



MOVING TO NEEDS-BASED ASSISTANCE DELIVERY FOR REFUGEES

RWANDA

OVERVIEW

Rwanda has been welcoming refugees for over two decades and hosts approximately 127,000 refugees (August 2022, 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 24 years, and from Burundi, where some recent voluntary repatriations have taken place.

The Government of Rwanda has a progressive refugee protection framework where refugees have freedom of movement, the right to work and where the government has also promoted the financial inclusion of refugees through their National Financial Inclusion Strategy.

MOVING TO NEEDS-BASED ASSISTANCE

For many years UNHCR and WFP assistance for food and basic needs in Rwanda had been provided to all refugees living in camps. Both agencies recognized that while there are still high levels of vulnerability, not all refugees in Rwanda are equally vulnerable and in need of long-term humanitarian assistance.

Since May 2021 UNHCR and WFP moved to a needs-based targeting approach for the provision of cash for food assistance to refugees in camps, with support from the [UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub](#) with the following objectives:

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

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

PRIORITIZATION OF ASSISTANCE

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



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.



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 appeals mechanism establishment as well as complaint and feedback management. This included the **avoidance of security incidents**, which had been identified as a significant risk.



Activities throughout the targeting process were **conducted jointly**, and achieved within a **very short timeframe**, despite contextual challenges, including the COVID-19.



Three UNHCR-WFP Joint Post-Distribution Monitoring exercises were undertaken to inform the targeting and programme design. The results provided a **comprehensive overview of household needs, and vulnerability** in camps. The first exercise provided a baseline prior to the targeting implementation, and the second and third exercises enabled a **comparative analysis of the targeting impact and 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.



UNHCR and WFP country offices both made **significant changes to ways of working**, with an increase in dialogue and joint activities, and staff undertaking a range of new activities, and incorporating new tools and approaches in their daily work.

THE TARGETING APPROACH

The targeting approach included a **combination of geographical, categorical, and community-based targeting methods** and 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.

Analysis led by the Joint Hub technical team in collaboration with WFP and UNHCR identified **a combination of eight eligibility criteria** associated with **three groups of households** categorized as highly, moderately, and least vulnerable. The eligibility criteria were based on statistical testing of optimal inclusion-exclusion error combinations.

The application of the targeting strategy for food assistance enabled a **basic safety net**, of a full assistance package, for the most vulnerable, 50% food assistance for moderately vulnerable households, with least vulnerable households no longer eligible for food assistance.

PUTTING REFUGEES AT THE CENTER

Throughout the targeting process, the participation of refugees was ensured, with a joint effort on including refugee perspectives in decision making on the targeting approach. Specific activities included:



Community consultations with refugees to give insights on:

- The targeting **eligibility criteria**
- **Protection risks and mitigation measures**
- Refugees' preferred **channels for giving and receiving information**



A joint appeals mechanism to enable refugees to appeal their vulnerability categorization and eligibility, and to help address errors and update assistance lists.



The use of a variety of communication channels to keep refugees informed.





MAINSTREAMING PROTECTION



The vulnerability analysis considered **protection needs** and **reliance on high-risk coping strategies** that expose refugees to protection risks.



A **detailed risk assessment** of the targeting strategy identified potential protection risks and designed mitigation measures.



Community consultations validated the eligibility criteria and approach and captured protection concerns.



Protection criteria were included to ensure the approach is protection-sensitive and **inclusive of people with specific protection needs**.



Appeals and feedback mechanisms that **allowed beneficiaries to appeal decisions on their eligibility for assistance**, update their data, and provide complaints and feedback.



Joint monitoring includes both qualitative and quantitative modules to assess whether there are increased exposures to protection risks.

OUTCOMES OF TARGETING

UNHCR and WFP continually monitor the situation of refugees in Rwanda.

Despite the impact of COVID-19, an economic crisis, and **significant funding constraints**, there has been a **modest reduction in the proportion of highly vulnerable refugee households** to 60% of the camp population (UNHCR-WFP Joint Post Distribution Monitoring - March 2022) and **no substantive deterioration in refugee vulnerability levels** have been observed since the implementation of the targeting.

While the **percentage of households adopting crisis coping has decreased substantively**, there are still 14% of the households who had to resort to emergency coping to meet essential needs.

In addition, households receiving less, and no assistance have demonstrated low resilience through frequently **adopting negative coping** and **resorting to debts and credit to meet essential needs**.