

Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) in Refugee Situations: Priorities for Camp Management

A UNHCR - Save the Children Initiative

Rationale for IYCF and Camp Management Integration

Most children do not die due to conflicts or natural disasters themselves, but rather to resulting food shortages, lack of safe water, inadequate health care, inferior shelter and poor sanitation and hygiene.

To ensure that most children are protected and provided with vital services, optimal IYCF practices must be in place through comprehensive and appropriate integration of IYCF with the Camp Management Sector. Protecting, promoting and supporting optimal IYCF practices not only saves lives, but also ensures that the living standards of refugees are upheld and that their human rights are protected. Good coordination of services, identification of needs and gaps in assistance, avoidance in duplication, enhancement of women's participation, and ensuring that humanitarian standards are applied and human rights are protected helps meet many of the same goals that are integral to IYCF.

Camp Management and IYCF can specifically interact by **building effective partnerships** with a diversity of stakeholders. It is crucial to work together to **facilitate and coordinate understanding** of the importance of IYCF implementation among the sectors and the community. One way this can be done is by advocating for sector integration for the holistic needs of children 0-23 months and camp populations in general.



The mother and baby in the Framework infographic (above) are the principle focus. They are supported by the community they live in, which closely affects IYCF practices. The circle around them represents high level actions to consider such as advocacy, resource mobilization, and adherence to policies and guidelines. A coordinated effort between **all sectors** and IYCF ensures protection of rights of children up to 2 years and pregnant and lactating women (PLW). Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) ensure quality.

Who should use it?

- UNHCR and Partners (including other UN Agencies)
- National and International Staff
- Senior Management
- Program Managers
- Technical Advisors
- Field Staff
- IYCF Specialists & Non Specialists
- Local and National authorities

Where should it be used?

The Framework applies to **all refugee operations** including the initial phase of an emergency as well as protracted/chronic crises. With minimal adaptation, it would also be applicable in settings outside of camps, including refugees living in host communities, in urban areas and rural settings, and for host communities themselves.

Common Strategic Objectives

- Ensure coordination of interventions targeting PLW and infants and young children;
- Ensure community members representing mothers and caregivers of infants and young children are involved at all stages of a refugee response;
- Uphold living standards for displaced PLW and children 0-23 months and ensure their human rights are protected while searching for a durable solution.

Key Integrated Activities

- IYCF staff to participate in camp management working groups to **raise awareness** of IYCF and ensure the special needs of PLW, infants and young children are considered;
- **Organise orientation sessions** on IYCF for camp management and other relevant staff, and provide a list of key IYCF information;
- In collaboration with IYCF actors, **identify IYCF champions** in different strategic coordination mechanisms to ensure IYCF is taken into consideration in decision making processes;
- **Advocate for disaggregated data** and ensure PLW, and children under 2 years are accurately recorded in data management systems;
- Advocate for sector integration for the **holistic needs of children 0-23 months** and camp populations in general;
- Encourage sectors to **conduct joint mapping** of available services relevant for PLW, infants and young children;
- **Collaborate in designing vulnerability criteria** for prioritization of assistance: consider vulnerabilities of female headed-households, infants and young children, non-breastfed infants etc.;
- Camp management can **act as a “connector”** for IYCF actors to engage with key networks (i.e. community leaders, relevant agencies, community groups);
- Camp management to support and facilitate data collection to **monitor the use of this Framework**.



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Overarching Opportunities for Collaboration

- Ensure **management of breastmilk substitutes (BMS) is according to The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes**, and is reflected in all aspects of camp management including Joint Statement;
- Allocate **sufficient space for IYCF activities** (baby-friendly spaces, breastfeeding corners, etc.) and ensure maintenance and appropriate services are in collaboration with site planning;
- Ensure **Non-Food Item (NFI) distribution mechanisms reflect the needs/circumstances** of PLW and caregivers of children 0-23 months.

For more information on the Framework, please go to: www.unhcr.org/uk/nutrition-and-food-security.html