

UNHCR ANNUAL CONSULTATIONS WITH NGOS
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International Conference Center Geneva

DISCUSSION PAPER

Title of session: "Are refugees' lives improving? – facilitating and measuring self-reliance and economic inclusion"

Date: Thursday, 4 July 2019

Time/Room: 11h -16h (with break from 13h-14h) Room 4

Executive Summary:

The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) includes enhancing refugee self-reliance as one of its four main objectives (para 7) and further states that this involves "...inclusive growth for host communities and refugees" (para. 70). Yet, the sector of self-reliance and economic inclusion is nascent and in need of standard-setting and alignment around best practices, both in terms of programs that facilitate these outcomes and how to measure them. This session will explore self-reliance and economic inclusion through the lens of collective action to measure, advocate and program for these outcomes, which improve the lives of refugees and their hosts. Further, it will explore the complementarities of combining efforts of humanitarian and development actors. This interactive session will take advantage of the four hours to first consider self-reliance and economic inclusion at a systems level, and second, discuss barriers, opportunities and successes in current examples of fieldwork. The session will close with action-based break out groups that are expected to inspire participants with ideas for increased promotion of self-reliance and economic inclusion to support the upcoming Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in December and the long-term goals of the GCR.

Concept Note:

- **Background and link to the theme** [*see Concept note for the overall theme for reference*]

The GCR includes enhancing refugee self-reliance as one of its four main objectives, but it has not been established how to measure self-reliance and assess when it has been achieved. Few agencies have explicitly focused on measuring self-reliance or economic inclusion and while each agency has its own monitoring and evaluation strategy, until recently little was being done to measure the collective outcomes of the myriad programs -livelihoods, health, education, etc. - that would assist refugees to achieve self-reliance and economic inclusion. One of the three main components of this year's UNHCR Annual Consultations with NGOs is focused on data and evidence and this session will concentrate on ways our community can build an evidence base around the promotion of self-reliance and economic inclusion that will lead to improved programming to facilitate these outcomes. The session will start with a general overview of the issues related to self-reliance before honing in on specific examples of efforts being made to achieve self-reliance and economic inclusion and build the necessary evidence base for growth and expansion. The goal of these efforts is pragmatic: measurably improving the lives of refugees.

Objectives

The session will be an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of what is meant by refugee self-reliance, why it is important and how the promotion of self-reliance fits with current approaches to refugee and host community support. This theme coupled with economic inclusion will allow for leaders in the field to consider self-reliance as a specific programming and research sector that includes but encompasses more than livelihoods.

Additionally, the session will provide an opportunity to introduce the Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative, the Coalition to Alleviate Poverty Amongst Refugees and Host Communities and explore and map other global efforts focused on this issue.

Structure

To meet these objectives, the session will consist of 2 sets of panels and breakout sessions, one before and one after lunch. With lunch in between, we anticipate gaining some participants and losing some for the afternoon portion. Participants will reconvene in plenary before the lunch break to hear briefings on two collaborative efforts: the Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative (RSRI) and the Coalition to Alleviate Poverty Amongst Refugees and Host Communities. The sessions would proceed as follows:

11:00-11:45 Opening Panel

- An opening panel to set the scene and “make the case,” which will include short presentations from three panelists about self-reliance and economic inclusion as it relates to advocacy, programming and measurement while providing an overview of what to expect in each of the breakout sessions. We envision the panel speakers becoming the leaders of each breakout, paired with a co-leader. The panel presentations will therefore serve as previews of the breakouts so that participants may decide which to participate in. Potential speakers: UNHCR – Theresa Beltramo (advocacy), RefugePoint - Mary Wangui Kariuki (programming), Mercy Corps - TBD (measurement).

11:45-12:40 Breakout Groups

- There will be three breakout groups focused on 1) Advocacy, 2) Programming and 3) Measurement and will provide a platform for participants to explore a number of key questions related to opportunities and challenges regarding refugee self-reliance, along with a beginning mapping of current self-reliance efforts. The breakouts will be co-led by the panelists listed above, paired with these partners: Advocacy – ODI; Programming - RefugePoint; Measurement - TBD.

12:30 Collaborations: brief RSRI overview and introduction to the Coalition to Alleviate Poverty
Kellie Leeson

12:40-13:00 Coalition to Alleviate Poverty Amongst Refugees and Host Communities
NGO (TBC) and Ziad Ayoubi (UNHCR)

13:00-14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-14:40 Panel 2

- Panel 2 will begin with a brief summary of the morning’s activities and report back to the group with three main findings from each breakout. This will then be followed by a short panel that will highlight efforts to improve outcomes for refugees while building an evidence base for both self-reliance and economic inclusion. We will offer examples and drill down deeper under each of the work streams presented in Panel 1, namely Advocacy, Programming and Measurement. Specifically, we will focus on: 1) Elevating and Fostering Collaboration around SR & EI; 2) the Graduation Approach; and 3) the Self-Reliance Index. As before, panelists will become breakout leaders and will provide a preview of the breakout sessions. (Potential speakers: WRC – Dale Buscher (Advocacy); HIAS – Galo Quizanga (Graduation), and Asylum Access – TBD (Self-Reliance Index).

14:40-15:30 Breakout Groups

- The breakout sessions will allow participants to explore these specific efforts to then develop actions for next steps in building the evidence base for refugee self-reliance and economic inclusion. The topics would be as above: 1) Fostering Collaboration around SR & EI (including pledges & co-sponsorship for GRF), 2) Graduation Approach, 3) Self-Reliance Index. The breakouts will be co-led by the panelists listed above, paired with appropriate partners.

15:30-16:00 Closing Plenary

- A closing plenary to present the main outcomes of the sessions, highlight concrete ideas for pledges and good practices to emerge from the sessions.

Ultimately, the session will stress that, while each agency may have different approaches to self-reliance and economic inclusion, it is critical to share and mutually assess common results and promote the collective outcomes of these individual programs to create best practices, alignment and momentum for achieving Objective 2 of the GCR in a meaningful, substantial, and global way – thereby enabling many more refugees and host nationals to improve their lives and fulfil their aspirations.

- **Desired outcome of the session:** [*What would you like to achieve with this session? What would be the follow-up actions to it?*]

Outcomes

1. Improved understanding and alignment around the importance of programming that facilitates self-reliance and economic inclusion
2. Increased knowledge base/mapping of what types of self-reliance activities are happening where, to facilitate collective learning and action
3. Recognition of the opportunities, barriers and potential solutions to measuring refugee self-reliance results
4. Wider recognition of coordinating mechanisms, such as the Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative and the Coalition to Alleviate Poverty and how to engage with these entities
5. Suggestions for how commitments to self-reliance and economic inclusion can support and feed into the Global Refugee Forum in December

Methodology & choreography [*panel discussion, break-out sessions, pigeonhole, video presentation, mixture of different elements*]

As above: 2 sets of panels and break-outs (3 groups each), followed by reconvening in plenary after each set of break-outs.