UNHCR DECENTRALISED LIVELIHOOD EVALUATIONS SYNTHESIS REPORT (2019)

Based on five country studies: Djibouti, Malaysia, Mauritania, Senegal and South Sudan

Key findings and conclusions

Livelihood activities provide important protection and psychosocial benefits, but the activities were generally small in scale and had limited impact on PoC livelihood outcomes and income.

UNHCR is, in some cases, missing opportunities to advocate for funding and for PoC access to services, which would have a bigger impact than small-scale livelihood programming.

With the transition to implement the 2019-2023 Concept Note and the forthcoming strategy on livelihoods and economic inclusion (LEI), key livelihood staff are still needed in strategic roles in operations, as is enhanced monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity.

UNHCR is highly knowledgeable and well-regarded in its understanding of PoC needs and is well-suited to advocate and build capacity among partners around PoC rights and economic inclusion.

UNHCR should continue to shift to a facilitation and advocacy role, mainstreaming the concepts of the new LEI strategy and removing administrative hindrances to its rollout, and strategically reassess the global livelihood portfolio and UNHCR's livelihood programming and partnerships based on context. This report describes these and other steps to enable this transition.

Evaluation Purpose

This report provides a synthesis of findings from the 2019 livelihood programme evaluations conducted in five countries—**Djibouti, Malaysia, Mauritania, Senegal and South Sudan**—and builds on findings from the 2018 Evaluation of UNHCR's Livelihoods Strategies and Approaches.[i]

UNHCR commissioned this multi-country livelihood evaluation to achieve two purposes:

(1) to contribute evidence to inform UNHCR's global strategy development and its implementation in the selected country operations (CO), and

(2) to provide recommendations that will lead to enhanced economic inclusion of persons of concern (PoC) to UNHCR globally, by assisting the organisation to develop further guidance on the approach to refugee livelihoods, self-reliance, and economic inclusion.

The primary audiences are UNHCR CO, regional bureau (RB) and stakeholders in Geneva headquarters (HQ), including the Division of Resilience and Solutions (DRS), Division of International Protection (DIP), and the Division of Strategic Planning and Results (DSPR).

Background

UNHCR is working toward a forthcoming global LEI strategy, which will be further aligned with the principles of the Global Compact on Refugees, Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), and the New Way of Working of the Grand Bargain. In advance of the strategy, the Refugee Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion: 2019-2023 Global Strategy Concept Note[ii] was released to all UNHCR staff, to replace the previous operational guidance. The Concept Note states that UNHCR shall:

- Engage in advocacy to enhance the enabling environment such that refugees have legal and de facto access to decent work.
- Partner with and convene expert entities to facilitate inclusion of refugees into existing programmes/ services.
- Implement interventions as a last choice to fill a gap in service.

Evaluation design

The evaluation was designed to answer two overarching key evaluation questions (KEQ). Sub-questions were tailored to the context of each country (see country evaluations for further detail).[iii] The summarised KEQ include:

KEQ 1: What changes/results for targeted PoC have emerged from UNHCR-funded livelihoods interventions? What factors contribute to results?

KEQ 2: How can UNHCR better position its approach vis-à-vis other stakeholders, and what are opportunities for sustainability and phasing out of direct implementation (i.e., to align with the Concept Note's guidance to implement as "last choice")?

Results were also assessed against a resilience framework (see Box 1 below) and importantly, their alignment to the global objectives of the new LEI strategy (described in the country-level reports along with country-specific recommendations[iv]).

Recommendations for HQ divisions and the RB to support country operations through this transition process of aligning with the new strategy are integrated throughout this synthesis report.

Methodology

This evaluation series used a mixed-methods approach (see Figure 1).
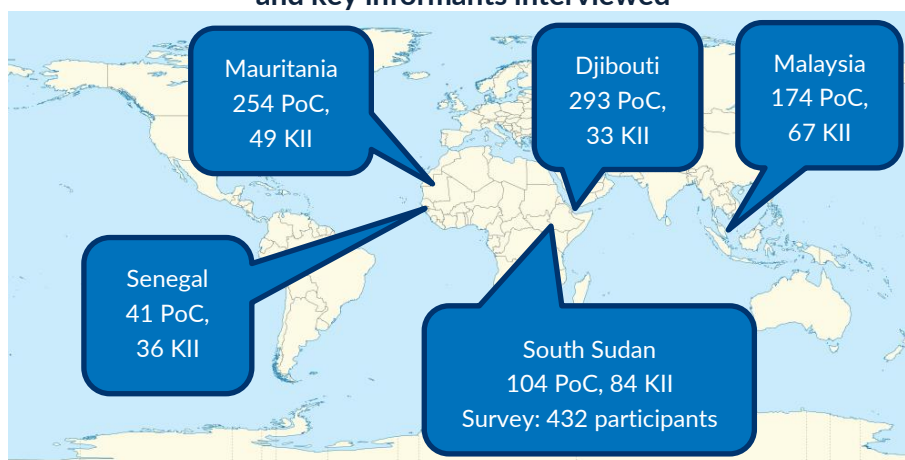
Qualitative research:

- Primary data collected through 269 stakeholder and partner key informant interviews (KII), and individual and/or focus group discussions (FGD) with 866 PoC beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries (396 men, 470 women) across the five countries
- Desk review of over 300 programme documents

Quantitative research:

- Programme participant survey conducted in South Sudan refugee camps (n=432), as requested by the CO

Figure 1: Map of 2019 country-level evaluations and number of PoC and key informants interviewed

Mauritania 254 PoC, 49 KII

Djibouti 293 PoC, 33 KII

Malaysia 174 PoC, 67 KII

Senegal 41 PoC, 36 KII

South Sudan 104 PoC, 84 KII Survey: 432 participants

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Overall results from current approaches

UNHCR has funded implementation of diverse interventions categorised as livelihoods, including the following examples that demonstrate this variety:

- o employment counselling and bank account facilitation for individuals, emergency financial assistance through short-term cash transfers (Malaysia);
- o on-the-job training for youth, scholarships for youth to attend university in urban areas, financial literacy training (Mauritania);
- o start-up business grants targeting refugees and community members, job placement assistance to help children of long-term refugees become job ready (Senegal);
- o vocational training with private sector partners, engagement with CRRF coordination mechanisms (Djibouti);
- o trainings on entrepreneurship and agricultural production, start-up inputs, and establishing village savings and loan associations (South Sudan).

Livelihood activities provide important benefits, including improved social capital (i.e., relationships between PoC and between PoC and host communities), reduced negative coping mechanisms (e.g., reducing meals; early marriage; other protection risks), and in some cases, supplementary income and improved food security. Yet, the livelihoods activities provided limited impacts on income or economic inclusion for participants, according to interviews and programme documents across four of the five countries. The South Sudan data, however, suggest that activities implemented near scale, and with cross-sector and integrated intervention packages, can indeed improve PoC livelihood outcomes even in fragile settings.[1]

Overall conclusion: UNHCR needs to shift away from small-scale livelihood programming with limited livelihood impacts toward an advocacy/facilitator role in many contexts, to re-assess the livelihood portfolio globally based on enabling environments (as described in the next section), and to continue mainstreaming the Concept Note and new global strategy within operations. These conclusions are addressed in this report.

Strategic assessment of context and the enabling environment

CONTEXT TYPOLOGY TOOL

UNHCR works in diverse operating contexts and enabling environments. The enabling environment for PoC—comprised of the rules, regulations, conditions, and systems that are in place to help people to live and work peacefully and productively—enables PoC to meet their basic needs, a prerequisite for building resilience. The enabling environment for PoC also includes access to health services, education, and safety, and may differ for PoC versus nationals. The extent to which the enabling environment is functioning for PoC is a key

> The extent to which the enabling environment for PoC is functioning is a key factor for planning country LEI strategies.

factor to consider when planning country-level livelihood and economic inclusion (LEI) strategies. If basic needs are not met, and larger systems (e.g., markets, financial, policies) are not functioning, livelihood programming will likely have little or no impact on PoC well-being.

Key finding: To strategically target limited funding for maximum impact, a more nuanced view of livelihood programming scenarios is needed that considers a country's enabling environment.

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[1]Note on limitations: The evaluation design does not allow for actual measures of impact attributed to programme participation, and the findings are not generalisable to the entire PoC population of the country.

Table 1 presents a context typology tool with two main variables: the political and economic contexts. Political context refers to overall government stability and national policies related to PoC (e.g., freedom of movement, right to work), while economic context refers to factors such as income, assets, and employment opportunities, and rates of poverty. In this table, the political context is on the vertical axis, with the least favourable political context at the bottom row and most favourable context at the top. Economic context is on the horizontal axis, with the poorest economic context on the left, progressing to the best scenario on the right.

Table 1: Context typology tool for UNHCR livelihood operations

POLITICAL CONTEXT (Best ↑)		
Excellent political support (CRRF), but difficult for government to justify financial support to refugees with high poverty: Work to bring in development actors and donor investment to build government capacity and strengthen government systems to include PoC; i.e., strong systems-level M&E is needed. Staff and management profile should reflect strategic/policy needs.	**Good political support with some economic opportunities:** Work with government to link PoC to labour market gaps and basic services. Match PoC skills with existing industry or development projects. Implement joint projects as strategic pilots with partners who can take the project to scale.	**Best enabling environment:** Facilitate system-level change and coordination, working with operational partners to build capacity and achieve scale. There is little or no programming by UNHCR. Staff and management profiles should reflect the advising role.
Some government receptivity but political obstacles (e.g., labour laws) and very limited economic opportunities: Focus on protection via foundational livelihood activities such as building natural capital, social capital, and informal safety nets (e.g., savings groups). Strengthen partnerships with other organisations for enhanced advocacy and coordination.	**Moderate (and increasing) political support with some economic opportunity:** Work with government to expand refugee rights and access to services; focus on developing operational partners who can expand livelihood activities to PoC and host communities.	**Some political support but changing political context; strong economy:** Continue working with partners and private sector to advocate for full rights for PoC, including freedom of movement and access to land, financial services, and work in all sectors.
Least favourable enabling environment with very weak government and aid-dependent economy: Focus on providing adequate protection and safety nets and advocating for PoC rights and development investments. Livelihood programming is needed in the absence of other actors but may not be sustainable with high insecurity and limited infrastructure.	**Poor/fluctuating political support with only informal sector economic opportunities:** Work with partners to establish a graduation approach for some assistance; ongoing advocacy is needed along with strong protection monitoring. Promote informal safety nets and social capital.	**Poor political support with a strong economy:** The most important PoC needs are advocacy and worker rights in coordination with private sector, UN, etc. Focus on PoC employment readiness; build safety nets, community governance, social cohesion, and local protection systems.

ECONOMIC CONTEXT → Best

ADDITIONAL FACTORS TO CONSIDER
Security and other recurrent shocks, development/donor context, changes over time, intra-country geographical differences, PoC characteristics

This tool can be used to guide CO livelihood programming. Advocacy for policy change, for example, will likely be more successful in contexts with strong political support and economic opportunities compared to a country with no refugee protection legal framework or very weak government—meaning very limited/or non-existent government services and systems. Below, we describe examples of approaches for different context categories. The descriptions in the table are based on the evaluation team's (ET)

assessment of conditions in this and the 2018 evaluation series. The table is not prescriptive, and categories are not mutually exclusive.

The best enabling environment is represented in the top-right cell of Table 1; few operations fall into this category. Activities in this context have the most potential for going to scale, increasing transformative capacities (see Box 1 below for description of resilience capacities), building partner capacity and creating institutional-level change. Country governments that have committed to the CRRF are one example where there is a clear demonstration of political support for building refugee self-reliance. UNHCR's role here is best as a facilitator, linking PoC to government, development, and private sector systems. The staff profile, including senior management, should reflect this high-level advising role.

Mid-level political support and economic opportunities: Most of UNHCR's operations fit this category. In these contexts, UNHCR should build strong operational partnerships and work with government to expand PoC access to livelihoods and full worker/refugee rights. The CO advocacy efforts should continue working to facilitate change in some of the underlying conditions and systems that have an indirect effect on PoC economic inclusion and self-reliance. Where possible, the CO should identify operational partners to build adaptive resilience capacities of PoC, while phasing out of funding traditional small-scale livelihood activities.

In the absence of national legal protections for PoC, represented in the bottom row of Table 1, social cohesion work with local authorities and host communities helps to build a sphere of protection for PoC. In these contexts, advocacy for worker/refugee rights and monitoring of abuses are most critical. Very weak enabling environments for PoC, represented in the bottom-left cell, have weak or limited government systems for PoC along with limited

Woman in Mauritania showing produce from her garden supported by UNHCR

economic opportunities. In this kind of setting, UNHCR's focus will be primarily in providing adequate protection and safety nets (i.e., absorptive capacities) and advocating with Government (if it exists) and/or donors for basic services, favourable policies, and humanitarian and development funding. By ensuring that basic needs are met, UNHCR still has a role in building the foundation for self-reliance and development, for example, by improving women's empowerment, access to microcredit through savings and loans groups, and access to education and trainings for employment readiness. Such work is particularly important in unstable environments where few other United Nations (UN) and development actors will work due to the volatile security situation.

Box 1. How do resilience capacities relate to LEI?

Fostering resilience requires strengthening **resilience capacities** at the individual, household, community and systems levels. Resilience capacities can be broken down into three types:

- **Absorptive capacity** is the ability of households and communities to minimise exposure to shocks if possible and to recover quickly after exposure;
- **Adaptive capacity** is the ability of households and communities to make pro-active and informed choices about their lives and their diversified livelihood strategies in response to changing conditions;
- **Transformative capacity** encompasses the system-level changes that ensure sustained resilience, e.g., formal safety nets, access to markets, infrastructure and basic services.

Initiatives to foster refugees' economic inclusion, whether implemented by UNHCR or other actors, should work to reinforce existing capacities and build new capacities as needed across all three areas to ensure the long-term sustainability of refugees' economic activities. In the forthcoming LEI strategy, UNHCR is urging livelihood programmes to focus on strengthening absorptive and transformative capacity and to promote adaptive capacity through partnerships that can operate at scale.

Source: UNHCR 2019. UNHCR Global Agenda for Economic Inclusion: 2019-2023. Draft 17 April.

Additional factors to consider: In addition to the political and economic contexts, the ET encourages UNHCR to consider factors such as security, recurrent shocks, the development/donor context, changes over time, intra-country geographical differences, and lastly but very importantly, PoC capacities and work readiness characteristics. Insecurity inhibits donor investment and participation by development actors.

Some settings face recurrent political, economic, and natural shocks (e.g., conflict, drought or flooding, price fluctuations), and thus, have dynamic contexts. Similarly, changes over time such as in the political context can lead to better or less favourable PoC conditions. For example, if a country's economy has a sharp downturn, the public and political support for PoC may decrease.

A further consideration is geographical variation within a country and the presence of development actors. South Sudan as a whole has a very weak enabling environment, but some areas are safer and have better access to services and markets. UNHCR South Sudan has an important role in advocating with donors and private sector to invest in development in the north (where UNHCR has a mandate to support PoC in camps).

> The profile of the PoC population and their employment readiness must be considered.

Finally, the profile and capacities of the PoC population and their readiness for an activity must be considered. In Malaysia, some refugee groups needed training on work norms to effectively participate in a work pilot. The ET found that PoC in multiple countries need basic literacy, language, and financial literacy skills to be able to successfully engage in the economy. Likewise, employers, financial service providers, and government representatives need increased awareness of how to support PoC employment readiness.

Recommendations: RB, with DRS, should use the context typology tool (above) as a guide to strategically reassess the UNHCR LEI portfolio both regionally and globally and make recommendations to CO for shifting and adapting activities, resources, and staffing accordingly. In this larger process of assessing the CO in their respective regions, RB should build CO capacity to assess whether their operational context (including PoC profile) is ready for an activity and to what extent the activity will be scalable or sustainable in the long term.

Transition phase between strategies

PHASING OUT OF TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES

As stated in the Concept Note (see page 2), UNHCR is to partner with and convene experts to facilitate the inclusion of refugees into existing programmes and services that address livelihood skills development, jobs, and business opportunities. UNHCR is only to implement livelihood programming in certain scenarios. This represents a significant shift in UNHCR's role in promoting refugee livelihoods, which in some cases needs transition plans or change management support.

Key finding: UNHCR implementation of livelihood activities (directly or through partners) may be appropriate for two scenarios:

i. in contexts where no other development actors are operating AND the livelihood programme has sufficient funding to implement LEI activities near scale (e.g., to reach a significant proportion of the target PoC population) while working to attract development partners, as well as government and private sector services; or

ii. in contexts where joint programming or pilot projects are designed with Government and/or partners with the strategic objective of showing impact, building capacity, and then handing over to operational partners to implement at scale.

In South Sudan, where agricultural activities are reaching scale despite a very weak enabling environment and the limited presence of other development organisations, UNHCR-supported livelihood programming fills a critical need. Based on comments from numerous PoC and KII, exemplified by the quote to the right, a reduction in programming could contribute to protection risks and increased tensions between PoC and host communities. A transition phase is therefore needed to engage other peace-building and development

actors before instituting programme cuts. For example, the CO should partner with organisations good at safety nets and foundational livelihood activities (e.g., World Food Programme) to fill that role until operational partners can implement livelihood programming, especially in isolated areas and camps.

Recommendation: Where UNHCR should be phasing out of traditional activities, RB, with DRS support, should build CO capacity to develop transition and handover plans to ensure uninterrupted livelihood programming support.

Change management processes to revise CO strategies are key for some operations to make the shift away from traditional livelihood activities and to promote operation-wide buy-in to restructure toward a common goal of refugee self-reliance. Some CO are ready for change; others less so. The level of readiness is highly influenced by senior leadership leading the vision, as the ET observed in Malaysia. Strong support

> The level of readiness for change is highly influenced by senior leadership leading the vision...to align with the new strategy.

from the CO Representative and Deputy enabled changes in programming and the organisational structure to align with the new strategy. Without CO management on board, the livelihood units will likely struggle to enact significant shifts toward the new strategy.

In contrast, KII in another CO expressed concern that the transition away from UNHCR livelihood implementation and into advocacy and facilitation would create a gap in livelihood support for PoC. These concerns contribute to a reluctance to transition out of traditional livelihood programming. The change in focus, however, does not mean UNHCR is no longer "on the ground" with refugees. Rather, UNHCR will be working to support PoC LEI needs and capacities in a different way, such as working with refugee community-based organisations to ensure that they have information to disseminate on financial services or Technical and Vocational Education and Training institutions, and also ensuring the various institutions that PoC access are ready to work with PoC.

Recommendations:
- DRS should develop a plan to strengthen RB capacity to ensure RB are equipped to provide the necessary technical support to CO during this strategy transition, in particular, in programmes no longer aligned with the new LEI strategy or the CRRF context.
- RB should encourage CO to align all units/functions under a cohesive advocacy strategy that contributes to the strategic coordination, advocacy, and M&E objectives of improving refugee LEI and self-reliance. RB, with DRS support, should provide change management (i.e., consultants) and technical support to senior management as needed.

MAINSTREAMING THE NEW LEI STRATEGY WITHIN OPERATIONS

Key finding: To support a successful rollout of the upcoming global strategy on livelihoods and economic inclusion across operations, HQ and RB will need to take action at several levels: to raise awareness and capacity around the new strategy, support strategic staffing, and remove administrative hindrances.

Staffing and capacity: Orientation and capacity building are needed among livelihood staff, some of whom the ET found were unfamiliar with the Concept Note of 2018 (see page 2). Staff from other units, who contribute to relevant work such as advocacy and partnerships with private

Woman in Senegal with poultry supported by UNHCR

sector or financial service providers, should also be familiar with the new LEI strategy and the importance of integration with work by the livelihood unit. As noted above, another key step to mainstreaming the new strategy is to ensure that CO senior leaders understand and embrace the vision that livelihood and economic inclusion is the best form of protection.

Livelihood staff and senior management skill profiles need to match both the UNHCR role with the new LEI strategy and the context. These roles will increasingly entail high-level capacity building, stakeholder coordination, and advocacy. It is notable that UNHCR Senegal does not have a separate livelihoods unit/officers. Rather, the CO sees the work of protection and advocacy as mutually reinforcing and integral to the economic inclusion strategy. This may be a model for other small operations to learn from.

The ET finds that strategic livelihood staff are still needed at country level under the new strategy. Most UNHCR CO livelihood budgets are small, and they are expected to shrink due to global funding shortages and changing priorities in line with the forthcoming strategy/existing Concept Note. In some CO, field-based and experienced positions have been cut, including M&E roles. These constraints limit UNHCR's ability to enact the new strategy, that is, to provide oversight of partners' implementation of livelihood programming, collect useful data, and advocate for PoC for livelihood programming or funding among partners.

Recommendation: DRS, with RB support, should continue mainstreaming the upcoming LEI strategy to reach CO and field-level staff and ensure that senior management support the vision by developing a dissemination plan to include a series of webinars, communications, etc. In addition, RB should ensure that CO have the mid- to high-level LEI staffing expertise necessary to advocate on behalf of partners to secure livelihood policy and resources.

Budget procedures: There are two budget procedures that currently hinder the implementation of the forthcoming LEI strategy. The first is the annual budget cycle, which was highlighted as a factor hindering programme results in every livelihood operation of the 2018 and 2019 evaluation series. The ET notes that changes to the budget cycle are now underway. Further discussion on the importance of multi-year planning to the LEI strategy is included under strategic partnership development, below.

Second, CO-led fundraising for development-oriented livelihoods programming may be a key role for UNHCR in the future but is challenging due to the current budget allocation procedures. KII in two evaluations noted that disbursal of their livelihood programme funds was constrained by funding envelope limits placed by HQ per sector. Thus, if livelihood staff secure external funding earmarked for their programme, they cannot exceed their sector budget until other sectors (e.g., protection) are fully funded. The ET recognises these funding limitations are meant to ensure that the basic operating level (OL) for operational priorities are funded before above operating level (AOL) funds may be disbursed.[v] The ET feels this is a disincentive for livelihood staff to engage in funds mobilisation. The ET understands that decentralisation will enable the RB and CO to have a more dynamic resource allocation process throughout the year.[vi]

Recommendation: DSPR: change the annual budget to a multi-year cycle, and consider eliminating sectoral funding caps. These changes are critical for UNHCR's new role as facilitator and strategic partner in LEI.

ADDRESSING GAPS IN LIVELIHOOD MEASUREMENT

Key finding: All five evaluations concluded that the CO need to strengthen M&E around PoC economic inclusion to contribute to their advocacy and partnership strategies.

A new mindset around measuring impact at both the individual and systems levels will need to be developed. The ET acknowledges that the results frameworks and monitoring system are being revised; the evaluations confirmed that further refinement is needed. The ET observed that livelihood outcomes and impacts were not measured because there is often no mechanism for multi-point measurement (baseline and longer-term follow-up) for UNHCR projects.

Within the CO, the M&E capacity might not exist to promote robust outcome and impact measurement, and partner agreements are short-term and often do not include this kind of measurement expectation.

Agriculture project participant supported by UNHCR Senegal

As a reiteration from the 2018 strategy evaluation, a new set of systems-level indicators are needed to assess UNHCR's contributions to policy, to assess PoC access to programmes and services, and to measure PoC resilience capacities. The ET understands that systems-level indicators are currently being developed. Building this systems-level monitoring expertise within UNHCR is key to informing advocacy and facilitating capacity building and joint data collection with Government and partners.

UNHCR can use this refugee data system as a technical service and point of leverage with operational partners. The ET in Mauritania concluded that UNHCR's repository of information on refugees should help

> UNHCR can use this refugee data system as a technical service and point of leverage with operational partners.

UNHCR solidify its role as a lead agency in coordination. Through UNHCR's registration data and enhanced data collection with partners, a population-based PoC profile can be developed and strategically shared, focusing on topics such as: inclusion of PoC in national social service programmes and financial systems; PoC education, capacities, and skills and employment readiness; and PoC contributions to the host country's economic development and human capital.

Recommendations:

- DRS should develop a memo that outlines expectations around indicator measurement in the transition period while the global strategy is rolled out.

- DSPR, with DRS and RB support, should develop M&E systems and capacity at CO level that aligns with their strategic and advocacy objectives. CO need capacity and guidance to monitor individual and systems-level indicators related to PoC well-being, employment readiness, and inclusion. Adequate population-based studies of probability sampled PoC are needed, with stratification on age, ethnicity, gender, and location. This work requires a realistic budget and training of CO staff.
  - o DSPR should consider developing an online course for relevant staff on assessment and monitoring. Additionally, an HQ-supported platform is needed that protects PoC personal data and allows CO to share data with partners as a technical service.

Strategic LEI work for all CO

ROLE IN ADVOCACY FOR LEI

With its understanding of the diverse needs and capacities of PoC, UNHCR is well-suited to advocate for PoC. This advocacy role includes a strong capacity-building role with Government, if Government exists, as well as with the private sector, financial institutions, donors, and development actors.

This advocacy role includes a strong role in capacity building.

Key finding: As part of its advocacy role, UNHCR needs to build the capacity of operational partners at various levels of a host society to consider the needs of PoC in on-going development and policy efforts.

Government and other actors may need capacity strengthening to:
- conduct joint data collection related to PoC access to systems
- better understand refugee needs and rights via application of national policy
- foster improved communication between government representatives
- make services accessible to PoC, including social services, certification/credentialing systems or employment services

Recommendations: See related recommendations regarding coherent advocacy strategies and staffing, above. DRS: Develop guidance for RB/CO on LEI advocacy strategy options for CO operating in fragile environments and where government services are very limited.

Role in public awareness on refugee/worker rights: UNHCR efforts to raise public awareness and operate as an advocate of refugee rights are needed and important, as found in the evaluations across multiple operations. For example: in Djibouti, a 2017 national refugee law has led to rapid progress to integrate refugees into social services. The evaluation found a high level of awareness among national government representatives about refugee rights granted by the new policy but limited awareness among private enterprises, local authorities, and the host population.

Recommendation: RB support of CO is likely needed as the CO collaborate with key partners to develop joint communication and advocacy strategies that aim to raise public awareness of PoC rights. Support and coordination with protection colleagues at CO, RB, and DIP levels is also necessary to ensure coherent messaging.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Several evaluations in the series found a need for UNHCR to enhance their partnering with UN agencies or UN Country Teams to initiate collaboration around the Global Compact on Refugees. KII with UNHCR staff and UN partners in South Sudan, Mauritania, and Malaysia described opportunities for improvement in UNHCR's role in this area. The evaluations concluded that UNHCR should convene experts and partners at a national or regional platform to facilitate the inclusion of refugees into existing programmes and services. CO may need to assess their partnerships, including capacities and gaps, and develop a multi-year partnership strategy aligned with their LEI objectives.

Key finding: Long-term partnership strategies are key, and even with UNHCR's annual budget cycle, some CO have developed their own multi-year, multi-partner planning, which may serve as a good example to other operations.

"UNHCR is a very strong and impressive brand that can be used to build partnerships…"
*~KII in Malaysia*

The evaluations identified several benefits to multi-year planning with partners, including:
- potential for longer-term, larger impacts through incremental work that can build from year to year
- reducing the time and momentum lost between project cycles, and avoiding the pitfalls of poor-quality programming or partners due to the time pressures of one-year cycles
- demonstrating commitment to Government and other partners by building their capacity to address refugee LEI issues, which will contribute to LEI at scale and the sustainability of

programming
- o improving coordination and communication between partners and stakeholders
- o increased potential to collectively fundraise and plan for multi-year resources with partners; this includes UNHCR's role in helping partners secure resources from development actors or donors.

Recommendations:

- RB should provide guidance to CO to use their revised strategic plans (see previous recommendation on revised strategies) to develop corresponding multi-year, multi-partner LEI operational plans with budgets, which should be developed in partnership with relevant national stakeholders, including Government, where possible.

- To foster cross-operation capacity building in long-term planning with strategic partners, DRS, with RB support, should identify and disseminate learnings from existing good practices and experience from livelihood programmes to be used as guidance for other programmes. For example, create global/regional information sharing fora where champion CO can share their good practices with other CO.

  - o DRS: Develop guidance for RB/CO on how to strengthen the enabling environment (transformative capacity) through strategic partnerships with other development partners and the private sector, providing examples of good practices from current operations.

- DRS, in coordination with RB, should issue guidance on how CO may use the UNHCR name and reputation to petition donors for funds for recommended partners known to operate in line with UNHCR's LEI strategies.
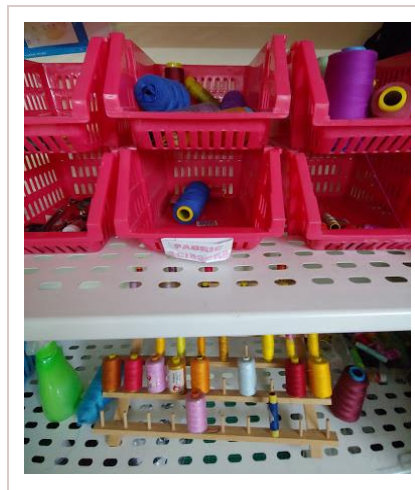
Refugee sewing centre supplies, supported by UNHCR Malaysia, among other partners

Conclusion

This 2019 evaluation series gathers evidence from livelihood programming supported by five UNHCR operations. Building on the 2018 evaluation and case studies, this series highlights the importance of strategic, facilitative, and context-based livelihood programming and the need for broader impact through advocacy and work with strategic partners. To make this shift in UNHCR's role in livelihoods, the organisation must strengthen staff capacity in M&E, advocacy, and coordination roles. Livelihood staff, CO senior leadership and non-livelihood staff need to embrace the vision of LEI work as the backbone to protection, as well as to resilience and solutions. Finally, key internal procedures and mechanisms supportive of this strategy include data sharing platforms, joint fundraising, flexible budget allocations, and multi-year planning. These changes will help UNHCR maximise limited funding and enhance PoC economic inclusion globally, ultimately supporting PoC to live dignified lives and better prepare them for long-terms solutions to forced displacement.

Endnotes

[i] TANGO International. 2018. Evaluation of UNHCR's Livelihoods Strategies and Approaches: Global Report December 2018. https://www.unhcr.org/5c51a0774.pdf. The 2018 livelihood case studies included: India, Rwanda, Turkey, Ghana, and Costa Rica.

[ii] The Concept Noted may be found here.

[iii] Country reports (available on UNHCR website: https://www.unhcr.org/evaluation-and-research.html

[iv] *Ibid.*

[v] UNHCR 2016 Programme Manual states: Given that global refugee needs far exceed resources available, this prioritisation is based on the Global Strategic Priorities (GSP) and the Indicative Operating Level (IOL) that is provided by the High Commissioner for each region and Division and subsequently by Bureau Directors to each operation in advance of the submission of the operations plans.

[vi] As per UNHCR Broadcast email shared with the ET from Kelly T. Clements, Deputy High Commissioner, 20 December 2019. Subject: Transitional measures for planning and resource allocation for 2020-2021 biennium.

Photo credit: All photos taken by TANGO during 2019 fieldwork.

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