

UNHCR-WFP Joint Hub Country Exchange

Using Designing and Implementing Joint Targeting and Prioritization Strategies: Lessons from Uganda and Niger

JULY 2025



BACKGROUND

The Joint Hub facilitated a country exchange webinar to share experiences on prioritization and targeting of assistance in refugee contexts, focusing on Uganda and Niger. The aim of country exchanges is to promote knowledge sharing between UNHCR and WFP, to strengthen technical capacity and partnerships for data-driven and needs-based targeting. In this session, colleagues from Uganda and Niger discussed their successes, challenges and lessons learned from joint targeting and prioritization. For further details see the presentation [slides](#).

UGANDA

CONTEXT

Uganda hosts 1.9 million refugees under a progressive free movement policy (no camps). The country faces recurrent health crises, exposure to climate-related shocks and price volatility, high levels of food insecurity (IPC Phase 3) and malnutrition. Multidimensional deprivation affects refugees, with 93 percent experiencing a gap in at least one sector. Funding constraints led to repeated food ration cuts, prompting a shift from status-based assistance to vulnerability-based targeting.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND ENABLING FACTORS

- Phased approach to targeting, transitioning from ration cuts for all refugees, to a geographical approach, to index-based prioritization (enabling differentiated levels of assistance based on household needs).
- Strong communication with communities and broad community consultations were a success factor for smooth roll-out.
- Good collaboration: weekly coordination between UNHCR, WFP, and government; active engagement of field teams.
- Enablers: dedicated technical teams, institutional memory, senior management support, and honest dialogue.

CHALLENGES

- Appeals are an integral part of any targeting system but were perceived as being complementary. Difficult to fundraise for appeals, causing delays in appeals resolution and undermining trust.
- Funding cuts limited ability to implement improvements.
- Diverging views on transparency and sharing details of targeting approach and index.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Treat appeals as an integral part of targeting, not standalone.
- Invest early in improving data quality and joint planning.
- Maintain continuous communication with stakeholders, including refugees and government.

For further information, see: <https://wfp-unhcr-hub.org/where-we-work/uganda/>

NIGER

CONTEXT

Niger is affected by ongoing conflict and high levels of food insecurity. The context is highly insecure, complicating field assessments and requiring costly security escorts. Refugee and host communities face widespread vulnerability, and targeting exercises must adapt to fluid conditions.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND ENABLING FACTORS

- Established clear categorical eligibility criteria, to identify and target vulnerable households (female-headed households, disability, chronic illness, large households, elderly-headed households and those reliant on assistance as their primary income).
- Community-based targeting, with community involvement crucial in validating eligibility criteria and selecting eligible households.
- Combined quantitative data with qualitative community consultations for accuracy.
- Monthly coordination meetings led to a signed MOU and joint action plan between UNHCR and WFP
- Enablers: senior management involvement, experience and acceptance of community-based targeting, commitment to WFP-UNHCR collaboration.

CHALLENGES

- Security constraints caused frequent delays and rescheduling of field missions.
- Staff turnover disrupted continuity and slowed implementation.

- Limited resources restricted ability to scale improvements.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Develop flexible plans accounting for insecurity and logistical challenges.
- Engage regional authorities and communities early for buy-in.
- Maintain regular communication and joint reviews to adapt to evolving conditions.

For further information, see: <https://wfp-unhcr-hub.org/where-we-work/niger/>

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPLICATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES

- Establish joint governance structures and clear roles early.
- Ensure senior management involvement to resolve bottlenecks.
- Prioritize data quality from the outset.
- Integrate appeals and accountability mechanisms from the outset.
- Engage communities and authorities throughout the process, encourage transparency.
- Plan for flexibility in insecure or resource-constrained contexts.
- Harmonize complaints and appeals systems to avoid duplication and confusion.

CONTACTS

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