



# THIRD UNHCR/WFP JOINT POST DISTRIBUTION MONITORING

## For Refugees in Rwanda, April/May 2022



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency



**World Food Programme**

JOINT PROGRAMME EXCELLENCE AND TARGETING HUB

### BACKGROUND

Rwanda is hosting 127,112 refugees as of April 2022, predominantly originating from Burundi (39 percent) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (61 percent)<sup>1</sup>. About 90 percent of the refugees live in five camps<sup>2</sup> and the remaining 10 percent live in urban centres.

Rwanda's National Asylum Law stipulates refugees' right to work, freedom of movement and access to documentation. The Strategic Plan for Refugee Inclusion 2019 – 2024 defines the country's commitment to facilitating the graduation of camp-based refugees from being recipients of humanitarian support to increasingly self-reliant and self-sufficient members of society.

### POPULATION FIGURES



**127,112**  
TOTAL POPULATION

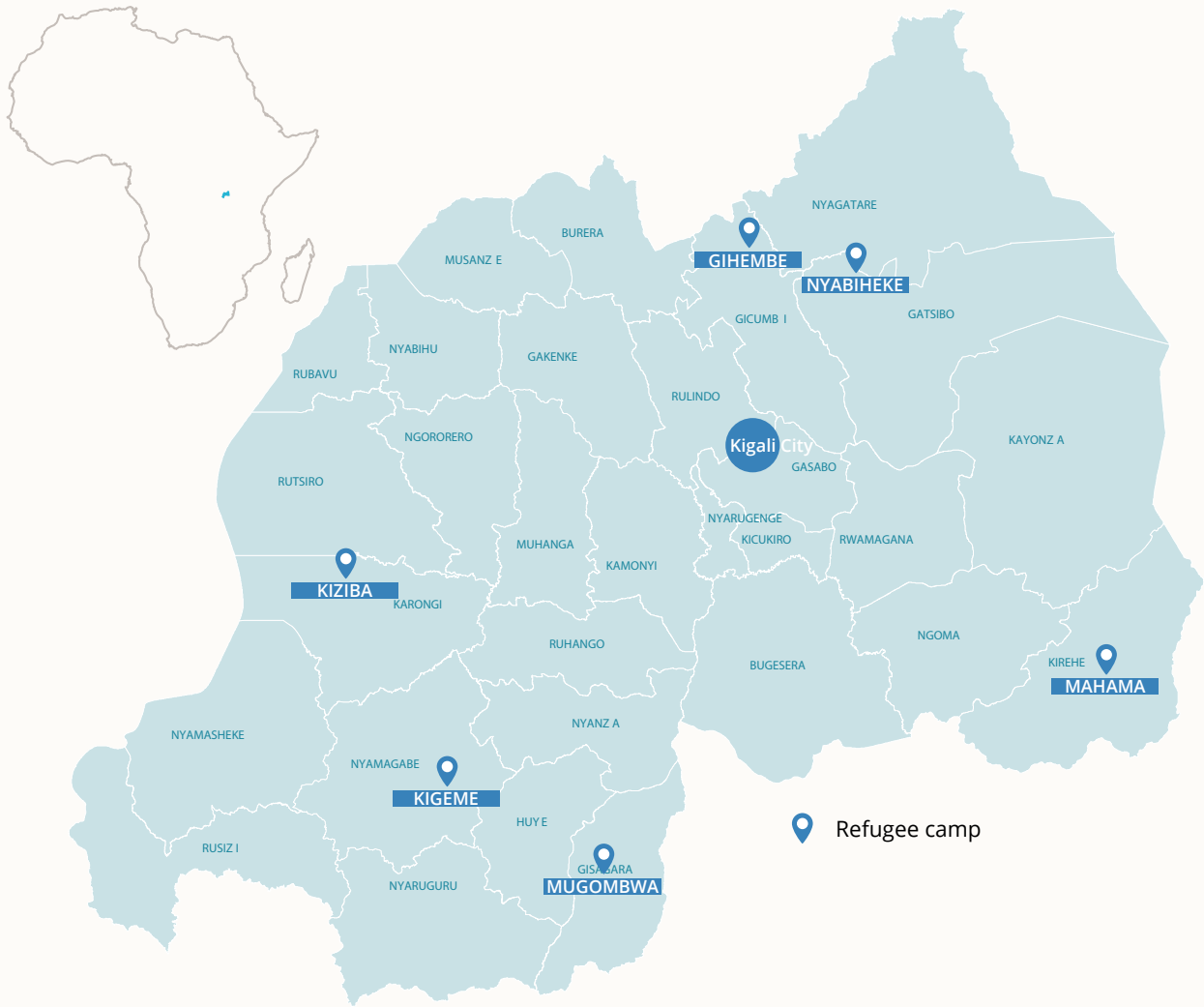
**121,778**  
Refugees

**353**  
Asylum Seekers

**4,981**  
Other people of concern

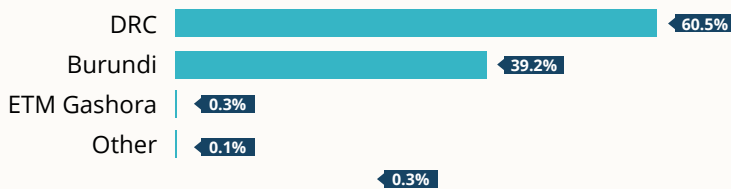
<sup>1</sup> Source: UNHCR ProGres Data April 2022

<sup>2</sup> Since the closure of Gihembe camp in October 2021, there are five refugee camps left in Rwanda.

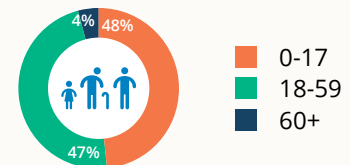


Refugee camp

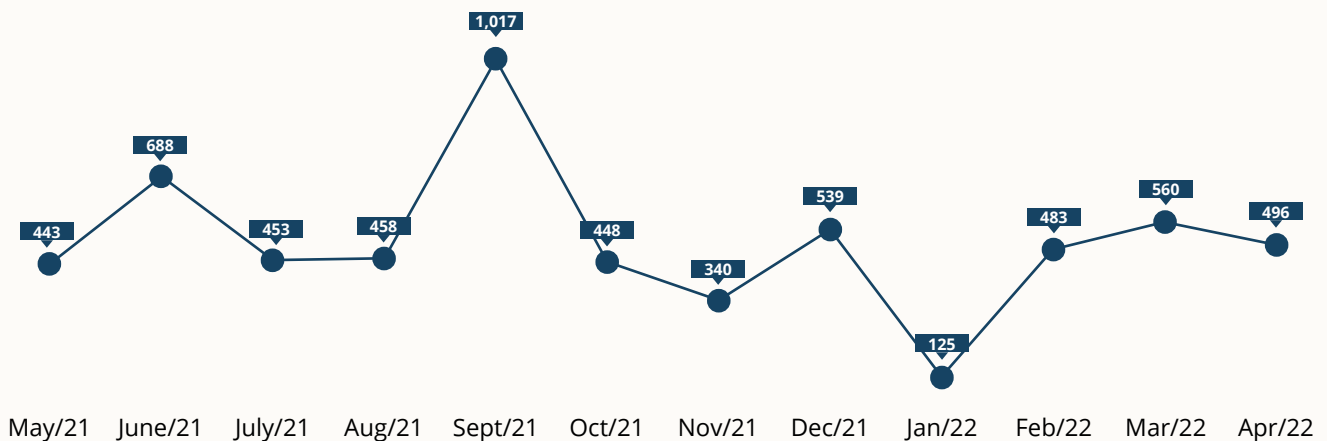
## COUNTRY OF ORIGIN



## AGE BREAKDOWN



## MONTHLY REGISTRATION TRENDS



Source: UNHCR ProGRES Data April 2022

# THE SHIFT FROM BLANKET TO TARGETED FOOD ASSISTANCE

Until April 2021, WFP and UNHCR – under the overall guidance of the Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) – had been providing blanket food and cash assistance to camp-based refugees. Due to declining financial resources and the finding that household vulnerability levels among refugees are not homogenous, needs-based targeted assistance in the form of monthly cash-based transfers (CBT), was first introduced in May 2021<sup>3</sup>. Guided by the global commitments on targeting principles<sup>4</sup>, three rounds of interlinked JPDMs have been implemented between December 2020 and May 2022:

**The first Joint UNHCR/WFP Post Distribution Monitoring (Round 1) and vulnerability assessment was conducted in December 2020** and served to analyse refugees’ levels of vulnerability and identified socio-demographic and protection-related eligibility criteria highly correlated with

vulnerability. Based on this analysis the targeting strategy was developed<sup>5</sup>.

**The second JPDM (Round 2) took place in September 2021<sup>6</sup>** – five months after the introduction of targeted assistance – and served as a follow-up monitoring exercise to assess the overall implementation, initial impact and effectiveness of the targeted assistance. The analysis recommended continued and regular monitoring and strengthening of appeal mechanisms to improve the immediate and longer-term impact of targeting.

**The third JPDM (Round 3) – the focus of this brief – was conducted in April and May 2022**, ten months after targeted assistance was first introduced. It is recommending further adjustments to the sample design and survey methodology (see *Recommendations*).

## THE TARGETING STRATEGY TO FOOD ASSISTANCE

A vulnerability analysis and profiling exercise conducted as part of the JPDM in December 2020 identified a number of socio-demographic and protection-related eligibility criteria that – individually or in combination – classify a refugee household registered in UNHCR’s ProGres database according to their level of vulnerability.

### SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CRITERIA

- Households that have a high number of dependents (DR >2)
- Single headed households with children below 5 years
- Single female headed households
- Household head with no education
- Household with 8 or more members
- Household with 2 or more female children aged 0-17 years

### PROTECTION CRITERIA

- Household with 1 or more disabled or chronically sick members
- Household with member at risk based on UNHCR classification (e.g. unaccompanied minor, elder person living alone, etc.)

The level of vulnerability in turn determines the assistance package households are eligible to receive:

Eligibility Group (% of households)	Recommended food assistance package (cash transfers)
Highly vulnerable (86 percent)	100% of food assistance (RWF 7,600)
Moderately vulnerable (7 percent)	50% of food assistance (RWF 3,800)
Least vulnerable (7 percent)	No assistance

## CONTEXTUAL CHANGES BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 2021 AND MAY 2022

A number of factors are likely to have undermined livelihoods of the refugee population between Round 2 and 3, increasing their vulnerability levels. They include the **reduction of transfer values due to limited resources and rising costs of the food basket**, following a 14.8 percent increase in Rwanda’s Consumer Price Index (CPI) between May 2021 and 2022. Secondly, **the relocation of about 10,841 refugees**

**from other camps to Mahama camp in October 2021**, which has left the newly relocated without any livelihood or income sources. Thirdly, **abnormal weather conditions** towards the end of 2021 and beginning of 2022 which have affected agricultural activities and food availability directly and indirectly.

<sup>3</sup> Targeting has only been applied to general food assistance for food basket but provision supplementary nutrition for prevention and treatment of malnutrition among vulnerable refugees, including pregnant and lactating women, children under 5 years of age, and people living with HIV, remains blanket assistance.

<sup>4</sup> Including the Joint UNHCR/WFP Guidance – Targeting of Assistance to Meet Basic Needs; <https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000113729/download/>

<sup>5</sup> RWD\_targeting-2-pager.pdf (wfp-unhcr-hub.org)

<sup>6</sup> [https://wfp-unhcr-hub.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/JPDM-September-2021\\_R7.pdf](https://wfp-unhcr-hub.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/JPDM-September-2021_R7.pdf)

## OBJECTIVES

- Ensure corporate continuity in monitoring refugees' food security and basic needs, income and livelihoods, economic capacity and overall vulnerability levels;
- Update corporate knowledge and identify any gaps in the targeting implementation process, including the communication with the communities and the mechanisms with which to appeal, complain and provide feedback;
- Measure the impact of targeting on households across three eligibility groups and assess their means of coping;
- Reevaluate the targeting effectiveness, relevance of eligibility criteria, and propose potential adjustments.

## METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

The 3rd JPDM is composed of a quantitative<sup>7</sup> household survey using a structured household questionnaire and 17 semi-structured Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and 9 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted in all five refugee camps<sup>8</sup> across the country. Data collection took place between 20th April 2022 and 20th May 2022.

The sample frame of the household survey was UNHCR's ProGres database. The sample was representative by camp and by eligibility group to attain comparable results with previous JPDMs. The selected confidence level stands at 95 percent and margin of error at 7 percent. A 15 percent non-

response rate was factored in based on field experiences in previous rounds.

Despite field sensitization activities, some refugee households expressed fear of being removed from assistance once they were to participate in the assessment and refused to be involved. Also, engaging sampled unassisted households in the assessment has also proven highly difficult as they did not see the importance of their contribution. Lastly, many households working outside of the camp could not be found during the hours of data collection.

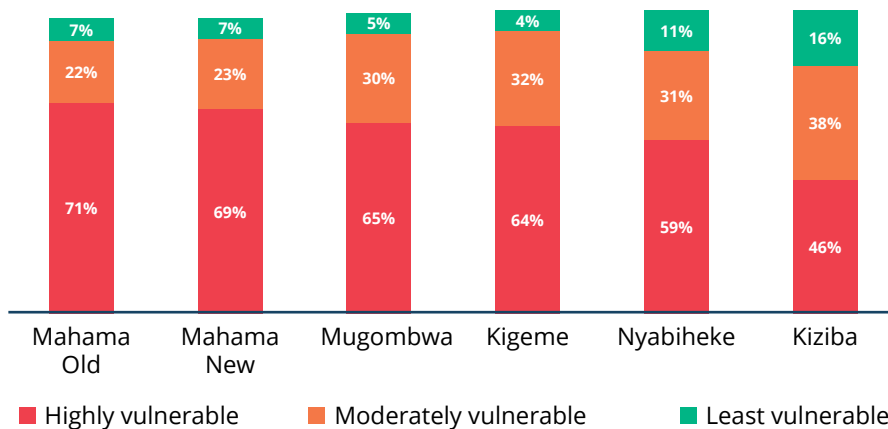
## KEY FINDINGS

### OVERALL HOUSEHOLD VULNERABILITY

**About 60 percent of refugee households remain highly vulnerable, thus no substantive deterioration has been observed since targeting implementation one year prior.** Overall, about 92 percent of refugee households are either highly or moderately vulnerable and the share of least vulnerable households stands at 8 percent. Increasing market prices are likely to have contributed to a slight increase in moderate vulnerability and a reduction in the share of least vulnerable households. Household vulnerability continues to vary across camps with Mahama camp – including the “old” residents and the newly relocated - hosting the largest shares of highly vulnerable households with up to 70 percent (Fig 2).

Households receiving half rations and those unassisted tend to be more affected by high vulnerability, possibly pointing towards fewer and unsustainable capacities and resources at hand to meet essential needs, compared to those being assisted with a full ration (Fig 1).

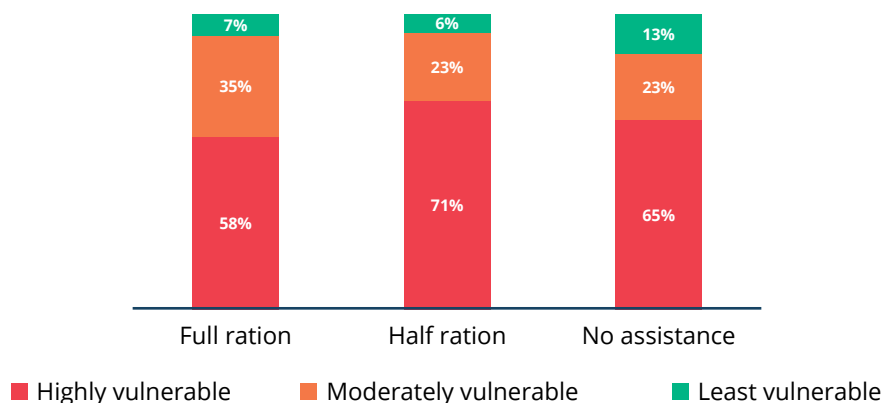
Figure 1: Household vulnerability classification by camp, May 2022



<sup>7</sup> The household questionnaire used for the JPDM R3 conducted in May 2022 was developed based on the questionnaire used in September 2021 for the JPDM R2, with adaptations as per the country teams' suggestions. See Annex x.

<sup>8</sup> For the purpose of this analysis Mahama was further divided into “old” and “new”. “Old” Mahama refers the Burundian refugees who are the original residents since the camp opened in 2015, while Mahama “new” refers to the Congolese refugees who were relocated to Mahama from Gihembe and Kigeme since 2021 (relocation is still ongoing and some refugees have moved from Kigeme to Mahama in 2022)

Figure 2: Household vulnerability classification by eligibility group, May 2022



Against the background of rising market prices, climatic challenges, coupled with the reduction in cash transfers, vulnerability levels were found to fluctuate. Refugee’s resilience capacities are generally highly fragile and in the absence of blunt, alternative investments that provide opportunities to build self-reliance, household vulnerability levels are expected to continue changing over time, depending on the contextual challenges households will be confronted with in the future.

## HOUSEHOLD FOOD SECURITY

Household food consumption has slightly worsened since September 2021 and variations between eligibility groups and camps remain evident. Overall, about six in ten households have acceptable (62 percent) and three in ten have borderline food consumption (32 percent). Poor food consumption remains minimal at 6 percent. Differences in food consumption were found between the three eligibility groups with non-assisted households being most likely to have poor and borderline food consumption. Non-assisted households also tend to engage in food-related coping more to withstand food shortages. In all camps acceptable food consumption has seen a decline since September 2021 pointing to a worsening trend.

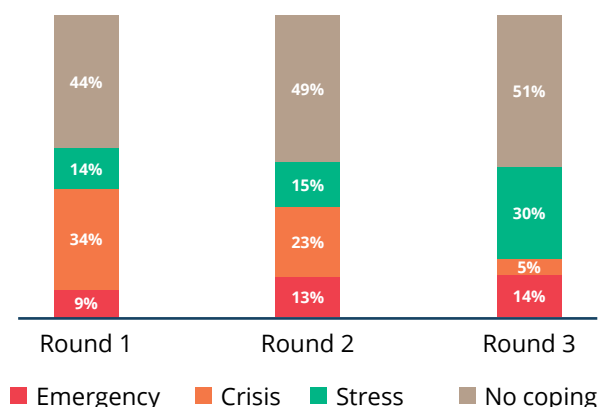
## LIVELIHOODS

Not having any livelihood or income source remains the reality for half of the refugee population and is most prevalent among households receiving food assistance, reflecting their low level of self-reliance. The 50 percent of households that do have an income predominately engage in casual labour or small businesses and most likely include unassisted households.

The comparative advantage of having an income source does not appear to sufficiently equip households with the resources required to uphold a certain level of well-being over time. Unassisted households and those receiving reduced assistance transfers that are most likely to have an income source, are also most likely to engage in livelihood coping strategies, including emergency coping, demonstrating their rather fragile capacity to fend for themselves.

Overall, the share of households engaged in livelihood coping has remained at about 50 percent and emergency coping at 14 percent (Fig 3). However, findings requiring particular attention, include the increasing share of households resorting to begging as a means to cope with up to 12 percent in May 2022 compared to merely 1 percent in September 2021, and the alleged increase in theft as a means to cope since the introduction of targeted assistance.

Figure 3: Livelihood based coping Dec 20, Sep 21, May 22



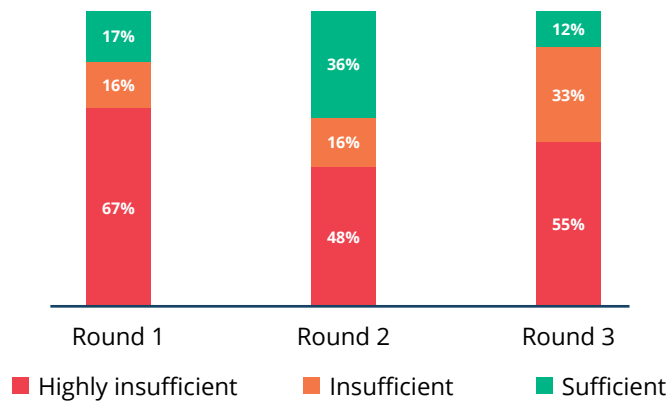
## ECONOMIC CAPACITY TO MEET ESSENTIAL NEEDS

While households’ economic capacity to meet their essential needs using their own resources remain largely limited overall and across all eligibility groups, household food and non-food expenditures covered by credits have seen an alarming increase. The average amount of credit used on food rose by 240 percent between September 2021 and May 2022 and credit on non-food items increased by 30 percent during the same period. The average amount of debts households accumulate has also increased substantially and are highest among non-assisted households. At the same time, households’ ability to use their own resources for meeting their essential needs, including cash and self-produce, continues to be limited. Due to the rising market

prices for both food and non-food items and scarce livelihood opportunities, the overall economic vulnerability has worsened among refugee households. Up to 88 percent are highly economically insufficient compared to 64 percent in September 2021(Fig 4).

Among the three eligibility groups, households receiving no assistance are those that have more cash and self-produce at hand than those receiving either full or half rations. However, they are also the ones that tend to accumulate higher debts more frequently, which potentially undermines their already limited resilience.

Figure 4: Economic capacity to meet essential needs (ECMEN)



## EFFECTIVENESS OF TARGETING APPROACH

The vulnerability-based targeting approach continues supporting the most vulnerable of refugee households with mostly stable trends in several key outcome indicators. However, most noteworthy findings relate to vulnerability levels fluctuating across the three vulnerability groups over time. Resilience is generally low with half of the population resorting to livelihood coping strategies to make ends meet. Thus, if vulnerability levels are in constant flux – depending on the challenges that households are confronted with, or lack thereof – the targeting approach is required to change in parallel in order to ensure its effectiveness throughout and further reduce inclusion and exclusion errors<sup>9</sup>.

Current targeting errors may be a reflection of households’ fluctuating vulnerability levels over time. Potentially contributing factors, include the review of protection-specific needs as sole eligibility criteria for receiving full rations, the use of socio-demographic targeting criteria no longer associated

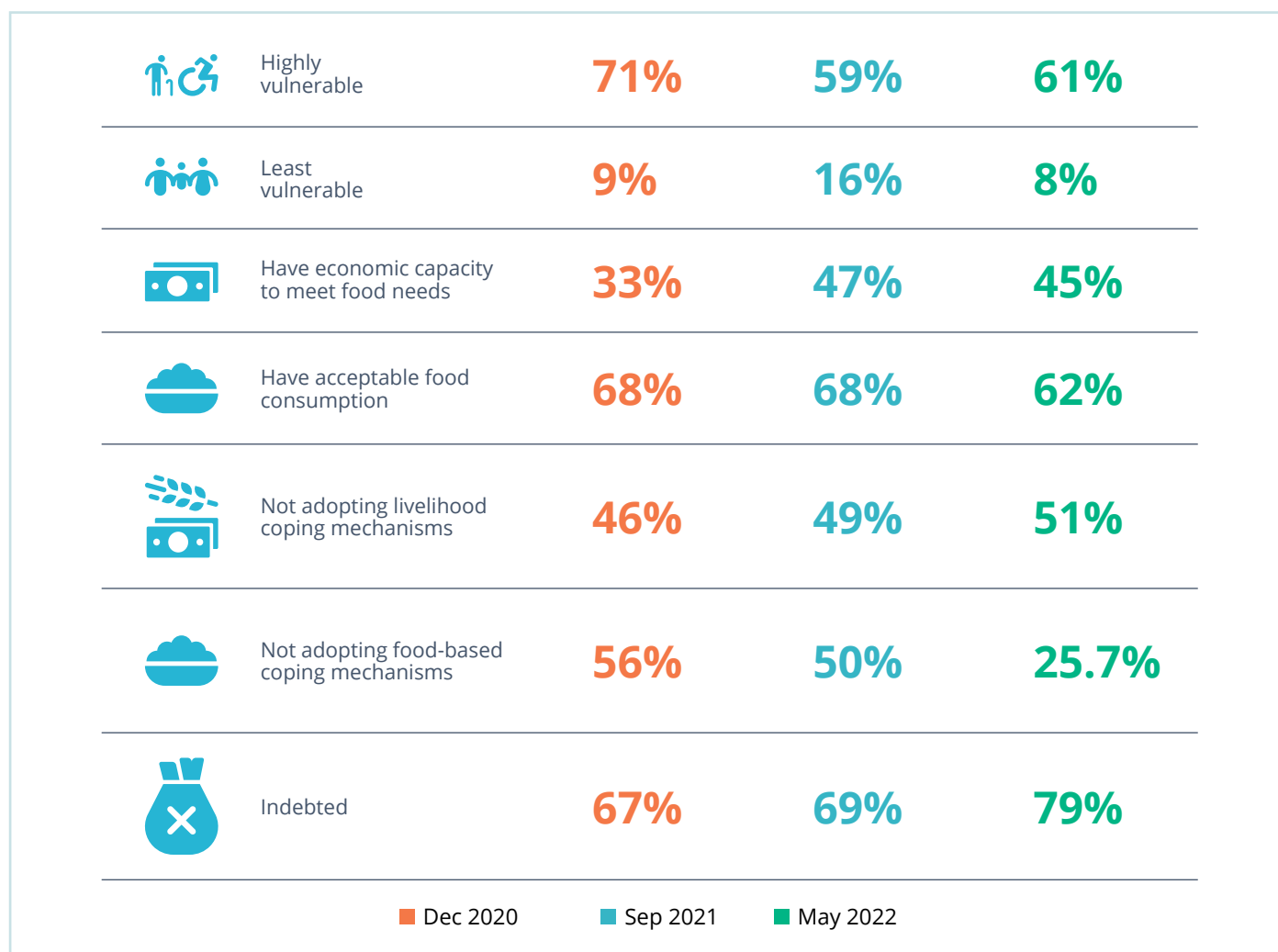
with heightened vulnerability, as well as inconsistencies between households’ assigned eligibility group and the targeting criteria they actually meet or do not meet.

## COMMUNICATING WITH COMMUNITIES

Following an extensive information campaign, by May 2022 refugees’ knowledge and understanding of the targeting approach had significantly improved since September 2021. Similarly, increased awareness of the availability of appeal mechanisms, their functioning and purpose, was also evident. Gaps and challenges, however, remain and will need to be addressed, including the population’s difficulties in understanding and endorsing the correlation between some eligibility criteria and vulnerability, long waiting times to receive responses after having appealed and difficulties in understanding the response provided. Based on their experiences thus far, refugees consider targeted cash-based assistance most effective in improving their livelihoods and gradually building self-reliance.

<sup>9</sup> The **inclusion error** refers to the receipt of benefits by people or households who receive assistance but are not in need. It is the number of households eligible to receive assistance based on targeting criteria despite not being in need, divided by the total number of eligible households. The **exclusion error** refers to people or households who do not receive any assistance, but are in need based on the targeting criteria. It refers to the number of households not eligible that are, however, in need, divided by the number of households in need of assistance.

## AT A GLANCE: KEY MONITORING FINDINGS AT HOUSEHOLD LEVEL



## CONCLUSIONS AND JOINT UNHCR/WFP RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a great need to further **build household resilience through alternative, long-term, sustainable programming** (including nationally owned programmes), while the **transfer value of the food assistance should be reviewed** in order to reduce the impact of ongoing price increases on household vulnerability.
- The **targeting approach and associated eligibility criteria have been found appropriate** for the current context and can be retained going forward, however, **some adjustments are needed to further reduce targeting errors**. Remaining design and implementation targeting errors should be addressed through a review of UNHCR protection-based criteria and of ProGres information, the use of appeal mechanisms to identify common characteristics of excluded households, and an update of the list of socio-demographic eligibility criteria. This update of socio-demographic criteria is recommended to involve the replacement of “households with two or more female children” with “households with two or more female and male children” and the inclusion of students above 18 years as able household members.
- **An alignment of Non-Food Items (NFI) assistance to food assistance targeting is strongly recommended to ensure the most effective use of available resources to help households meet their basic needs.** NFIs should be provided to moderately and highly vulnerable households, while least vulnerable households should be removed from receiving NFI assistance.
- **Appeals mechanisms need further finetuning** to help reduce targeting errors by improving the timeline for appeals from households affected by targeting changes, ensuring follow ups and timely analyses of appeals to identify and address targeting errors at the right time.

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