeals process, and on the use of proGres, UNHCR's registration and identity management system.

As refugees prefer to visit the appeals desks, the dedicated targeting helplines have been receiving few calls. In addition, many of the calls relate to enquiries as to the opening hours of the help desk. An additional factor that should be considered is to ensure that the helplines are toll-free, which requires planning for these at the early stages of the targeting process.

The most frequent issues raised by refugees at appeals desks relate to perceived exclusion and inclusion errors. Refugees and field staff have advocated for home visits and household level reassessments, and a possible community-based approach, to address these errors.

Currently, appellants are not systematically receiving responses to their appeals and only learn about any changes to their eligibility status at the next distribution, unless they follow up themselves beforehand. Potential questions relating to this are whether responses could be provided by SMS or phone call where possible, and what other solutions could be used for households that do not have access to a mobile phone.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Appeals channels should be based on **refugees' preferred communication channels**, which in this instance proved to be help desks.

Appeals staff need **comprehensive training** not only on the appeals process, and handling of information in UNHCR's proGres database, but could also have benefitted from a broader training on the targeting approach itself, in particular from those involved in the technicalities.

Consider a **toll-free number** early in the planning process.

Jointly develop and agree on a way to inform refugees about upcoming changes to their eligibility status at least one month in advance (e.g. through SMS where possible; home visits for the most vulnerable) to **enable appeals in advance of cuts to assistance**.

Jointly develop and agree on **how to address appeals from households that are highly vulnerable but are not meeting the eligibility criteria** (design exclusion errors) – such as through household-level reassessments.

Where possible, future **changes to the targeting approach should be implemented in a way that reduces the risk of facing significant peaks in appeals** (such as implementing changes in stages), so that the number of incoming appeals stays manageable for existing field staff involved in receiving, following up on and responding to appeals (help desks, helplines, registration, case management).



## LESSONS ON UNHCR-WFP COLLABORATION IN RWANDA

### DATA SHARING

Underpinning the shift to targeted needs-based assistance to refugees in Rwanda was the use of UNHCR's proGres data.

UNHCR's proGres is a registration and identity management system that includes in-depth information on all refugee individuals in Rwanda. UNHCR's proGres data helped to inform:



The development of a **sampling approach from the proGres data set** for UNHCR-WFP Joint Post-Distribution Monitoring Exercises (JPDM).



The development of **targeting criteria was influenced by the data that was available in proGres**, including comprehensive protection and demographic data that was included. As there is no economic data available in proGres, and as this is very difficult to keep up to date, this information was not included in the eligibility criteria.



The creation of **lists of those eligible for assistance** based on the eligibility criteria matched to available data in proGres.

As it had been some time since a verification exercise was conducted (in part complicated by the Covid-19 pandemic), some **ProGres data fields for refugees were not up to date**.

The out-of-date proGres records that existed for some refugees meant that **certain eligible and vulnerable persons were not included in assistance**. These targeting implementation errors also led to **higher appeals numbers and increased case management**.

Inversely, **the targeting exercise and consequent appeals process helped to update UNHCR's proGres database**, especially relating to the data on vulnerable people.

There were lengthy discussions on access to proGres for WFP for both complaints and feedback mechanisms, and for the appeals process, with UNHCR raising concerns on the

sharing of sensitive data with additional parties and data protection.

In the end, as the appeals related to data available in proGres fell within the remit of UNHCR's case management, UNHCR took the lead in managing the appeals process.

UNHCR also took the lead in the creation of the lists of those eligible for food assistance, which in other operations is often a source of contention between UNHCR and WFP.

There were some initial **errors in the development of the lists of those to be assisted**. This was due to a disconnect between the targeting criteria as developed by UNHCR and WFP, with support of the Joint Hub, and the scripts that were run in proGres.

Due to errors in the way that the criteria were applied to the proGres database, **some vulnerable refugees were wrongly excluded from assistance**.

Having additional personnel cross-check the creation of list (either by WFP or by UNHCR staff) was proposed, however it seemed that this was not perceived as a priority by country offices and manageable within the current process.

A key lesson is to ensure that there are **accountability and mitigation measures** to ensure that checks and balances are in place to avoid human error.

In addition, there were requests from field colleagues for the decentralization of lists so that colleagues can check the lists at the field office level.







## LESSONS ON UNHCR-WFP COLLABORATION IN RWANDA LIVELIHOODS AND TRANSITION PLANNING


The implementation of the move to needs-based targeting for refugees in Rwanda was confusing for refugees and came as a shock to them, with a general feeling that “there was no time to plan”.

This sudden change, which surprised families who had been receiving assistance for many years highlighted a crucial missing element.

While initially part of the scope of the targeting exercise, it was decided by the country offices to not proceed with a joint transition plan. This was due to several factors, including:

 UNHCR confidence in the existing livelihoods strategy that was developed with the Government of Rwanda (MINEMA)






 WFP prioritization of other areas over livelihoods initiatives for refugees, due to the limited funding availability

 Fatigue from both agencies due to coordination challenges in the development of the targeting approach

Almost all colleagues surveyed expressed a need to focus on addressing **livelihoods and transition planning as the biggest missing component of UNHCR-WFP collaboration.**

The UNHCR-WFP Joint Post Distribution Monitoring (JPDM) exercise and community consultations in support of the targeting exercise both involved discussions with refugees on livelihoods and self-reliance.

Some of the key recommendations from the JPDM in relation to targeting were the:

-  Expansion of livelihood support
-  Involvement of broader humanitarian and development community
-  Securing of multi-year support
-  Focus on livelihoods support in Mahama camp, and
-  Continuation of effective cash management

During community consultations, there was an **overwhelming demand for livelihoods**

**support** to be provided to those who have been taken out of assistance, especially for youth.

A **UNHCR-WFP joint proposal** was developed by the UNHCR and WFP Rwanda country office, without the Joint Hub's support but there has otherwise been limited work on joint projects.

Refugees have indicated that they are **willing to accept the targeting changes** if more livelihood options and support is offered.

Longer-term sensitization work **and support on a "mindset shift" for refugees** was needed. This has since been incorporated into an updated joint communication plan.

The **roles of UNHCR and WFP** in regard to the development of proposals and joint work to support refugee livelihoods needs to be further defined.

Some of the eligibility criteria for the targeting of food assistance were **not linked to thinking on self-reliance and longer-term transition and could have had negative impacts on supporting refugee self-reliance**. For example, initially, eligibility criteria were reported as **disincentivizing over 18's from remaining as students**, which was later addressed through changes to the eligibility criteria.

UNHCR one off "covid-relief package from livelihoods unit" grant for group 3





Donor messaging should be that targeting of basic needs and food assistance and livelihoods and transition funding must go "hand-in-hand".

Both colleagues from UNHCR and WFP encouraged **further collaborative work on securing increased funding for livelihoods**, and tying this to the targeting work.

Types of livelihoods interventions should be linked to targeting strategy and vice versa.

This should also be **coordinated with partners and their assistance/ livelihoods projects** in particular what type of activities should be targeted to households for each category (category 1, 2 and 3) – aligning the targeting methodology for food/ basic needs assistance with livelihoods support

If targeting considers work capacity but not actual household income, livelihoods opportunities need to be made available for:

-  Documentation
-  Access to land
-  Vocational training
-  Start capital

