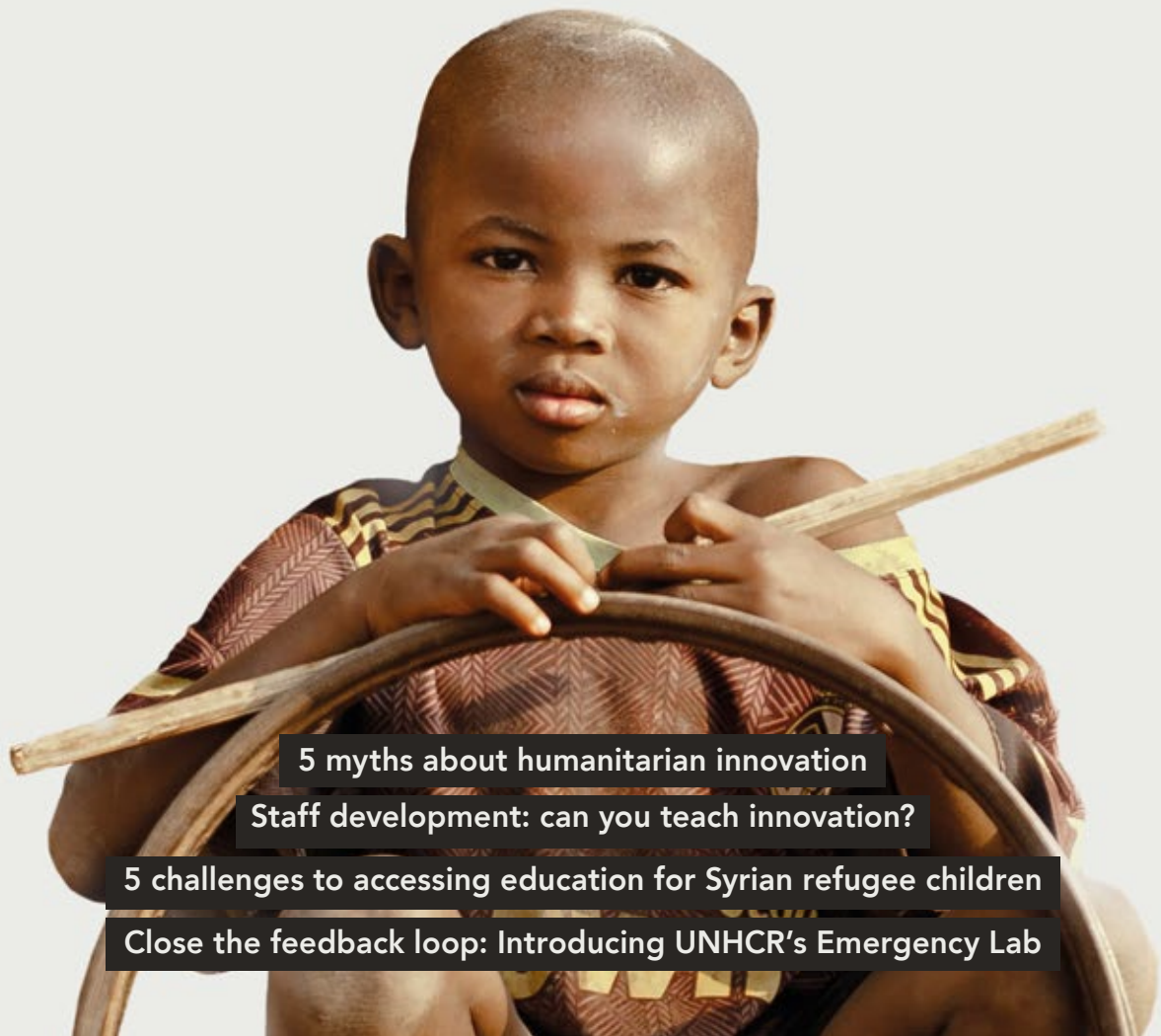


# BEYOND TECHNOLOGY

INNOVATION AT UNHCR

*Year 2015*



5 myths about humanitarian innovation

Staff development: can you teach innovation?

5 challenges to accessing education for Syrian refugee children

Close the feedback loop: Introducing UNHCR's Emergency Lab



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

# Innovation is necessary

**2015 was no ordinary year. Given the scale and complexity of displacement in the world today, it is no surprise that issues facing the forcibly displaced dominate global dialogue in ways they hadn't previously.**

Multiplying and intensifying conflicts around the world have forced millions of civilians to flee their homes, with no sustainable solution in sight. And, countless barriers still make it difficult for refugees and others forcibly displaced to access basic needs such as adequate shelter, education, health care, and a sustainable livelihood.

It is clear that the institution of asylum is needed more than ever. However, this institution is challenged by new global dynamics that compel UNHCR to strengthen the life-saving work it carries out day-to-day. As an organization, we must embrace new approaches that turn these challenges into opportunities. We must work differently.

But, as an organization, this isn't new to us. We've always adapted to new contexts. And, when faced with new challenges, we've always sought to find ways to solve them. This spirit and practice of innovation have been a hallmark of who we are as an organization. I see evidence of this daily in our operations worldwide.

We've embraced new technologies, such as biometrics for refugee registration, and Instant Network Classrooms, which improve the quality

of education provided for refugees. We've started testing more automated ways of distributing food and core relief items. Colleagues have developed mobile apps and platforms that provide vital information to displaced populations. Added to this, our Connectivity for Refugees project aims to ensure that all refugees, and the communities that host them, are connected to mobile networks and the internet.

These solutions aren't innovative because they are technological, however. Innovation at UNHCR goes beyond technology. Innovation speaks to the processes we adopt to develop these solutions: processes that put people first and their needs at the center. As such, our coordination, design, and delivery of cash-based interventions are a key component of our innovation work.

Looking ahead, we will continue to invest in innovation, and are integrating it in our regular business practices. This renewed commitment is complemented by new leadership of UNHCR's Innovation Unit that will help facilitate the adoption of innovation processes Agency-wide as we transform into a truly 21st century organization.

**KELLY T. CLEMENTS, DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER**

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# 5 MYTHS ABOUT HUMANITARIAN INNOVATION

BY CHRISTOPHER EARNEY, CO-LEAD AT UNHCR INNOVATION

If we could call innovation something else, we would. The word innovation is rife with confusion, is loaded with misunderstandings, and has the propensity to cause all sorts of confusion. Yet, it doesn't need to. Here are 5 myths about innovation that are not true. And why:



## 1. Innovation = technology.

It doesn't. But sometimes it can. Innovation needs to be as accessible as possible to our staff and partners so, for us, process and approach are important. That isn't to say that innovation processes don't sometimes result in new technologies – or even old technologies – but it's how you get there that matters. The Liter of Light project is a great example of this. It uses very simple components, such as empty plastic drinking bottles, to create lights in a matter of minutes, and with great positive effects on refugee communities.

## 2. It's a generational thing.

Some of the most innovative people I know are a lot older than me; my mother's one of them. Some people seem to think that innovation is only something that the 'younger generation' can do. It seems to be shrouded in some kind of mystery, but it really isn't. Across UNHCR we have older people who used to be younger people. We have younger people who will become older people. And we all operate in environments that demand that we all innovate. The Innovation Fellows cohorts are indicative of this – the youngest 2015 Fellow was a then 23-year-old Iranian male. In the same intake, the oldest Fellow was around 55 years old. Age doesn't matter; it's what you do with your attitude that counts. Combinations of experiences, nationalities, and ages lead to not only richer, more thoughtful solutions, but also the substance to make ideas into realities.

## 3. It's completely new.

It's great that across UN agencies and well-known international NGOs there are Innovation teams. It's also great that recently there has been a turn towards innovating more. But, innovation within the humanitarian sector has been around for as long as the humanitarian sector. In UNHCR we've been innovating since our creation – we've had to. Drivers in South Sudan, Protection Officers in Afghanistan, Representatives in Niger, you name it, they've been innovating. The establishment of innovation teams demonstrates that organizations have recognized the innovative nature of staff, and decided to invest in structures to further foster, and capture innovation. This is testament to their willingness to continuously adapt, which is truly innovative.

## 4. Bottom-up innovation isn't the Holy Grail.

Some experts and practitioners in the field of humanitarian innovation often allude to the more romantic notion that innovation should always – always – come from the bottom, and then percolate up through the hierarchy, but that's just not true. Plenty of innovations do in fact come from the top. Sure, people in field operations understand their needs often much better than senior managers in HQs. Senior managers on the other hand understand needs in a different way, and are sometimes required to drive organization-wide innovations that solve a multitude of similar - though not identical - challenges. Senior managers can also set the right tone for innovation, and encourage it at all levels. You have to have both a top-down and bottom-up approach to make it work.

## 5. It's all about ideas.

Sure, somebody has to come up with a good idea. Making that a reality is the difficult part. I've had colleagues who could come up with hundreds of ideas in a year; some of them are not entirely ridiculous. But as soon as they tried to make them happen, they were put off by the work required to do so. Some of them just weren't equipped, or savvy enough, or consultative enough to make it happen. Innovation is more about perseverance and strategy, and people, than it is about coming up with ideas.

# LEARN LAB

## Progress.

The Learn Lab – a collaboration between UNHCR's Division of International Protection and UNHCR Innovation.

UNHCR's Learn Lab expands educational opportunities for refugees and the forcibly displaced through new approaches to learning. Here's how the Lab progressed in 2015.

### Instant Network Schools (INS) Program



Supporting teachers in primary, secondary and vocational programs with dynamic educational content through internet connectivity, localized content and child friendly tablets.

Vodafone Foundation  
Worldreader

Kenya  
New:  
South Sudan  
United Republic of Tanzania

Project models were localized through community human-centered design workshops for testing.

**2** new locations  
**500** teachers (an increase from 26 in the previous year)  
**22,500** pupils reached

### Consortium on Connected Learning



Leveraging ICTs to provide refugees with accredited university education in remote camps and locations.

InZone (University of Geneva)  
JC:HEM  
Australian Catholic University  
Borderless Higher Education for Refugees

Afghanistan  
Jordan  
Kenya  
Malawi  
Thailand  
New:  
Chad  
Jordan  
Rwanda

**3** new locations  
**3500** students reached in 2015

### Ideas Box



Prototyping a portable and customizable library for children and adults.

Libraries without Borders  
IRC

Burundi  
New:  
Ethiopia  
Jordan

**7,000+** Access increased to 7,000+ refugees.

**3** impact evaluations completed

**WON** the Google Impact Challenge in 2015.

**2** New locations

### Humanitarian Education Accelerator



A 3-year program that evaluates the process of scaling innovative education-in-emergencies initiatives. Provides funding for ready-to-scale in emergencies pilots.

UNICEF  
DFID

Global

**1** call for applications launched in 2015

### Amplify



A global challenge to solicit solutions that help refugees learn new skills and gain access to a quality education.

UNICEF  
DIFD  
IDEO.org

Chad  
Ethiopia  
Jordan  
Kenya  
Uganda

**400** research contributions

**376** ideas submitted from **141** countries

**7** ideas selected

# It's no longer 'business as usual' for refugee education.

## Here's why.

ITA SHEEHY, SENIOR EDUCATION OFFICER

It is easy to think about education and schools as a normal part of growing up: a bunch of children in a classroom with a teacher, textbooks and other education supplies, with children busily learning knowledge and skills. In many refugee contexts, that's just not the reality. Where teachers are sometimes completely untrained, where books fall apart in the heat after a few months or where girls are told they are not worth sending to secondary school, we need innovative ways to make sure that refugee children are not left behind.



After a 2011 assessment revealed refugees had very low access to education and received poor-quality education in many countries, at UNHCR we realized that we needed to change from doing the same old thing in the same old way, hoping it was going to make an impact.

We believe that it is fundamentally important for UNHCR to look at the way we are doing things and think creatively about how we can do them better. How can we truly engage young refugees in getting the knowledge and skills that will serve them well in their futures? How can we best equip teachers in some of the most resource-poor settings in the world? How can we galvanize collaborations that go beyond funding agreements to become real partnerships?

**By taking an innovative approach to our work in education, we are starting to answer these questions.**

For example, this year the Learn Lab, a joint venture of UNHCR Innovation and the Education Unit in the Division of International Protection, established the Connected Learning Consortium for Higher Education for Refugees, a first-of-its-kind initiative that pools resources across institutions to exponentially expand access for refugees to accredited higher education through digital learning, even in the most remote places. With 11 partners from multiple universities and organizations, 3,500 students are now enrolled and earning certificates or degrees or gaining the qualifications to serve as teachers and other professions.

New partnerships like these, and others with the Vodafone Foundation, IDEO.org, UNICEF, and DFID, allowed us to reach more refugees in 2015 with quality learning, and to learn from each other.

By thinking creatively about educational resources and access we also created Instant Network Classrooms: flexible, digital "schools in a box" that leverage mobile technology to bring connected learning to refugee children. We've found that students enrolled in Instant Network Classrooms actually perform better on national exams and have improved attendance and pass rates. This year, we worked with the Learn Lab to expand these Instant Network Classrooms to Kenya's Kakuma refugee camp, and we will soon bring them to students in the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

Taking an innovative approach to the challenge of getting learning materials to refugees also led us to support the production and testing of portable multimedia centers – called Ideas Boxes – with Libraries without Borders. With computers, tablets, eBooks, paper books and internet access, the boxes are a creative way of engaging young people and the community and helping them learn and connect in a very self-directed way.

We piloted them in Burundi and the boxes are now reaching thousands: just between April and July 2015, refugees in two camps visited the boxes 21,686 times. Other partners and other countries are now setting up their own Ideas Boxes, expanding access to learning, information and culture. And these boxes are translating into real educational gains. A quantitative study completed in July 2015 showed students who attended French and Math classes within the Ideas Box showed 23 percent more academic improvement than students who took the courses in a classroom setting.

A Humanitarian Education Accelerator we launched as part of the Learn Lab in 2015 will now help us transform good pilot projects into impactful social initiatives in education. An innovative partnership with DFID and UNICEF allowed us to open up a competition for ideas with a multi-million dollar commitment for implementation over the next three years. We have announced the three winners, who will help us bring fresh approaches to re-thinking how we can create better educational access and quality.

Taking an innovative approach to how we teach, partner and expand access to education for refugees is not something we want to keep to ourselves. Refugees will be best served when the humanitarian and development community takes honest stock of its performance, and takes actions to improve. So, this year we established a course at the University of Geneva's summer school that teaches students about higher education in emergencies and crises. It is starting a dialogue among UN agencies, NGOs and educators to discuss policy and programing recommendations, innovative solutions and pedagogical approaches as well as the potential role of universities as humanitarian actors.

The collaboration between DIP and the Innovation Unit to launch the Learn Lab has brought new partnership opportunities and the creative support we needed to take a good hard look at ourselves and our goals, open our minds about how to do better, and start doing it.

Right now we are focused on getting these innovative initiatives right – something we can only achieve by ensuring deep engagement from communities, partners, and young refugees themselves as we think in new ways about program design, implementation, monitoring, and eventual expansion.

# 5 CHALLENGES TO ACCESSING EDUCATION FOR SYRIAN REFUGEE CHILDREN

More than half of the 4.8 million refugees who have poured out of the Syrian Arab Republic are children. The world sees their faces as they cling to parents, bob in overburdened boats, cry in the arms of volunteers on beachheads.

The public rarely sees them in school.

Syrian refugee children are going to school, of course. In fact, Deputy Secretary of State of the United States of America, Anthony J. Blinken points out that today there are more Syrian children in Lebanese public schools than there are Lebanese.

But as Blinken said at a January 2016 Refugee Education workshop that our Learn Lab attended at Stanford University; *"Across the world, the most severe consequences of all this suffering and displacement have fallen most heavily on the smallest shoulders."*

Despite the best efforts of the governments in the region, most school-aged refugees living in host countries remain without access to education.

Some 921,370 school-age children are out of school (UNICEF 2016. Syria Education Fact Sheet. March). The majority of them want very much to return to the classroom, but current efforts to get them there have come up short. Those who do enroll often face challenges of their own, as do the school systems that try to integrate them.

*"What we found out over the past year is that, despite a massive effort, our existing resources and responses are simply not enough,"* Blinken said at Stanford. *"The magnitude of the problem is greater than the solutions that we bring to bear at the moment."*

Why is providing Syrian refugee children with access to quality education while they await a durable solution so sticky? Here are five of the most notable reasons.



## 1. The language of displacement

Refugee children living in Lebanon are eligible to enroll in public school, and hundreds of thousands have. Challenges posed by space limitations and resource constraints are obvious but these students face a more fundamental problem when it comes to learning: they don't speak the language.

Syrian refugee children struggle to make sense of lessons taught in English or French, which are official languages of instruction in Lebanese schools. Children have to speak Arabic and English or Arabic and French from as early as Kindergarten. As much as Arabic may not be a problem, English or French is an issue for Syrian refugees. A 2012 assessment by UNICEF and Save the Children showed as a result, children were being placed in lower grades than the ones they attended in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The language barrier is one reason that 66 percent of the 80 children in Lebanon whom UNHCR asked about education said they were not attending school. Another 2013 assessment found that 80 per cent of Syrian refugee children in Lebanon were not in school. The problem plagues refugee children in Turkey too, and even other Arabic-speaking countries where the dialect is different.

*"I have been in too many classrooms where refugee teenagers cram themselves into tiny benches or sit on the floor in early primary classrooms because that is where language learning happens,"* writes Sarah Dryden-Peterson, a professor at Harvard's Graduate School of Education. *"This is one quick pathway to drop-out and disillusionment."*

## 2. School itself is scary

Bullying is a problem the world over, and refugees do not expect their children to be spared. But for many Syrian refugee children, it's not only the other kids causing a problem. In some cases, it's the teachers, too.

Peterson writes that Syrian refugee children face "ongoing physical and emotional bullying."

Teachers likely do not want to cause harm, but don't realize the deep psychosocial burden of what their young charges have seen and experienced. Moreover, they haven't been trained to address protection issues such as bullying by other students and create inclusive classroom environments.

Peterson writes that the number one request she hears globally from teachers of refugee children is to have training and ongoing support they can draw on to help their students understand each other and get along.

"This training may seem a luxury, especially in national systems where teachers are trained," Peterson writes. "It is not. Children who do not feel safe in school cannot learn and quickly become marginalized from their peers and communities."

UNHCR includes awareness raising and campaigns against bullying as a vital activity, which is also echoed as a key finding in UNICEF's March 2015 report *Access to Education for Syrian Refugee Children and Youth in Jordan Host Communities*, which suggested creating or expanding safe spaces for youth in an effort to make school environments more welcoming.

Initiatives like these will address part of the problem. But Syrian refugee children also report being harassed or abused on their way to and from school – one of the major reasons that 78 percent of children between 6 and 17 in Jordan's Za'atari refugee camp said they were not in school, according to a 2013 education needs assessment.

## 3. Resource gaps

It comes as no surprise to those in the humanitarian community that education for Syrian refugee children is facing a major resource shortfall that makes it impossible to tackle all the obstacles in the way of access and quality.

As Peterson writes in another blog post, education is notoriously underfunded, and as Rania Succar of Google and Jusoor noted,

**"money is clearly the biggest barrier to 'solving' this challenge."**

Peterson points out that in 2015, UNHCR's Regional Refugee Response Plan for Syrian refugees was less than half funded,

and worse, the education portion of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' Syria Humanitarian Response Plan was funded at just 23 percent.

Children whose families cannot afford the materials or transportation fees to distant schools end up missing out. Lack of money for supplies or a need to supplement family income was in the top three reasons cited by survey respondents in Jordan as to why their children were not attending school. Several countries hosting Syrian refugees do not permit refugees to work, which has a direct impact on their ability to send children to school.

But it's about a lot more than dollars: this crisis demands more technical expertise and knowledge to bolster funding that has already been allocated. Although quite a bit of money has been contributed to this already, we need to look at how it's being spent.

With restrictions on work permits and limited employment opportunities for adults in some places, children face even more pressure to contribute to their household's income instead of going to school. Schools themselves are having trouble accommodating so many more children – resorting in places to double-shift class days and extra-stuffed classrooms. There are huge numbers of students all sharing the same resources, the same buildings- conditions that would lead to strain in any education system.

# 3.



## 4. A kitchen full of cooks

It is heartening to see how many organizations and agencies want to help Syrian refugee children access quality education while they wait – for what might be the rest of their school-age years – in countries not their own. Despite the Humanitarian Response Plans for Syria and Iraq (coordinated by OCHA) and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), a coordinated region-wide response framework of more than 200 partners, including governments, UN Agencies, and NGOs to address the refugee crisis, some level of duplication, redundancy and top-down solutions is possible.

Engaging the right actors – including refugee communities themselves – is an ever-present challenge, but one that is essential for the humanitarian community to get a good grasp of what's really going on: what is already in place, what's working, and what isn't.

To avoid designing duplicate programs with little on-the-ground understanding and input, organizations that often compete are going to have to work together.

We need to look across these different initiatives, build consortiums and momentum, looking at how we build on good practices at the level where they can scale. There has to be broader knowledge sharing and a way of actually harnessing interest in order to avoid duplicating efforts and building things from scratch.

As the workshop at Stanford revealed, there is a lot of enthusiasm and interest from nontraditional actors – companies like Facebook, LinkedIn, Air BnB and Vodafone, and universities ready to jump in with tertiary education and blended learning offerings. They bring different expertise and resources they can leverage to move things along at a faster pace and greater scale.

But even they need to do their homework before rapidly creating programs that don't understand the nuances and complexities of the education challenges at hand. This starts with strong mapping and research but ultimately, refugees should be the ones both innovating and implementing their own solutions.

## 5. A patchwork of problems means no one solution

The quality of education for Syrian refugee children looks different in Lebanon than it does in Egypt, Turkey, or Jordan. Actually, it looks different for children in Amman than it does for those less than two hours away in Zarqa and even for those in a well-resourced school in the same neighborhood as another school that is struggling.

Some schools have wonderful teacher training programs, sometimes supported by the UN and NGOs, while others have no initiatives to help them better integrate refugee students.

These variegated contexts make solving problems at scale particularly challenging. Despite separate appeals, strategy documents, and different strategic objectives, programing of the response to crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and the five hosting countries is generally aligned and there is scope to streamline activities and indicators across countries through HRP and 3RP processes.

A silver bullet will never work in environments where the contexts are so different – radically different even between cities. Instead, broader knowledge sharing will help, as will engaging communities in creating localized solutions.

We need to ensure the interest meets the communities where they live, and understand in a more nuanced way what the real challenges are within these environments. After all, they are the innovators and also the implementers.

# ENERGY LAB PROGRESS


The Energy Lab – a collaboration between UNHCR's Division of Program Support and Management and UNHCR Innovation.

UNHCR's Energy Lab finds the most suitable technology to meet the energy needs of refugees and those forcibly displaced at the community level. Here's how the Lab progressed in 2015.

## Micro-grids



Using solar powered, community managed, micro-grid systems to increase refugees' access to electricity.

 Engineers without Borders, USA


 Nepal

- 1** assessment conducted February 2015
  - 1** prototype of lighting system and community-based training program completed October 2015
- Numerous modifications made based on on-going feedback from the community.**

## Local Integration



Engaging refugee and host communities to develop solutions focused on livelihoods and integration.

 Engineers without Borders Australia,  
Caritas Czech Republic

 Zambia

- 1** new partnership established
- 9** design themes identified in Zambia for the 2016-2017 EWB Student Challenge
- 3** refugee and host community workshops held in Mayukwayukwa, Zambia



# Thinking outside the box: Innovative solutions that address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in refugee communities.

**It is a terrible truth: Sexual and Gender-based Violence is a problem that rears its ugly head so surely during conflict and emergencies that often we can even map our predictions for it. Although rape and exploitation and other gruesome abuses are a part of conflict, they also quickly take root in what should be a safe space: asylum.**

**U**NHCR employs traditional tools and methods to address various forms of abuse affecting women and girls, but over the years the stark reality stares us in the face: We need to do more. We need to address risk earlier and actually prevent the abuse!

Through a UNHCR Ideas Challenge, UNHCR Innovation and the Division of International Protection solicited ideas for preventing this violence. These ideas had to be really innovative to overcome the resource-constrained conditions in many refugee camps, where there is sometimes no electricity, no running water, no cooking gas, or limited telecommunications. The ideas also had to take us beyond responding to abuse that had already occurred.

We received several hundred ideas and picked the top four to pilot as part of the Safe From the Start Initiative, which received funding from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

One of the progressive projects is bringing community lights to refugee camps in northern Uganda that are totally off the national grid. When the sun goes down there it is pitch black, making it unsafe for women and children especially to leave their shelters – even just to use the toilets.

Our team worked with the Innovation Unit to identify the right locations and the most appropriate technology for public lighting: in this case solar energy. The staff then worked with the refugees and the Innovation Unit to develop a grid-based lighting system that illuminates paths leading to public utilities. With the Energy Lab's input, protection colleagues were able to demystify the process of setting up the lighting system for community members, and mobilize their support for maintaining it. They even managed to

peg on a community-run phone battery charging station that generates income for refugees who maintain the lights.

An ongoing assessment will help us isolate the impact of community solar lighting on protection, but we've already been told the lights have stopped people from defecating next to the school, and that the market is staying open later now that people feel safe walking to and fro after sundown. Being able to remain outdoors in the evening is contributing to a greater sense of community, and safety. In the future, we hope to package this approach to ensure that communal lighting becomes a standard part of the emergency response.

Another idea we piloted as part of the Safe From the Start Initiative in 2015 is using low-cost biomass briquettes instead of firewood for cooking fuel. We've known since the 1990's that collecting firewood puts women especially at risk of being assaulted, but UNHCR had never implemented such a simple alternative systematically!

The Energy Lab – a joint venture of UNHCR Innovation and UNHCR's Division of Program Support and Management – was a one-stop shop, offering ideas on changing the machinery, finding the right ingredients, testing the production process, and identifying lessons from similar projects. Refugee groups in Ghana, Cameroon and Chad have now started manufacturing energy stoves and producing briquettes. Progress is slow and sometimes uphill, but an incremental approach ensures that gradually, we can reduce the need for women to take risks while maintaining momentum for these projects.

Turning ideas from the Challenge into projects created new synergy as we convened a cross-disciplinary team from the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Unit, the Energy & Environment Unit, the Livelihoods Unit and the Energy Lab.

Using an innovation process to address sexual and gender-based violence also helped us think beyond the traditional approaches to come up with more effective, accepted and sustainable answers. Those solar lights are a great example; The technology itself is not new, but the process we used was innovative in that we brought together experts and went back and forth with refugees and field staff to keep improving the solution.

Using this innovation approach has even helped us avoid spending time and money on ideas that do not work. For example, the Safe from the Start Initiative was poised to launch an income-generating project to help refugees produce handheld solar lamps. It seemed like a great idea and refugees who were initially trained were very appreciative when the prototype was tested. But the Energy Lab elevated our analysis and our feedback process and showed us that without having the raw materials readily available, refugees would not have been able to produce the lanterns in a cost-effective way. They would have gained a skill but not a livelihood. I think we avoided throwing a lot of money into a pit pursuing a project that was not viable.

There is a lot of room to do more. The Innovation Unit has offered to help us ramp up our documentation, and will continue supporting our protection staff to find new and improved ways of addressing everyday challenges in preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence. I hope that by our ongoing collaboration we can continue to transplant knowledge across the organization and especially to our field staff. They have so many great ideas; they just need the support and confidence to innovate! To try and fail and try again until one idea works!

By

JOANINA KARUGABA, SENIOR PROTECTION OFFICER,  
SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE UNIT



# OPEN CALL FOR INNOVATION IN ASSISTANCE DISTRIBUTION

## Introducing ReliefLink: Connecting Persons of Concern (PoC) data with distribution data

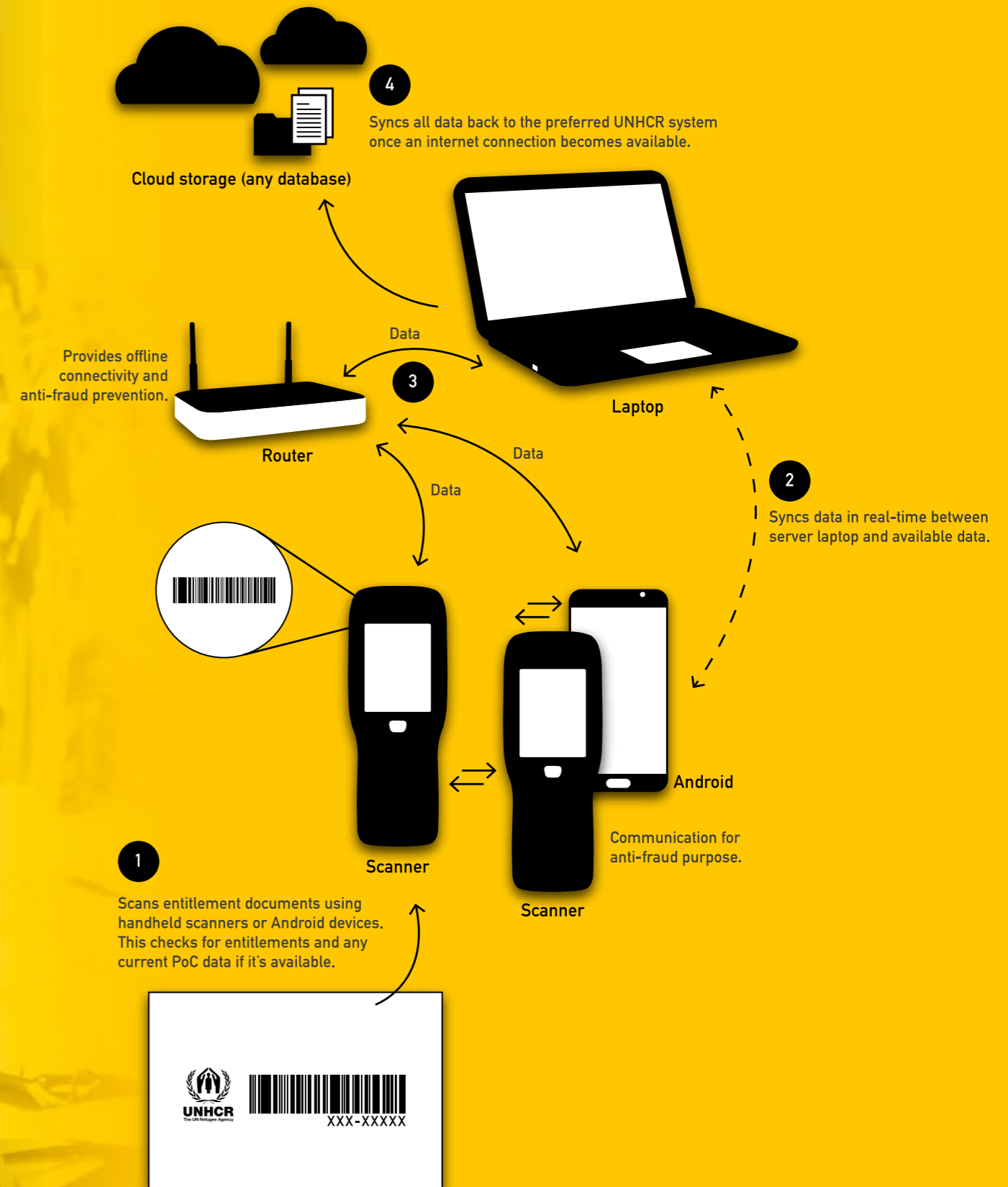
UNHCR Innovation are looking for field operations who'd like to improve their distribution activities. Whether it's decreasing the overall time it takes to distribute assistance or ensuring increased accountability, Initial ReliefLink tests in Bassikounou, Mauritania show incredible potential for the tool to achieve both.

The app was developed together with UPS - through a grant from UPS Foundation - and builds off of their Trackpad™ technology. It can be adapted to almost any distribution system currently in

use, including Excel tables. In the absence of Persons of Concern data, ReliefLink can be used simply to track distributed items in an automatised way.

If your operation is experiencing difficulty in tracking distribution items, or if the overall distribution process takes too long, this test might be a good fit for you.

## What is ReliefLink?



**Get in touch. Let's see how we can help.**  
Contact us at [innovation@unhcr.org](mailto:innovation@unhcr.org).

# LINK LAB

# PROGRESS

The Link Lab – a collaboration between UNHCR’s Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications and UNHCR Innovation.

UNHCR’s Link Lab connects refugees and forcibly displaced communities, UNHCR, and external partners to one another through information and communications technologies. Here’s how the Lab progressed in 2015.

## UNHCR AXIS



A data visualization platform that enables UNHCR colleagues to view customizable dashboards of Global strategy indicators. Axis is a joint project of UNHCR Innovation and the Division of International Protection.

No partners Global

- 1** planning meeting for reactivation of project with 2 UNHCR Sections
- 25** priority countries analyzed with AXIS for UNHCR’s 2015 Strategy Implementation Report: Protection strategies on Child Protection, Education and Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

## Help.unhcr.org



An online platform that delivers relevant and easy-to-access information to refugees and asylum seekers based on their country of interest.

No partners Costa Rica

- 3,619** total page views in Costa Rica
- 1** communication campaign launched
- 15** billboard ads, and promotional video ads with a total reach of
- 2.75million**
- 7** website improvements made through a participatory process
- 2** website country expansions

## ReliefLink



UPS ReliefLink is a program that uses UPS Trackpad technology that tracks the distribution of food and non-food items using mobiles devices, and then link distribution data with UNHCR’s registration data.

UPS Foundation Mauritania

- 2** ReliefLink tests in Mauritania
- 50%** reduction in distribution events time
- 106,168** POCs reached through food distribution
- 16,870** POCs reached through non-food distribution

- Distribution in Mauritania:**
- 13,720** bars of soap
  - 302** family shelters
  - 13,138** POCs reached through food distribution

## Ascend



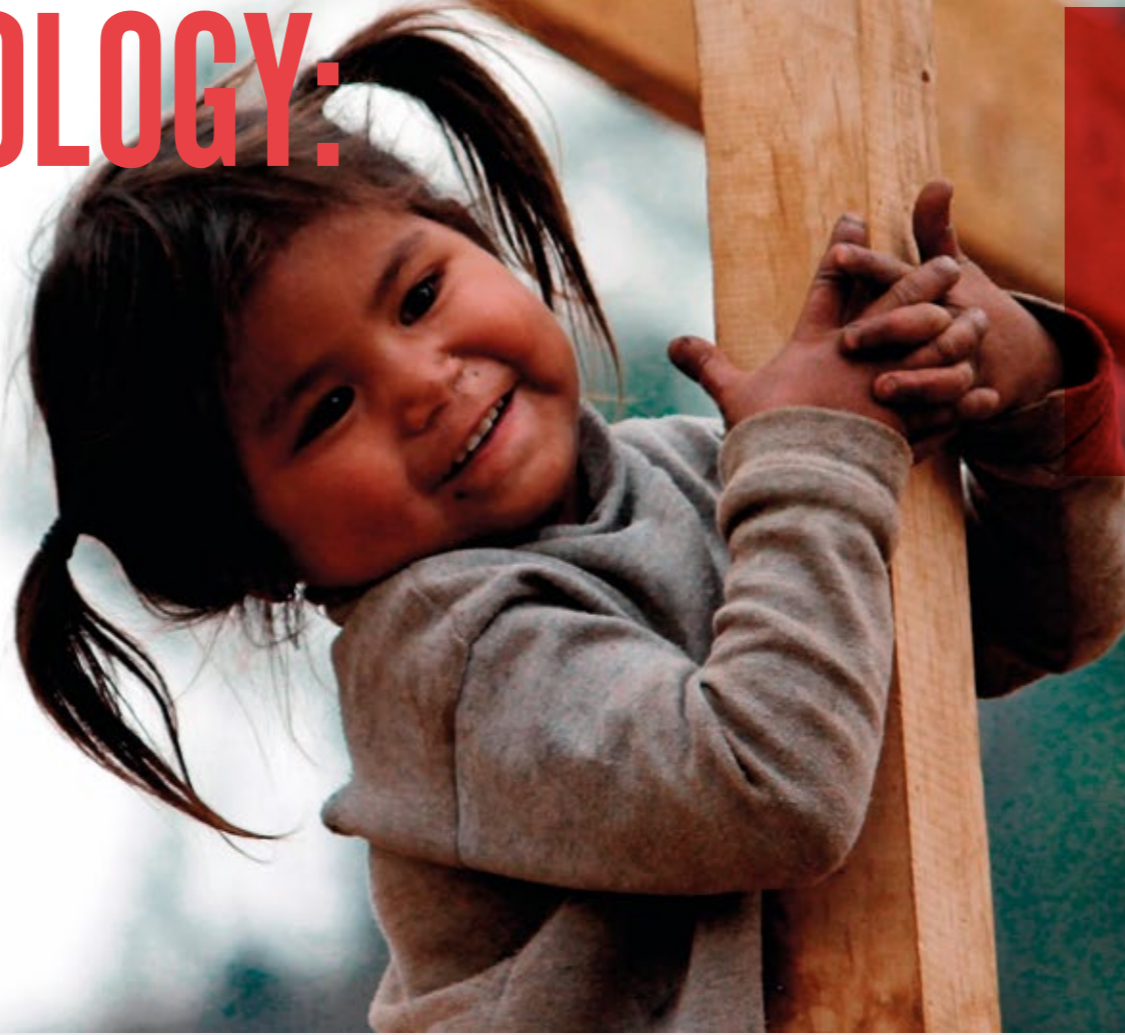
Ascend is an SMS solution that allows both one-way and two-way communication between UNHCR, partner NGOs, and urban refugees.

ACAI Costa Rica Ecuador

- 492** POCs reached through implementing partner ACAI
- 17%** of total POCs in Costa Rica reached through Ascend
- 1** new project reactivation plan established for Ecuador

# BEYOND TECHNOLOGY:

If anyone still pictures a refugee camp when they think about the work of UNHCR, they have not been to Costa Rica. There are about 3,680 registered refugees in the country and around 90 percent of refugees and asylum seekers live in the San Jose metropolitan area. In Costa Rica, refugees enjoy the same rights and duties as its citizens, from education and healthcare, to employment and financial services.



# TESTING AND SCALING NEW SOLUTIONS IN COSTA RICA

DANIEL GARCIA AND VALENTINA DUQUE, DURABLE SOLUTIONS ASSOCIATES, SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA

But in reality, despite the favorable social, economic, political and cultural context, refugees in Costa Rica claim they feel lost, and unsure about where to get accurate information about renewing their legal documents, for example, or enjoying full access to public services. Participatory assessments showed us that one of the biggest barriers to local integration for refugees and asylum seekers in the country is a lack of access to information.

In 2013, UNHCR leveraged its idea management platform, UNHCR Ideas, to crowdsource ways to improve access to information and services for refugees living in urban areas. The winning idea, a website called 'help.unhcr.org,' would provide reliable and timely information and serve as a channel for communication for refugees and other persons of concern.

When Valentina was selected as a 2013-2014 Innovation Fellow, she believed the help site was the right platform to address urban refugee issues in San Jose. She used the Innovation Fellowship to understand human-centered design, learn about the innovation process and how to manage it, and hold workshops with refugees in Costa Rica about the kind of information they felt they needed in order to ensure their local integration.

UNHCR Innovation supported us as we became the first country operation to pilot the help.unhcr.org site; gathering, compiling and translating content that was specific to people of concern in Costa Rica on topics ranging from which partner organizations offered special services for children or the LGBTI community, to describing the asylum-seeking process.

UNHCR Innovation provided all the technical support to make the site a reality. It was especially helpful how they got inside the way we worked and even how our partner agencies operated, and made sure the end product fit into that in an organic way. We do not have an IT person in our office in Costa Rica, so just having that kind of support alone was key.

With UNHCR Innovation, it has all been about working together. They have never imposed ideas on our team. Instead, it has been a collaborative process that started with ideas from refugees themselves – something we both think made the final product a lot stronger and more useful. That's the magic of innovation, we believe. Everyone gets a voice in the process.

We unveiled help.unhcr.org on World Refugee Day: June 20, 2015. Over the next few months, the Costa Rica Operation together with UNHCR Innovation worked on updating the content on a regular basis to make sure the information provided was current and timely. Since its launch, the site has had more than 3,700 new users. When you remember that there are 3,680 recognized refugees in Costa Rica, this number is very significant.

We are certain that we would not have got to this point without the support of the Innovation Unit. They continuously provide analytics and feedback on the site that allows us to see what content is most in-demand, as well as how and where people are accessing it. This means we can continue to be as responsive as possible.

We also created a social media campaign to sensitize Costa Ricans about refugee related matters. For local integration to work, the host community should be able to understand who refugees are and how they can be active contributors to the development of the country. We therefore produced a series of short videos that show how refugees and "Ticos" are equal, as both enjoy the same rights and duties.

Now, with UNHCR Innovation's continued input, we're thinking beyond the website, and considering how to reach and serve newer populations arriving to Costa Rica. Next year we have more communications initiatives in store containing the same information found on help.unhcr.org, like a mobile app and digital information stands that will be placed in strategic points in the San Jose metropolitan area

and throughout the country. These two initiatives allow the user to contact UNHCR directly, making them two-way communication channels.

By working with the Innovation team, we have been able to test ideas, seeing if they work and scaling them up when they do. We are all learning from each other and seeing what communication platforms can create the most impact.

We think there can never be too many ways for refugees and other people of concern to access the information they need. Listening to refugees themselves as we test more channels for them to get information and provide feedback is always necessary. And the more we get the host community to see refugees just as ordinary people who come to the country with knowledge and dreams, the more successful our efforts to locally integrate refugees will be in the long run.



# Introducing the Emergency Lab



If you would like more information on the Emergency Lab and how it can support you, please contact us at [innovation@unhcr.org](mailto:innovation@unhcr.org).

close the  
feedback  
loop.



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# Better listening= better emergency response

Listening and talking to communities is an essential part of UNHCR and its partners' work. When we directly and continually engage affected populations and incorporate their feedback into our emergency response, we strengthen our accountability to them and help them feel better protected. But, achieving this within the constraints of emergency contexts can be challenging.

Enter the Emergency Lab – a joint initiative between UNHCR Innovation and the Division for Emergency Security and Supply. The Emergency Lab deploys to emergency settings and prototypes systems that ensure feedback from affected populations can

be collected, analysed in real-time, and then built into emergency response programming by decision-makers. These systems – either 'high-tech', 'low-tech', or 'no-tech' – are combined with UNHCR's traditional approaches to community-based protection.

When we listen better, our emergency response is more effective. This in turn leads to better protection outcomes. To date, the Emergency Lab have supported operations in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Malawi, South Sudan, and Niger.



## Collaborative communication partnerships

The Emergency Lab helps operations to forge partnerships with non-traditional actors - including media development agencies, telecommunications organizations and software developers. This has included collaborating with software developers to develop a bespoke Translation Application tested in the European emergency response.



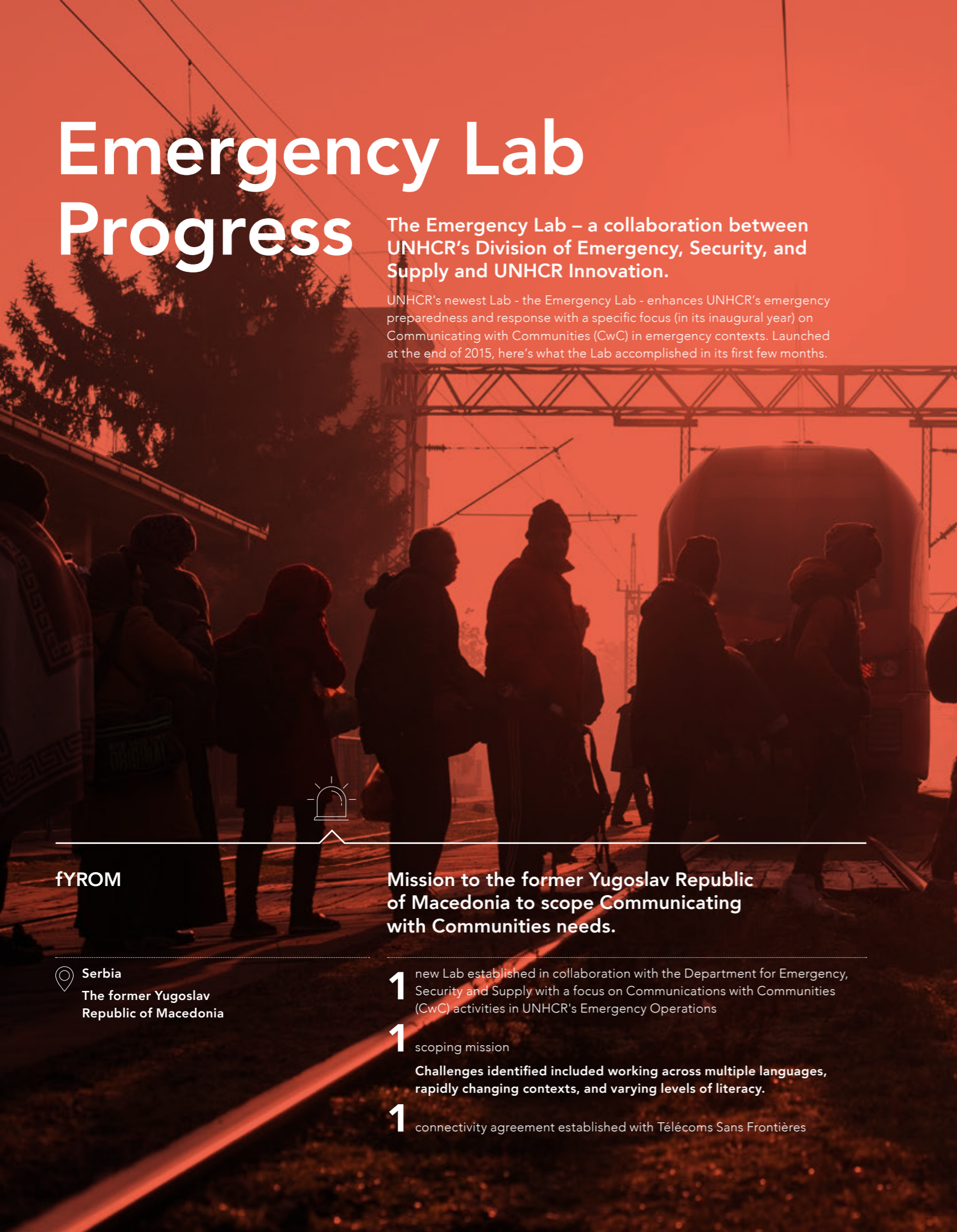
## Adapting to feedback

The Emergency Lab helped the operation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to establish a feedback mechanism using online, real-time data collection tools. This system strengthened community engagement, data analysis and inter-agency accountability to communities.

# Emergency Lab Progress


The Emergency Lab – a collaboration between UNHCR’s Division of Emergency, Security, and Supply and UNHCR Innovation.

UNHCR’s newest Lab - the Emergency Lab - enhances UNHCR’s emergency preparedness and response with a specific focus (in its inaugural year) on Communicating with Communities (CwC) in emergency contexts. Launched at the end of 2015, here’s what the Lab accomplished in its first few months.



FYROM

**Mission to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to scope Communicating with Communities needs.**

 **Serbia**  
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

- 1** new Lab established in collaboration with the Department for Emergency, Security and Supply with a focus on Communications with Communities (CwC) activities in UNHCR’s Emergency Operations
- 1** scoping mission
- Challenges identified included working across multiple languages, rapidly changing contexts, and varying levels of literacy.**
- 1** connectivity agreement established with Télécoms Sans Frontières

Q&A with Vicky Tennant:

# COMMUNICATING WITH COMMUNITIES IN EMERGENCIES

Vicky Tennant is currently Special Assistant to the High Commissioner. In 2015, she was Chief of the Emergency Policy and Capacity Development Section, in the Emergency Services pillar of UNHCR's Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS). In this Q+A, Vicky reflects on communicating with communities and the role of the Emergency Lab.



## What does 'communicating with communities' mean in the context of today's displacement emergencies?

Years ago we used to talk about mass information. We spent time figuring out the best ways of disseminating information to large groups of people in refugee camps who needed our services. Today, those channels of communication are multidirectional, much more complex, notably deeper and absolutely better.

Communicating with communities has been a priority for a long time, but with so many refugees living in urban settings, using new communications platforms, transiting borders quickly or staying in insecure and inaccessible areas, UNHCR has to find new ways of reaching out – especially in emergencies, where it's critical that we have strong communications channels in place from the very beginning.

Communicating with communities in emergencies is about engaging directly with refugees and internally displaced people from the very outset of a crisis – making sure they have access to the information they need, helping them play a role in their own protection, and enabling them to actually shape our operations and hold us accountable for what we do. This is a key part of our work to place community-based protection at the heart of our emergency response. And we need to make sure we are engaging with all the groups within the population – which means rapidly understanding and tapping into the variety of ways in which people communicate.

## What role is UNHCR's Emergency Lab playing and how do you see this developing in the future?

DESS set up the Lab together with the Innovation Unit in October 2015, to try to really tap into new expertise, technology and partnerships that could help us accelerate and intensify our communication with refugees, IDPs and host communities in emergency operations. Of course, we already have a long history of communicating with communities through our presence in the deep field, and our daily interaction with refugees and IDPs. The new Lab takes this a step further by looking at how we can leverage all the expertise around communications technology and engagement and incorporate it into our emergency responses.

This DESS/Innovation 'co-owning' relationship actually works very well: the Innovation Unit brings a certain expertise and methodology. Perhaps more importantly, they bring a willingness to take risks and to test things and if they don't work, to let it go and move on. There's a lot of creativity there and a way of working that doesn't necessarily come naturally to those of us steeped in the UNHCR way of doing things. I've really appreciated that and learned from that.

The Emergency Lab draws on communications and technological expertise to apply it within an emergency context. We worked hard to make sure that the Lab colleagues were fully integrated into Emergency Services as well as the Innovation Unit, as the idea is to make sure that they are fully connected to our emergency operations as they evolve, and can be deployed to the field at short notice alongside our standby teams. This way, they can get into the field very quickly, understand the context on the ground, and come up with creative, practical and immediate responses that are linked to the overall strategy for the emergency operation.

## Can you give an example of where the Emergency Lab made a contribution?

The Emergency Lab was set up while UNHCR was engaged in a large-scale emergency response to the refugee and migrant crisis in Europe. Almost as soon as it was created, the Lab colleagues were deployed to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, working with emergency staff and colleagues in the operation to beef up communication between UNHCR and others delivering humanitarian services on the one hand, and refugees and migrants on the other, in a very unique situation where on some days literally thousands of people were arriving at the border.

None of UNHCR's existing solutions matched the particular reality in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the ways in which we would normally operate in a classic camp-type environment, or even in a rural or urban setting in which people are staying in one place for an extended period, just would not have worked. When new situations like these emerge, we have to be able to innovate.

Working together with staff and NGO partners on the ground, the Emergency Lab colleagues galvanized unconventional partnerships we might not have thought

to create - with Google and Translators Without Borders. Together, they were able to bring expertise to bear on a very specific problem and quickly come up with practical solutions: a tablet-based question-and-answer mobile app, for example, that allowed staff to triage routine queries and freed up translators for more complicated work.

They also came up with a multi-platform communications system that meant that different kinds of information, in different languages, could be broadcast to different monitors depending on which group within the population was watching – a way to meet communities where they were with tailored information about their protection and their rights.

The Emergency Lab's approach in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia showed how it can foster new, creative methodologies for multi-directional communication by really looking at how people communicate, what channels they use, ways to be more inclusive, and ideas to engage refugees and staff better.

## What do you see as the future of the Lab?

As an agency, we are going through a period of more and more displacement emergencies. In 2015, UNHCR responded to five new major emergency situations in multiple countries. Because emergencies are such a fundamental part of our work, we have to get our responses right, from the beginning. The only way we can do this in an effective and accountable way is by making sure we can all talk, communicate and share: with each other and with the people we are working to help.

If we get this right at the beginning, this approach should be embedded within the operation and shape how it develops from then onwards.

I think the Lab can play a really important role in this respect, and hope that we can work towards making its work a standard component of our emergency operations. Communicating with communities should be routine for us, and indeed a lot of great and innovative work on this is already going on within operations. The Emergency Lab will provide the great benefit of capturing and amplifying these efforts, and harnessing expertise and partnerships to bring creative, quick solutions that ultimately contribute to better protection for displaced people.

# The European Refugee crisis: 10 Communications with communities challenges.

## The challenge is obscured by 'complexity'

"It's like no other emergency" or "there are huge challenges, like nowhere I've ever worked" are common phrases I've found myself saying post deployment to almost every humanitarian operation I've worked in. I'm definitely not alone – humanitarian workers are often prone to describing their latest field experience as 'particularly difficult', 'unique' or (even more vaguely) as 'complex'.

Sticking with a 'it's like no other context' mantra makes extremely limited headway in terms of defining the challenges and even less progress towards finding solutions. From conversations with people working in the Europe Refugee Crisis context, I'd been told that there were unique challenges relating to communicating with communities (CwC). If the Emergency Lab was to help identify, develop and test innovative solutions to these challenges, I needed a much better understanding of the context and to work with teams to define these challenges further.

## The Emergency Lab's first step: defining the #commisaid challenge

In December, the Emergency Lab went on a scoping mission to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to do just this. With refugees, UNHCR staff, and partners we identified 10 specific CwC challenges. Caveat: stop reading now if you're looking for solutions – we're very much at the 'work-in-progress stage'.

**Rapidly moving population:** We estimated that the average refugee spent between 6-9 hours transiting through the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in December – with some people traveling through from the Greek islands even quicker. Communicating with a community that changes or 'refreshes' this quickly is not only 'Groundhog Day'-esque for field workers, it limits the amount and type of information that can be shared. Repetitive information 'provision' related to available services is only one element of CwC. Quickly establishing dialogue is key – but how do we listen, and to whom, if we only have 30 minutes?

**Where and how to 'close the loop':** Commitment 5 of the Core Humanitarian Standard states that people affected by crisis should have access to safe, responsive complaints mechanisms. But what does this look like for a highly mobile population? Do people have time to complain if they're hurrying for a bus, ferry or train? If so, how do we respond if they've moved on?

**Diversity of language requirements:** In this context, vital documentation is transliterated across four different scripts, there are multiple spoken languages and varying literacy levels within a 'community'. At field level, translators are in short supply – with humanitarian agencies struggling to find Pashto speakers or Serbian and Kurdish speakers. The Emergency Lab has started working with Translators without Borders on key translation and plans to prioritise this challenge in 2016.

**Leveraging channels:** There have been many reports highlighting the significance of the mobile phone in this context – with much progress having been made in terms of ensuring wifi connectivity, mobile phone charging and access to SIM cards. Refugees frequently state that Facebook, WhatsApp and Viber are their preferred channels for communication – but is this with humanitarians? If these channels are predominantly being used by refugees to communicate with friends and families how can/should we leverage them to facilitate better dialogue between refugees and aid agencies? Are humanitarians ready to embrace 'social media' like this? And what of the non-digital channels? While the majority of refugees own a phone, many do not – how do we engage with these people and ensure their voices are heard against the digital backdrop?

**Information Management sans Frontiers:** The Europe Refugee crisis is a multi-country, multi-region response. Sharing information on this scale takes considerable resources and time. If field teams do not

have the latest information to share with refugees they risk providing conflicting information or spending considerable effort hunting down details. Fragmented information management also impacts the likelihood that feedback from refugees will be used to inform improvements to the wider response – as information shared by refugees remains 'local'.

**Coordination:** CwC coordination – really? A challenge specific to the Europe Refugee Crisis? Many people highlighted the significant contribution that volunteers had made to the response. Some coordinated volunteer groups are well-organised while others are well-meaning individuals. From a CwC perspective, the importance of systematic information sharing is key; how can we best engage volunteer groups and individuals in coordination mechanisms? How can we also ensure that good practice in terms of listening, feedback and complaints management is followed?

**Dignity and wellbeing:** The traumatic experiences and protection risks faced by thousands of refugees currently on the move requires special consideration. Whilst en-route what can be done to support refugees' dignity and wellbeing from a CwC perspective? UNHCR has been working with Clowns without Borders to provide entertainment and act as a distraction. The Emergency Lab is currently exploring other options to provide entertainment in waiting areas – potentially through access to news broadcasts, serials, films.

Seriously, what can we talk about?: In 30 minutes there will be some sensitive topics that it will not be possible to discuss and harm caused by trying to do so. These discussions will be best held when trust has been established – recognising that this takes time, this will most likely be with professionals in destination countries.

**Too cold to talk:** The cold, harsh Baltic winter also impacts CwC activities. At transit sites refugees seek warmth, waiting inside shelters with their family groups. The cold makes standing around and 'chatting' unbearable. Winterization of CwC activities is critical.

**Harnessing 'innovation':** The Europe Crisis has definitely struck a chord with Tech Developers and Designers. However, there has been a proliferation of new 'Apps' – many of which seem to duplicate existing platforms and are seldom used. This innovative, creative capacity needs to be better harnessed – ensuring that the solutions are 'needs-based' and reflect real field challenges. How can we best harness this capacity to improve CwC? (Focusing on 1-9 above would be a start!).

**KATIE DREW, EMERGENCY LAB MANAGER**



Call for Contributors

## Wanted: Your stories of innovation!

We're always looking for stories, ideas, and opinions on innovations that are led by or create impact for refugees. Sharing innovations that you've tried or tested can help other colleagues who might be looking for ideas to solve a similar challenge.

If you have a story or idea to share, send an email to [innovation@unhcr.org](mailto:innovation@unhcr.org)

### Using GIS technology to map shelter allocation in Azraq refugee camp

## YAHYA HASSUNE DOESN'T TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER, QUITE FORTUNATELY FOR UNHCR.

About two years ago, Hassune was working on his first day as Associate field officer in Azraq, a new camp located in central-eastern Jordan that currently hosts about 26,000 Syrian refugees living in 10,000 shelters. The camp hadn't opened yet, and Hassune was in charge of getting the shelter allocation system ready for day one. Bernadette Castel, who was the camp manager at the time, asked him: "Imagine you are the manager of a big hotel that contains 10,000 rooms. How are you going to manage them all?"

Shelter allocation was known as a critical step that could cause significant challenges due to the high number of refugees who were expected to be processed each day. Hassune was warned by his colleagues that it would inevitably become the bottleneck of the operation. How to sort and deliver 10,000 keys, for instance, would be a headache. But instead of caving in to pressure, Hassune took the warning as a challenge. At the next meeting, he promised the team that shelter allocation would run smoothly. "I told them the bottleneck would perhaps happen at the next step, but not mine," he says.

But when he sat down to look at the system he was supposed to use to assign a shelter to each family, then manage the constant flow of people who would come in and out of the camp, he realized it was deeply flawed. The system relied on a massive and complex Excel sheet that was shared between so many users that it risked being quickly compromised. He knew that just a few errors in the dataset would make the file unreliable.

Hassune had a few notions of computer programming and Geographic Information System (GIS), a system used to capture, process and displaying geographical data. He thought Azraq would be the perfect place to use GIS for shelter allocation;

unlike other camps where refugees were housed in tents, Azraq was given sturdier transitional shelters made of zinc and steel to resist harsh weather conditions. Because the t-shelters weren't mobile, they were given a physical address, which could be used in a GIS program.

He went and submitted his idea to the camp manager, who liked it, but felt she couldn't take the risk to implement a brand new system. She reluctantly asked him to continue using the Excel sheet, out of precaution. "If I give you the Excel sheet, will you let me do what I want?" Hassune asked. She said yes.

Staff at UNHCR's Amman office had similar reservations. Although the idea was worthwhile, they said they didn't have the time or resources to make it happen. So Hassune enlisted the help of Shadi Mhethawi, a programmer at the Amman office who had shown enthusiasm about the project, and together they convinced their superiors to give them permission to build a program.

They spent a month working together, Hassune making regular trips to Amman so that he could vet every step. There was no room for errors, because the code couldn't be easily changed once the system would be up and running. "There is a rule in programming, it's 'garbage in, garbage out'" Hassune explains. "We made sure the program was well built, and we tested it. It was perfect."

On the day Azraq opened, field officer Nuria Fouz paid a visit to Hassune to see how the GIS-based system was performing. What she saw astounded her; to allocate shelters, staff just had to navigate through a map of the camp to see which shelters had already been allocated, which ones were available, and how many people were living inside. Later on, the program would show additional data, such as whether the shelter had been damaged, or if it was occupied



informally by another family. Staff only had to click on the desired shelter to allocate it, and the data would then feed directly into the ProGres file. What's more, it only took an impressive 20 seconds to find the right key among 10,000.

Nowadays, the shelter allocation team can easily process the 300 to 400 refugees who arrive at the camp each day, and Hassune says they once processed 1,600 newcomers in a single day without difficulty. "We're not the bottleneck anymore. My colleagues at the next step have had to tell me to slow down because we were processing too fast, and they didn't have enough space in their waiting area," he says with a laugh. The number of staff required to work on shelter allocation has been reduced from eleven to five.

Hassune is now working on bringing minor improvements to the program, while solving the myriad other challenges that arise at the camp each day. "From the moment I wake up in the morning, I want to be at the camp," he says. "This is not a routine job. Each day has new adventures, and I'm always trying to identify problems and find solutions for them."

Hassune's spirit of facing challenges head-on was one of the reasons he was chosen as part of UNHCR's Innovation Fellow cohort for 2016. During his Fellowship year, Hassune will define a challenge unique to his expertise, use human-centered design and prototyping principles, in addition to being connected to mentorship and funding to refine his innovative solutions.

# STAFF DEVELOPMENT: CAN YOU TEACH INNOVATION?

ANTHONY MORRIS, CHIEF LEARNING OFFICER

The humanitarian context is in a state of change. In recent years the pace of crises has accelerated, with new major emergencies now appearing on an annual basis. UNHCR is now often confronted with simultaneous complex emergencies affecting many hundreds of thousands of people, with refugees, IDPs and affected local populations vying for scarce resources. UNHCR is evolving and adapting to these situations, which is why innovation at an agency like ours is so important.

Staff have been innovating long before doing so had a label – being what I would call reflective practitioners; thinking about their actions so as to engage in a process of continuous learning with the view of refining their practices and performing better.

Nowadays UNHCR is increasingly doing this in a more systematic way by applying an innovation lens to our work on a range of issues from housing to energy to health and education to name a few.

In collaboration with the Innovation Unit, we at the Global Learning Center (GLC) are playing a part in this by helping staff to develop their innovation skills and foster a culture that supports them.

For example in 2015, for the second year running, the GLC collaborated with the Innovation Unit to bring some of our best catalysts of change together for an Innovation Fellowship.

Staff from all those countries where we work were invited to apply and 21 were selected for the year-long fellowship. This kicked off with a five-day workshop where we shared with them innovation tools including design thinking and change management. Back in their home operations, the Fellows conducted assessments that identified challenges that could benefit from the use of an innovation approach, hopefully leading to productive new ideas and solutions.

With some funding to test out their prototypes and ongoing support from the Innovation Unit and the GLC, these Fellows came up with and implemented some really exciting ideas.

Salina Khatoon, a Health Associate in Damak, Nepal, used the Innovation workshop's brainstorming sessions, focus group discussions and role-playing exercises to refine her idea to provide telemedicine services to refugee patients.

In Takoradi, Ghana, Senior Field Assistant Yusif Sidik used the UNHCR Ideas Platform to generate suggestions for creating a peer training program that allowed refugee families to build their own shelters out of local materials. He said that the human-centered design training he received during the Fellowship was so helpful in focusing on the needs of the end user that he replicated the exercise with refugees, who helped shape the eventual solution.



The Challenge delivered 37 unique ideas from which we selected a winner with a very practical solution: create podcasts that are easily accessed and listened to one at a time on areas that staff need to quickly know, like: *"What is international law and how does it work?"*

A series of podcasts are now in production. We anticipate they will be a great way to simplify complex information and get training out quickly to our staff and partners.

We continue to use an innovation lens exploring design solutions - particularly new technologies – to deliver training in creative new ways.

And Keiko Odashiro, a Community Services Officer in Bunj, South Sudan, was able to reflect on her management practices during a training seminar provided by the Innovation Unit where she realized the value of participatory engagement, prototyping and testing as part of an iterative process that puts beneficiaries at the center. She went on to design U-Spark Hub, a way for young refugees in Uganda to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to design and develop solutions to any life or community challenge they choose to tackle.

Khatoon, Sidik, Odashiro and the other Fellows are championing UNHCR's innovative approach. They are helping to build their colleagues' skills and contribute to a culture of innovation across the organization.

Recognizing the potential benefits that being open-minded to change can bring, the GLC is now applying this same innovation lens inward, and asking ourselves what we can do differently to make learning and training opportunities for UNHCR staff more responsive to their evolving needs.

In 2015, we asked the Innovation Unit to collaborate with us on finding new approaches to ensuring greater access for staff to our core learning programs.

We wanted a way to 'scale up' the numbers of participants while maintaining quality. The Innovation team suggested using social media to find some solutions; they conducted a seminar for our staff on how to leverage social media to bring in new ideas from across the organization, and an Innovation Challenge was born!

# The UNHCR Innovation Fellowship:

NURTURING THE SPIRIT OF INNOVATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING WITHIN UNHCR

In 2015 UNHCR's Global Learning Center and UNHCR Innovation teamed up yet again to train and mentor the 2015 Class of Innovation Fellows. UNHCR Innovation Fellows represent the diversity of nationalities, skill sets, and global reach of UNHCR's operations. During the year-long program, Fellows work on solving a challenge specific to their field operations around the world or at headquarters.



**ANTHONY TOULANY**

Senior Program Assistant  
Beirut, Lebanon

I am addressing the challenge of how we can enhance program analysis in UNHCR. I want to find a solution to this problem because better analysis is the beginning of a better plan. A better plan gives us the change to better serve vulnerable people.



**BOBBIE BAKER**

Shelter Officer  
Zahle, Lebanon

I am undertaking a detailed needs and feasibility study to understand how pressures on Lebanese infrastructure can be reduced through the local design and production of a bio-gas digester unit. I want to find a solution that will help reduce the strain on existing Lebanese waste management, and therefore reduce conflicts between host and refugee communities.



**CAROLINE KANANA MBUI**

Resettlement Expert  
N'Djamena, Chad

I'd like to establish more child-friendly environments for protection interviews. I want to find a solution to this challenge because we have a duty to protect refugee children and provide the right environment for them to recover from a difficult start in life and build their resilience.



**CONSTANZE QUOSH**

Senior Protection Officer  
Adjumani, Uganda

I am exploring community-based opportunities that help to secure, repair, and maintain solar street lights and solar mobile charging stations, which in turn contribute to improved safety and reduced incidents of SGBV. I want to address this challenge because a lot of SGBV happens during the dark at night since the settlements were in off-grid locations. The engagement of communities in local solutions is essential to make this effort effective and sustainable.



**DAVID GITHIRI NJOROGE**

WASH Officer  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

I am addressing the challenge of how we can improve the efficiency of biogas cookstoves so that refugees can cook diverse meals. I want to find a solution to this problem because an efficient biogas cookstove or burner will encourage families to use biogas.





**IOANNIS PAPACHRISTODOULOU**  
Senior IT Assistant  
Athens, Greece

I'm addressing the challenge of how we can provide better opportunities for refugees to learn and use a new language, both in school and in their daily lives. I want to find a solution to this challenge because language is an important tool from the moment a refugee arrives in a host country, and it's the stepping stone to proper integration within a host community.



**JESSICA GUT**  
Associate Program Officer  
Juba, South Sudan

I'm addressing the challenge of how we can find an effective way to enhance UNHCR staff's understanding of program concepts in order to improve collaboration between the Program and Protection units. I would like to find a solution to this challenge because I've seen first-hand the impact that misunderstandings and coordination issues between units can have on program delivery.



**KARAM HINDI**  
Information Management Associate  
Erbil, Iraq

I'd like to find a way to provide dynamic visualized information on humanitarian operations despite changes. I want to find a solution to this challenge because a dynamic visualization, instead of a static snapshot of the operational activities, would better inform evidence-based plans and solutions to all actors.



**KEIKO ODASHIRO**  
Community Services Officer  
Bunj, South Sudan

I aspire to design and develop approaches and models that help build capacity and creative confidence of refugees in solving various life and community challenges. This approach diminishes the potential of the very people we are delivering for in crafting and designing their own solutions to life and community challenges.



**MOHSEN ALAVIAN**  
Field Associate  
Kerman, Kerman, Islamic Republic of Iran

I plan to focus on identifying the ideal model for crowdfunding in UNHCR, and understanding the potential challenges for introducing this model to UNHCR. I want to focus on crowdfunding models because UNHCR is facing an all-time high in the number of persons of concern, and the need for funds is rapidly increasing.



**SALINA KHATOON**  
Health Associate  
Damak, Nepal

I am addressing the challenge of how we can strengthen the medical nighttime emergency services for refugees from Bhutan in Nepal. I want to find a solution to this challenge because healthcare must be a prioritized need for refugees, as it is for everyone.





**PINTU AGRAWAL**

Assistant Operations Data Management Officer  
Damak, Nepal

I'm addressing the challenge of how elderly refugees can better interact with relatives and friends who are far away. I want to find a solution to this problem because access to easy communication can strengthen support systems that have been put in place for elderly refugees by UNHCR's Protection Unit (Community Services Section), partner NGOs, Lutheran World Services, and TPO Nepal.



**RITA-FLORA KEYORKIAN**

Assistant Community Services Officer  
Beirut, Lebanon

I am addressing the challenge of how to foster positive perceptions of refugees among Lebanese communities. I want to foster workshops between Syrian refugees and Lebanese communities to help them come up with their own innovative ideas and address protection issues of common concern.



**SAM CHEUNG**

Senior Protection Officer  
Beirut, Lebanon

I'm addressing the challenge of how we can help refugees find the most affordable, yet adequate, low-cost housing. I want to find a solution to this challenge because one of the most immediate needs for refugees is housing or shelter.



**YUSIF SIDIK**

Senior Field Assistant  
Takoradi, Ghana

I'm addressing the challenge of how we can empower refugee communities to create more durable housing in camps. I want to find a solution to this challenge because emergency tents provide little protection against theft and harsh weather conditions.



## Case Study:

# ZAMBIA

## THE UNHCR INNOVATION FELLOWSHIP

Call for applications,  
Class of 2017



The Global Learning Center and UNHCR Innovation are looking for members of UNHCR staff/affiliate workforce to join the Innovation Fellowship Class of 2017.

Are you creative and passionate about finding new ways to solve persistent operational challenges? Would you like to learn and understand concepts such as 'user-centered design' and 'prototyping'? Do you have the commitment it takes to apply these approaches to your daily work? Consider applying to the UNHCR Innovation Fellowship, Class of 2017.

Each year the Global Learning Center, in partnership with UNHCR Innovation, selects 20-30 UNHCR staff members and affiliates to participate in a year-long training program through a competitive application process. Throughout the Fellowship year, Innovation Fellows are given the support and training to develop their skills and explore the innovation methodology within their operations. They define a challenge

unique to their operation, and, while applying user-centered design and prototyping principles, they are connected to support and funding for refining their innovative solutions.

The Innovation Fellowship is awarded to UNHCR staff/affiliate workforce of all roles, functions, and geographical locations based on their innovative spirit, creativity, and desire and determination to solve challenges facing the organization in its service of persons of concern.

We will launch the call for applications for UNHCR's Innovation Fellowship 2017 by UNHCR Broadcast email in September, so stay tuned.

Should you have any questions, please send your inquiries to the Innovation Unit at [innovation@unhcr.org](mailto:innovation@unhcr.org).  
For more information on the Innovation Fellowship, kindly visit: [innovation.unhcr.org/fellowship](http://innovation.unhcr.org/fellowship)



If war had not come to Johnny D.'s Angolan village, maybe he would still be selling books with his wife and ten children. But war did come, in 2006, and there was no time to grab any possessions. They just ran.

Johnny says had he stayed, he would be dead. Armed men came after him, beating him and nearly breaking his legs. They killed several of his family members. Johnny and his family fled on foot and embarked on a four-month journey. Hunger and exhaustion plagued them constantly.

Almost ten years later, Johnny is grateful to have a safe place to live in a Zambian settlement called Mayukwayukwa for a simple reason; "There is no war, or killing each other," he says. Even though nearly a decade has passed, he says that he cannot go back. Nor does he want to: Zambia has become home.

UNHCR and the Zambian government know that. They're working along with implementing partners to integrate refugees like Johnny into the local community, and create a permanent solution. And as part of the effort, organizations such as Caritas Czech Republic and Engineers Without Borders Australia (EWB) are offering training in livelihoods selected by the community as especially promising, and speedy to start.

"Creating livelihoods opportunities allows people to become self-reliant and to be able to provide for their families," says Jenny Turner, EWB's Director of Education and Research. "It is essential for refugees in the local integration program to be able to establish themselves in Zambia apart from the protection of UNHCR in the refugee settlements."



## The promise of integration

Mayukwayukwa has been a haven for refugees since 1966. Nearly indistinguishable from the Zambian villages that surround it, the settlement is now home to Angolans, Congolese, Rwandese, and Burundese, many of whom were born there and have lived in Mayukwayukwa their whole lives.

The Government of Zambia is willing to settle refugees here permanently; In fact, it approved a local integration bill in June 2015 that, once enacted, will integrate up to 10,000 Angolans. More than 5,400 have already applied and been screened.

To help both refugees and locals integrate and prosper, the Zambian government are gifting five hectares (about 12 and a half acres) of land apiece to a group of refugees and native Zambians who'll be starting a new community in Mayukwayukwa together.

The plan is idealistic but not idyllic. A lack of basic infrastructure like plumbing and electricity means the group of new landowners will be starting from scratch. For integration to work, the group must be able to produce enough food for their families, and earn enough money to stay afloat.

## Picking and drying the low-hanging fruit

To help them begin, UNHCR, Caritas, and EWB are training interested community members in income-generating "Quick Impact Projects" they identified themselves.

"Learning to identify, develop, design, and test their own solutions goes a long way to developing a strong self-sustainable community," Turner says. "It assists in removing the dependence on aid organizations, as they no longer need to wait for a solution – which may or may not be appropriate to their context – to be provided for them."

Instead, says Turner, quick impact projects coupled with some training allow refugees to create tailor-made solutions on their own.

To ensure both refugees and Zambians benefitted from the projects, workshop participants were first introduced to the idea of human-centered design – a concept that helped them keep each other in mind as they came up with prototypes.

"Participants in the workshops learned the human centered design process and how this could be applied to new ventures such as solar fruit drying," says Turner. "There was a lot of excitement when they realized that they were the ones generating their own ideas for their future."

One such project is showing residents how to make use of the area's literal low-hanging fruit to turn a profit. Community members like Benny Mweemba are making plans to dry slices of the area's prolific mangoes for sale in local markets or Lusaka, Zambia's capital.

Mweemba came with his mother and grandmother to Mayukwayukwa two years ago, when deforestation and a lack of rain finally made his farmland too unproductive to earn a living.

Mweemba is ambitious – an ideas man. It's obvious from the various plans he has for raising the start-up capital he'll need to go into business as a plumber and sheet metal construction worker. He has the training but not enough money to go out on his own, something he is working hard to rectify by farming chili peppers for sale in the Zambian capital, Lusaka.

After attending the EWB workshop on human centered design, he's realizing another opportunity right underfoot.

"People from Mayukwayukwa, they have a lot of mango trees here but they are just wasting here," Mweemba says.

In fact, the majority of Mayukwayukwa's large mango harvest is lost without a way to process or preserve it. Drying them using a simple, do-it-yourself style solar fruit dryer could provide a food source for times of scarcity.

Mweemba says hopefully by next year he'll not just be in dried mango production, but will know enough to teach others here and back home.

"When I learn how to dry some mangoes, I will be drying mangoes so that...I can be selling, so that people and the community will benefit from me."

Grace Mukatimui Lubinda also learned how to process and dehydrate mangoes. She says the three-day workshop gave her a practical way to help her earn a better living for her family of five, and something to contribute to the community.

"These three days I have learned how you can manage to do something that you can achieve, knowing everything that you do can give you something," she says. "I can even teach others what I have learned."

Through other training courses, industrious hopefuls like Mweemba and Lubinda may soon venture into new roles as beekeepers and tailors – two other professional skill sets community members expressed interest in learning.

And their enthusiasm to learn continued after the workshops ended. According to Turner, the participants worked with Caritas to prototype the solar fruit dryers, which are now up and running. And beehives refugees constructed using both traditional and modern techniques and materials are starting to hum with the promises of profit.

## Rising to the challenge

Residents of Mayukwayukwa will reap the benefits of their own projects over the next years. But they're not the only ones working on coming up with good ideas.

UNHCR and EWB are pitting 10,000 university students from Australia and New Zealand against each other in the EWB Challenge, a competition to develop and prototype solutions to refugee problems from waste management to climate change in Mayukwayukwa.

The good practices learned in Mayukwayukwa and the innovative technologies helping the new integrated community may also be transplanted in Zambia's other refugee settlement area of Meheba.

In a few years, people in both settlements could be up-cycling car parts and old bottles into useful household goods, or employing conservation agriculture techniques that will make unpredictable rains less of a roller coaster. Maybe they'll be turning those mangoes into jars of preserves.

The only limit is the creativity of challenge participants, refugees and Zambians hoping to contribute to a new start for everyone.

# THE READER IS YOUR USER: DO'S AND DON'TS FOR ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY

BY CORINNE GRAY,  
INNOVATION ENGAGEMENT OFFICER

‘Engagement’ can be a bit difficult to understand as a description for one of the five pillars of the Innovation Unit. Is it communications? Is it public relations? And, what does it have to do with Innovation? These are all good questions, certainly. And while there are many dictionary definitions for “engagement”, the one that most relevantly applies here is “establishing *meaningful* contact and connection with people and communities.” In short, engagement at its core builds relationships and connections that are meaningful. Distinct from corporate-level communications or public relations, the Engagement Pillar performs the function of engaging communities inside of UNHCR around the theme of innovation.

Think of the process of building a relationship of any kind. Meaningful connections don't happen overnight; they require continuous effort. They require give-and-take and two-way communication. And, they require listening as much as talking. If you've ever met someone who only talks about him-/herself, you may be less likely to continue to invest in that relationship.

Interestingly though, while many of us can agree that a one-sided relationship isn't necessarily the most fulfilling experience, as community managers we sometimes commit some of these blunders when engaging our communities around the specific themes of our Units/Sections etc.

It's important to note that these so-called blunders may not apply to all communicators. Communications is a broad field that takes many approaches depending on the core function. However, for those of us working to build and engage internal communities around specific themes, here are some do's and don'ts that we've learned along the way.

## 1. Don't only communicate when something happens.

This is a familiar cycle: first, a significant event or achievement occurs, and then we communicate about it. It's absolutely essential to let our communities know about our important, life-saving work. And, it's certainly important to communicate around key milestones. However, if we only talk to our audiences when there is something to report, we risk creating a one-sided relationship, and ultimately losing their continued interest.

## Do create a persistent 'beat'.

There are significant milestones and achievements that need to be shared. But in those in-between moments, when there may be nothing critical to report on, don't be silent. Continue to engage your community, and continually talk to them by sharing interesting, meaningful content (either online or offline). Create a steady line of engagement, rather than sporadic peaks and troughs. It's worth mentioning, though, that beat is different from noise. Focus on creating meaningful two-way experiences to avoid the risk of talking to people, instead of talking *with* them.

## 2. Don't only talk about yourself.

It's difficult to create a meaningful connection with someone who only talks about him-/herself. Some of our most satisfying relationships are built around common interests and the lively conversations we have about them. If we only talk to our audiences about what we've done or achieved, we risk creating an echo chamber, not a community.

## Do start conversations around important themes.

Back to the concept of creating a persistent beat, in those in-between moments when there are no achievements to share, start conversations with your community around themes and topics that are related to your work. This shows your community that you are interested in truly engaging with them, and that they are not just another outlet for you to broadcast messages to.

## 3. Don't neglect to explore the various channels and styles that your audiences might prefer.

Engagement is a symbiotic relationship: a story cannot be told without a listener. You write a story with the expectation that someone will read it. You create a video with the hope that someone will watch it. Like the innovation process, if you don't keep your users (in this case, *readers*) in mind while creating

and sharing your story, you risk creating a wonderful archive of un-read and un-watched content (and not getting a return on the investment you made in creating it). Don't treat your community as a homogenous group. Explore the different channel and style preferences among your audience, and create different types of content to suit. While the world has very rapidly gone digital, engagement also encompasses a range of offline, in-person activities and events.

## Do think of ways to add value to existing content for your audiences.

Sometimes the 50-page report is necessary. But, think of ways you can repurpose or repackage that report. Try pulling out the data and creating an infographic to share with your Facebook audience. Or, try creating smaller stories, blogposts, op-eds etc. around the content of the report and sharing in different ways. This could be a Facebook live discussion or a community workshop on a central theme in the report. When the Office of the Controller wanted to engage colleagues on fraud prevention, they launched a Challenge on UNHCR Ideas – UNHCR's crowd-sourced ideas platform (you can read about the results of their Challenge in the next article). There are many tools/ platforms/ channels out there. Don't be afraid to try new things, and remember to measure the results so that you know what works with your audiences and what doesn't.



These do's and don'ts surely aren't prescriptive, as there are many ways to engage communities. In 2015, the Engagement Pillar shifted its focus to internal engagement. That means, we prioritized finding ways to engage colleagues on the theme of innovation. We've tested and tried different approaches and we are always evaluating the ones that work and the ones that don't. We remain committed to building and engaging communities of colleagues around the theme of innovation. In the following pages you'll see the results of our testing different ways to engage.



# Need ideas?

The crowd can help.

## UNHCR Ideas: UNHCR's very own crowd-sourced ideas platform

In our daily work at UNHCR, some challenges are complex and hard to solve alone. Others require new thinking or simply a different approach. This is where the power of the crowd can help.

With UNHCR Ideas any team can post a Challenge and source ideas for new solutions from the online crowd of colleagues, partners, and Persons of Concern. Teams even have the option to source ideas from the general public by launching an 'open' Challenge.

Since its launch in 2013 UNHCR Ideas has crowd-sourced 1,155 ideas to 12 challenges around UNHCR. And, Divisions and teams

agency-wide have relied on the platform's 20,790 users to find new solutions.

If your team (be it a Division, Bureau, Section, Unit, etc.) wants to find ideas for new solutions, consider launching your very own Challenge on UNHCR Ideas. To date, 9 new solutions have been implemented across the agency thanks to the platform.

Get in touch if you'd like to learn more; we're here to help. Write to us at [innovation@unhcr.org](mailto:innovation@unhcr.org). Visit [unhcrideas.org](http://unhcrideas.org).

### UNHCR Ideas at a glance

**12**  
challenges launched since 2013

**1,155**  
ideas added to the platform

**9**  
ideas implemented in UNHCR operations

**9,659**  
comments on ideas

**144**  
countries represented on the platform

**20,790**  
unique users

# DFAM Challenge: 5 lessons learned from running an open innovation challenge

The Office of the Controller at the UN Refugee Agency has major plans for 2016. It intends to release a detailed anti-fraud manual and an e-learning module on fraud prevention that will be used for the mandatory training of all UNHCR staff this year.

LINDA RYAN, CONTROLLER AND DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT

**B**oth documents will take into account insights from a survey among UNHCR staff members about fraud and corruption.

To ensure everyone can participate, the Controller's Office tapped into UNHCR's idea-management platform that is managed by UNHCR Innovation.

Every organization is vulnerable to fraud, and the environment in which UNHCR operates, given the dependencies on third parties and the delivery of projects through implementing partners in remote and often unstable areas, makes us exposed to higher risks of fraud.

UNHCR knows it has to be alert to fraud risks. There is a difficulty in identifying the problems and gaps in fraud prevention across the humanitarian sector in general.

## Fighting fraud

The anti-fraud campaign, officially known as the Fraud Prevention Project, takes guidance from the Strategic Framework for the Prevention of Fraud and Corruption. Issued in 2013, the framework aims to raise awareness about fraud and corruption risks, provides concrete and practical advice to the staff on how to identify cases of misconduct, and highlights preventive measures.

Fraud, as per the strategic framework, covers acts or oversights committed to benefit oneself or others. Corruption, meanwhile, involves directly or indirectly offering, giving, gaining or soliciting favors to improperly influence the actions of others.

## Innovating to prevent fraud

An open feedback survey ran in November 2015 through UNHCR Ideas, UNHCR's idea-management platform.

The open innovation platform is designed to bring together stakeholders from a wide variety of locations and backgrounds to share their thoughts, concerns and ideas to solve common challenges facing refugees.

It crowdsources knowledge and creates communities of practice based on the needs of UNHCR and its partners, allowing the agency to create a more enabling environment for humanitarian workers around the world.

Since it launched in 2013, UNHCR Ideas has launched eight crowdsourcing Challenges and has begun exploring building communities of practice for colleagues to share knowledge and best practices.

The ultimate goal of UNHCR Ideas is to empower and nurture the innovation process within UNHCR operations, while engaging refugee communities directly in driving the solutions that impact them.

As part of the process, UNHCR Innovation and the Controller's Office crafted questions and presented them to members of the agency's fraud prevention working group, who served as moderators of the online exercise. The multi-functional working group is composed of experts from the field and headquarters including the Inspector General's Office, an independent internal body charged with conducting inspections and investigation in operations. Given the online open format, several refugees were able to contribute their thoughts as well.

## Strengthening efforts

All entries and innovative solutions that were presented are being fed into the Fraud Prevention Project including an upcoming anti-fraud handbook and a mandatory e-learning course on fraud and corruption.

Beyond engaging staff, the Controller's Office is in constant communication with UNHCR's Ethics Office to reinforce its anti-fraud drive. The latter conducts an annual, mandatory refresher course on the code of conduct, which focuses on a new topic each year. This year's spotlight is on fraud and corruption. The Office of the Controller is also exploring with Ethics Office ways to organize a Fraud Prevention Week for UNHCR – an idea that was submitted by one of the Challenge participants.

Here are 5 lessons learned from running an open innovation Challenge from UNHCR's Controller's Office.

### 1. Collaboration is key for a successful innovation challenge

While the Fraud Prevention Challenge was a joint initiative of UNHCR's Controller's Office and UNHCR Innovation, we also worked to include colleagues from the Fraud Prevention Working Group in addition to the Inspector General's Office. These colleagues served as moderators and experts and were actively engaged in setting up and framing the Challenge. Collaborating with these multi-functional humanitarian experts from the field and headquarters allowed for real insights and important conversations about how we could better prevent fraud.

### 2. Engaging an external audience is important for an inclusive process

We decided to launch this Challenge as a public forum where not only UNHCR staff and affiliates could contribute, but humanitarians and people from all over the world. Through opening up the challenge process we were able to identify gaps that otherwise may not have been recognized if we had kept the Challenge only internal. Additionally, we were able to gather the voices of a number of refugees highlighting the importance of keeping this process as inclusive and open as possible.

### 3. Open innovation models can be used for more than just generating great ideas

UNHCR's Controller's Office utilized the UNHCR Ideas platform in a new and innovative way. While one aspect of the Challenge was to crowd-source new ideas on fraud prevention, we wanted to include all voices and feedback into our upcoming anti-fraud handbook and e-learning course. The UNHCR Ideas platform enabled us to directly ask our audience questions that could feed into these upcoming projects and address concerns of UNHCR staff and affiliates in the field.

### 4. The innovation process can help us do our work better

Running an open innovation Challenge was a way for UNHCR's Controller's Office to directly ask colleagues in the field, "How can we better prevent fraud?" We identified a challenge and were interested in using this process as one way to ensure our anti-fraud handbook and e-learning course addressed the real needs of UNHCR colleagues.

### 5. It's important to engage other units and offices throughout UNHCR

Through engaging UNHCR's Innovation Unit we were able to learn more about the innovative work UNHCR is doing in addition to sharing our work on Fraud Prevention with new colleagues. We were able to learn a lot about each others work through this initiative and possible synergies for us to collaborate again in the future.





Stay ahead of the humanitarian curve: learn about cash-based interventions

Join the movement; don't be left behind. Search for the Introduction to Cash-Based Interventions e-learning on:

[learn.unhcr.org](http://learn.unhcr.org).

Still curious about CBIs after you have done the e-learning?

Contact us at [hqcash@unhcr.org](mailto:hqcash@unhcr.org).

In-kind assistance has previously dominated the humanitarian sector, but there is a shift in the way assistance is being provided. The use of cash-based interventions (CBIs) is on the rise.

Where markets are functioning, and where cash or vouchers can be provided in a safe manner, CBIs can allow refugees to prioritize their own needs. They help restore dignity and facilitate the return to a productive life.

To continue to be effective in providing assistance, and to remain relevant, UNHCR must develop agency-wide expertise in CBIs. But what is a CBI? The Introduction to

Cash-Based Interventions e-learning offers all staff and partners the opportunity to answer this question and learn the basics of CBIs in a fun, interactive way. Follow Emilie Diallo as she takes you through a CBI journey, introducing you to the fundamentals of assessing if a CBI is appropriate, to implementing and monitoring a CBI.

UNHCR is gradually shifting towards the increased use of CBIs, building capacity and knowledge to be able to choose the best way to deliver assistance and provide services in every situation. The humanitarian community is adapting its systems and processes to make sure CBIs can be implemented as effectively and efficiently as in-kind.

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# #BUZZWORTHY

Innovation thrives when there is open dialogue, and so UNHCR Innovation's Engagement Pillar uses various tools and channels to drive conversations about innovation both inside and outside UNHCR.

So, what are people talking about online? Here are the top 5 online conversations about humanitarian innovation in 2015.

- We need to develop better models and systems to scale innovation
- Structural and organizational change is needed if humanitarian organizations want to embrace new ideas
- You don't need an app for that: innovation is not synonymous with technology
- Crowd-source real-time information, visualize this data, and share your data
- Leveraging design thinking and human-centered design in humanitarian action

[innovation.unhcr.org](http://innovation.unhcr.org), UNHCR's own subdomain for innovation

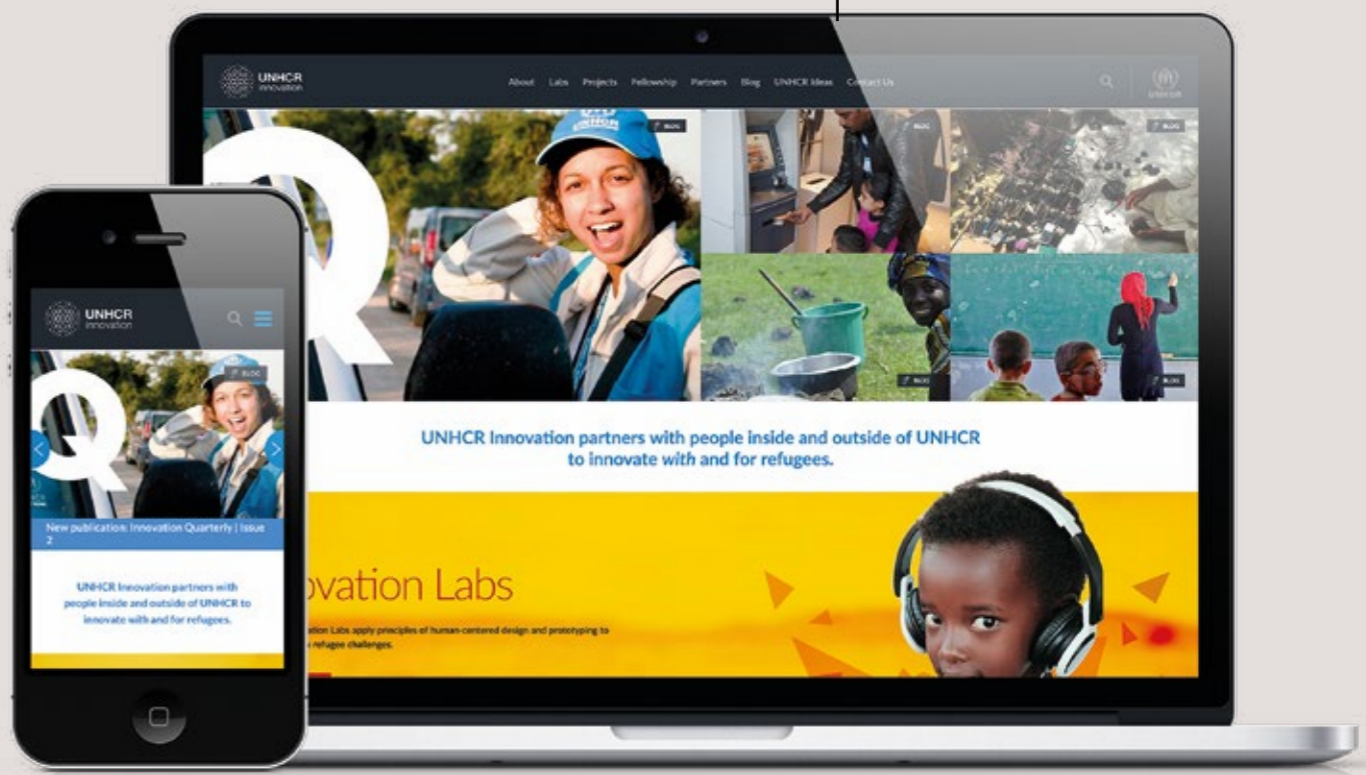
**662% more website visits**

**621% more page views**

**124,000 unique page views**

**A brand new look in 2015!**

**Event:** The Humanitarian Innovation Jam held at Georgetown University in January 2015. 100 humanitarians engaged with one another on common challenges in innovation over 2 days.



# Audience Growth

Twitter: [@UNHCRinnovation](https://twitter.com/UNHCRinnovation)

244% more Twitter followers

98+ million potential impressions, 2551 tweets, 9818 retweets, 5629 favorites, 7.6+k new followers, 5211 mentions

3817% more link clicks

Size of community: 10k followers

Most popular tweet:



Facebook: [www.facebook.com/UNHCRInnovation](https://www.facebook.com/UNHCRInnovation)

167% more Facebook followers

Size of community:  
58k Facebook followers

Most popular post:



## EMERGENCY HANDBOOK 4TH EDITION FIRST EVER DIGITAL VERSION

Download now on Google Play or Apple App Store

In July 2015, UNHCR launched the 4th Edition of the Emergency Handbook (EHB). First published in 1982, the EHB is widely known among humanitarian workers at UNHCR, UN agencies, NGOs, partners and other stakeholders.

In an increasingly complex humanitarian environment and coordination landscape, UNHCR policies procedures have evolved to ensure timely and effective response in emergency situations. Using technological developments, the EHB provides quick access to guidelines, policies, good practices, as well as management and administrative procedures.

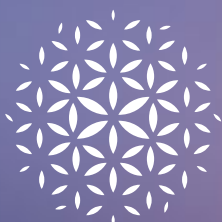
Response in urban and rural settings, new approaches to ensure access to basic needs and services including through cash-based interventions, community-based protection and Age, Gender and Diversity are an integral part of emergency response. It is essential that emergency responders have easy, mobile access to relevant and up-to-date guidance.

The 4th Edition of the EHB is digitalised for the first time and is accessible via a website ([emergency.unhcr.org](http://emergency.unhcr.org)). Users can create an account on the website and access it by browsing the menu, or by using the search engine. An inter-active "ideas forum" permits users to collaborate and share information. Those who wish to correspond or inquire about the EHB, may contact the Emergency Services.

[hqemhand@unhcr.org](mailto:hqemhand@unhcr.org), or through the "feedback" button on the website.

The EHB is available as a mobile App (for phones and tablets) and can be downloaded from the App Store and Google Play. The mobile App and USB stick versions can be accessed offline. Its contents are automatically updated when "synchronized" online. The EHB will also be available in French and Arabic in the near future.

The EHB was made possible with the contribution of many UNHCR colleagues on their expertise; the outstanding technical support of [emergency.lu](http://emergency.lu) and the invaluable support of Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



**UNHCR**  
innovation

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