



GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR LIVELIHOODS

A UNHCR Strategy 2014-2018

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ACRONYMS

AGD	Age, Gender and Diversity	PoC	Persons of Concern (to UNHCR)
CTA	Community Technology Access	SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based
IDP	Internally Displaced Person		Violence
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals	UNHCR	United Nations High
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization		Commissioner for Refugees

VISION

UNHCR aims to ensure that all persons of concern are able to make a safe and sustainable living that meets their basic needs, contributes to their dignity, and provides for the full enjoyment of human rights.



STRATEGY AT A GLANCE



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 2014-2018

1. **Promote the right to work and the right to development**
2. **Enable people to preserve and protect their productive assets as well as meet their immediate consumption needs**
3. **Develop and expand proven and innovative ways of supporting peoples' economic self-reliance**
4. **Improve planning, learning and practice on successful approaches to livelihoods development and their impact on self-reliance**

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Protection
- Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD)
- Equity
- Access
- Sustainability
- Community empowerment
- Appropriateness and reliability
- Enhance local markets

STRATEGIC APPROACHES

- Partnerships and Coordination
- Capacity-Building
- Communication and Advocacy
- Integrated approaches
- Measurement
- Innovation



Chad / Darfur refugees near Birak / UNHCR / H. Caux / March 2008

HOW TO REACH RESULTS

- Develop methodologies to collect and analyse socioeconomic data
- Use baseline data to develop and implement multi-year national and local strategies
- Forge new partnerships with national entities, research institutions, the private sector and specialised NGOs
- Advocate for the legal right to work and other opportunities for access to markets and resources
- Target livelihoods initiatives according to refugees' interests and capacities for achieving self-reliance
- Provide training for employment and entrepreneurship appropriate to market opportunities
- Enable access to financial services
- Develop innovative income streams
- Create synergies with other sectors from the onset of an emergency
- Build a common ethos and practice on market-based livelihoods development
- Draw lessons on poverty reduction and livelihoods from the development community, adapt to refugee contexts, document and apply good practices
- Capitalize on new funding opportunities

SCOPE OF IMPLEMENTATION

- Priority countries
- Non-priority countries where possible, sequenced with gradual increase in capacity
- Urban and rural areas, camp and non-camp settings

WHO HAS A ROLE TO PLAY

- Refugee communities
- Government including relevant line ministries and host communities
- UNHCR at all levels
- UN agencies and other international organizations
- National and international NGOs
- Community and faith-based organizations
- Private sector
- Research institutions



INTRODUCTION

“WORK IS THE ONLY THING THAT GIVES SUBSTANCE TO LIFE.”

Albert Einstein

Livelihoods are activities that allow people to secure the basic necessities of life, such as food, water, shelter and clothing. Engaging in livelihoods activities means acquiring the knowledge, skills, social network, raw materials, and other resources to meet individual or collective needs on a sustainable basis with dignity. Livelihoods activities are usually carried out repeatedly within an income stream such as agriculture, pastoralism, fishing, employment within a market sector, or as an entrepreneur. Ideally, people work within one or multiple streams providing goods and services to a market economy based on cash exchange or barter. Work provides the basis for their food security¹ and self-reliance, adding stability, prosperity and peace to the community at large. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) contributes to the ability of refugees to carry out safe and secure livelihoods activities in host communities and upon return, helping to develop an enabling environment of protection and support services, assisting refugees to gain lawful access to markets and supporting them to acquire the human, financial, social, and physical capital required to work productively.

Building self-reliance is essential throughout all phases of displacement. It is a critical component in achieving durable solutions and should be advocated for and supported whether persons of concern will return home, be resettled or

Self-reliance is the ability of an individual, household or community to meet essential needs and to enjoy social and economic rights in a sustainable manner and with dignity. By becoming self-reliant, refugees and displaced persons lead active and productive lives and are able to build strong social, economic and cultural ties with their host communities. Self-reliance can assist in ensuring that persons of concern are better protected by strengthening their capacity to claim their civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights.

¹ See UNHCR's Global Strategy for Public Health 2014-2018 for objectives and activities related to food security.

UNHCR aims to help find **durable solutions** that will allow displaced people to rebuild their lives in dignity and peace. There are three solutions open to refugees: voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement to a third country in situations where it is impossible for a person to return to his or her country of origin or find a solution in the host country. Most of UNHCR's livelihoods programming takes place during displacement, while people are awaiting a durable solution. Where a durable solution is not in sight, UNHCR should take a progressive approach, including supporting self-reliance.

Persons of concern include all people whose protection and assistance needs are of interest to UNHCR. These include refugees under the 1951 Convention, people who have been forced to leave their countries as a result of conflict or events seriously disturbing public order, returnees, stateless persons, and, in some situations, IDPs. UNHCR's authority to act on behalf of persons of concern other than refugees is based on General Assembly resolutions. UNHCR's Livelihoods Strategy applies mostly to refugees, but may in some cases be expanded to include returnees, stateless persons and IDPs.

locally integrated. Self-reliance will enable refugees to live with dignity and create a future for themselves and their families.

The purpose of this Strategy is threefold. First, it serves as a position paper on why UNHCR implements livelihoods programming: to decrease dependency and increase self-reliance for people of concern and host communities. The Strategy aims to increase understanding of why UNHCR is seeking innovative ways to link refugees to markets and scale up livelihoods programming. Second, the Strategy informs a global view of how UNHCR will implement livelihoods programs, providing general lines on what types of market-oriented activities will be supported. Thirdly, it guides the development of national and local livelihoods strategies. National and local field offices should use this Strategy as a foundation document to help them develop livelihoods programming specific to their context. The Livelihoods Unit will support national and local strategy development, with exceptional support to priority countries. It is addressed to protection and programme staff within UNHCR, partner organizations, host governments, donor organizations, and public and private entities with a stake in the economic and social well-being of displaced populations and host communities.

UNHCR acknowledges that much of the burden of caring for refugees falls on host communities and governments. While UNHCR and others aim to assist wherever possible, host communities and governments are those most affected by the millions of refugees seeking protection within their borders. In addition, UNHCR recognizes the countless national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based organizations, international organizations, UN agencies, and dedicated individuals who provide resources and expertise. Their support is essential to helping displaced people transition from aid recipients to self-reliant agents of change, able to contribute to the peace, stability and prosperity of the communities that offer them asylum. Where possible, the Strategy encourages efforts to reduce the burden on host communities and governments through interventions that recognize local economic development plans and support these to the greatest extent possible.

This Livelihoods Strategy reflects UNHCR's renewed commitment to helping refugees work towards self-reliance. It can be seen as a companion to three other related UNHCR Strategies for 2014-2018 on public health, energy, and settlement and shelter, with which it shares a common structure.





GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Livelihoods guiding principles are based on global best practices, experiences emerging from UNHCR operations, and sector research and guidelines. They set forth the core standards behind all livelihoods programming:

- 1. Protection:** Livelihoods programmes will aim to further respect for human rights as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. In addition, programmes will be designed to support an operation's overall protection strategy and related protection priorities. They will protect and foster people's dignity as linked to economic independence and self-reliance.
- 2. Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD):** Livelihoods programmes will seek to advance UNHCR's AGD approach by ensuring the active participation of diverse and representative groups of refugees. UNHCR will ensure inclusiveness and accessibility for specific groups of concern including women, adolescent girls and boys, older persons, the young, persons with disabilities, people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual or intersex, and women and men belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities or indigenous groups.²
- 3. Equity:** UNHCR will ensure that refugees have equal opportunity to participate in livelihoods interventions. The Agency will prioritize vulnerable people where possible, particularly where they face obstacles not encountered by the majority of the displaced population. Activities will maintain the goal of enabling self-reliance in the wider economy not linked to UNHCR, however, and should not foster dependency.
- 4. Access:** UNHCR will support refugee access to local services and programmes in parity with the host community. The Agency will invest in national programmes to extend existing services or create services where they do not exist, benefitting refugees and host communities alike. Skilled refugee workers and entrepreneurs contribute to the economic well-being of a region, providing goods, services, jobs and tax revenue to host governments and communities.
- 5. Sustainability:** Livelihoods programmes are planned for long-term self-reliance. Beyond the initial emergency phase where intensive support may be necessary, initiatives must help people build the knowledge and skills pertinent to their mid-term and long-term goals. Activities will form part of integrated programmes that span the project cycle from planning to implementation to phase-out. UNHCR will seek to provide the resources necessary to sustain processes until their completion.
- 6. Community empowerment:** Refugees and host communities should participate in all stages of planning, needs assessment, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in order to design appropriate and sustainable programmes. Enabling strong communities is a vital part of supporting self-reliance. Interventions should build upon the knowledge, skills and resources present, and aim to enhance them further while strengthening community leadership and integration.
- 7. Appropriateness and reliability:** Livelihoods programmes should be appropriate and tailored to context. They should be targeted to people best able to achieve self-reliance goals, be consistent in their approach and delivery, and take into consideration the economic status and interests of the local population. Refugees should be able to rely on interventions appropriate to their strengths and needs. Host populations and governments should be assured that programmes will contribute to the economic well-being of the entire community.
- 8. Enhance local markets:** Livelihoods programmes will strive to strengthen the local market providing an injection of labour, consumers, and traders. UNHCR will work with local governments, businesses, trade and labour associations to build on existing market opportunities, benefitting both refugees and host communities. Refugees will receive cash-based assistance where appropriate, empowering them to make decisions while supporting local markets.

2 See UNHCR, Age, Gender and Diversity Policy, 8 June 2011. <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4def34f6887.html>



CONTEXT AND SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

THE LIVELIHOODS STRATEGY DRAWS UPON LESSONS LEARNED FROM REFUGEES AS THEY STRIVE TO MAKE A LIVING, AS WELL AS FROM UNHCR AND PARTNERS AS THEY IMPLEMENT LIVELIHOODS PROJECTS.

CHALLENGES FOR REFUGEES, INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS) AND RETURNEES

Critical lessons have been compiled from thematic reviews and from UNHCR Livelihoods Assessments as follow:

- The policy environment in hosting countries places varying degrees of restrictions on refugees' ability to achieve self-reliance. In many cases, refugees and asylum seekers are excluded from the formal labour market and are not able to access educational opportunities and health services. This increases their exposure to economic exploitation, arrest and detention.
- Despite restrictions, refugees use many strategies to survive and generate income, mostly through day labour jobs in the informal sector. Lack of access to the labour market can result in an increase in negative coping strategies such as survival sex, child labour, and early or forced marriage.
- The initial assets that refugees rely on, such as their skills, access to financial capital, and physical health, are critical to widening their options to access safe and productive work. In many cases, however, these assets are either insufficient from the start or have been eroded by years of displacement.

- It is important for displaced people to become economically active as early as possible during or following a crisis. Refugees who reach some degree of self-reliance quickly are more able to retain assets, access opportunities, and maintain their dignity than those who remain dependent on assistance.
- A key challenge to meeting self-reliance goals is the short-term nature of relief interventions. By prioritizing access to short-term measures, planning and budgeting processes often exclude long-term interventions that seek to develop capacities and influence refugees' access to livelihoods opportunities; a process that inherently takes time. UNHCR's own culture requires a shift to allow refugees to reduce dependency and avail of solutions on their own.

UNHCR'S RESPONSE

UNHCR has gradually strengthened its capacity to enhance self-reliance for persons of concern. The Agency created a Livelihoods Unit in 2008, developed guidelines³, and invested in technical advisory capacity in regional offices and in select field operations. Many operations have developed and implemented multi-year livelihoods or self-reliance strategies. UNHCR has made efforts to increase refugees' access to productive resources, employment and business opportunities, and to eliminate interventions that do not show positive results in terms of household income. Likewise, UNHCR has made progress in planning interventions on the basis of sound socio-economic assessments, building the capacity of staff and partners for livelihoods programming, and building strategic partnerships with the private sector and development NGOs.

As a result, there has been a surge in the scale of livelihoods efforts across UNHCR operations in recent years. The global budget planned for livelihoods activities grew by more than 25% between 2011 and 2012 and by another 15% in 2013. In 2012, 18 operations had budgets ranging from USD 4 million to USD 24 million for livelihoods activities. In 2013, 87 operations conducted livelihood interventions, up from 79 in 2012. These programmes primarily benefit refugees (62%), followed by IDPs (22%) and returnees (13%). The greatest share of funds is invested in vocational and skills training, promoting entrepreneurship, supporting agriculture, livestock and fisheries, and strengthening access to financial services or microfinance. In order to continue this scale up, UNHCR must continue to diversify livelihoods programming, reach a wider population, and improve learning on how best to support refugees towards self-reliance.

Despite this overall growth, UNHCR's livelihoods programming has been limited in its capacity to reach more than a small percentage of refugees. On a micro-level, UNHCR's work over recent years has shown growing impact. On a macro-level, significant impact will only be realized through

3 See Livelihood Programming in UNHCR: Operational Guidelines. UNHCR, 2012. <http://www.unhcr.org/4fbd17c9.html>

sizeable replication and scaling up of proven livelihoods activities relevant in each context. This will require better use of available data about the refugee population, gathering additional data related to the economy, better targeting of relevant interventions, selection of partners that take a market-oriented, longer-term approach, and strong monitoring and evaluation.

FRAMING DOCUMENTS FOR THE STRATEGY

The Global Strategy for Livelihoods is underpinned by the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees⁴, which sets out the legal framework conducive to creating conditions for the gradual attainment of self-reliance in countries of asylum. The Convention binds signatory states to grant rights which make it possible for them to engage in income-generating activities, and allows them access to local facilities and services.

Following the logic of the Convention, with the passing of time, refugees should be able to enjoy a wider range of rights as their association and ties with the hosting state grow stronger. In this sense, the 1951 Convention gives refugees a solid basis on which they can progressively restore social and economic independence. Host states should make every effort to ensure protection of rights that relate to income generation. This includes the right to freedom of movement enabling refugees to market their goods and access the labour market. Equally important is refugees' capacity to access education, health care and other social services where available. (Excom paper EC/55/SC/CRP.15 section 11).

The right to work is a human right established in Article 23.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in Article 6 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. It allows men and women of all ages and backgrounds to become self-reliant in dignity and free from discrimination.

4 See Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, with introduction December 2010. <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html>

This Strategy also seeks to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in host countries and countries of return:

MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

- Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day
- Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people
- Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development

- In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications

The Strategy aims to help UNHCR field operations meet the programming standards set out in the Minimum Economic Recovery Standards (a SPHERE companion guide, published by the SEEP Network, 2010). The Minimum Economic Recovery Standards articulate the minimum level of technical and other assistance that should be provided in promoting the recovery of economies and livelihoods affected by crisis.

Finally, the Strategy will guide UNHCR towards achieving one of its Global Strategic Priorities (GSP 2): Improve the protection and wellbeing of persons of concern by promoting human potential through education, training, livelihoods support and income generation. Moreover, the Strategy draws lessons from the development world in relation to facilitating food security and equitable economic growth.





STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES REPRESENT THE FOCUS AREAS FOR UNHCR'S LIVELIHOODS ACTIVITIES. THERE ARE THREE EXTERNAL OBJECTIVES DESIGNED TO GUIDE DIRECT ACTION TO BENEFIT REFUGEES, AND ONE INTERNAL OBJECTIVE INTENDED TO IMPROVE UNHCR'S ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT QUALITY PROGRAMMING.

The first objective refers to securing a safe and supportive enabling environment. The second describes immediate activities following an emergency to protect assets and help refugees recover as quickly as possible. The third explains the main points of UNHCR's livelihoods support activities during displacement. The fourth objective outlines activities aimed at increasing UNHCR's continual learning process to inform and influence programming for greater impact.

PROMOTE THE RIGHT TO WORK AND THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

Expected results

- More refugees will enjoy the right to work legally in formal and informal sectors, access local and national services including training opportunities and financial services, and participate in networking and mutual assistance programmes.
- More refugees will have access to land, water, farming implements and other productive resources allowing them to carry out traditional livelihoods activities.

Refugees are better able to contribute fully to local communities when they can work legally, access resources and services, create businesses and pay taxes. Refugee workers offer varied skills, goods and services to host country markets. Refugee farmers and pastoralists diversify products and increase supply. Incorporating their labour and entrepreneurial abilities into local markets allows for greater diversification, growth and prosperity, benefitting refugees and host communities alike.

Refugees working in the formal sector or with minimal legal restrictions may also increase the stability and safety of communities. When refugees have a safe alternative for generating income, they are better able to avoid negative coping strategies such as criminal acts, survival sex and unsafe labour. The right to work allows for more interaction between refugees and host communities, and may contribute to building trust and peaceful coexistence.

UNHCR and partners will work with host governments at the national and local level to develop policies and practices that improve livelihoods opportunities for refugees and local populations. The agency will maintain a dialogue with authorities, engage the local business community, and invest in institutions to benefit the entire community.

Enabling Activities

Advocacy and policy dialogue

- Define specific targets to build a favorable policy environment for refugee self-reliance. Issues for dialogue with national and local authorities include, recognition of diplomas and professional certifications, access to land and productive natural resources, access to work permits, freedom of movement, freedom of association, access to financial services, access to training and learning opportunities, access to formal and informal employment, right of business ownership and membership in business associations.
- Research and establish an evidence-base on ways that the economic participation of refugees benefits local economies and host communities.

Awareness-raising and legal aid

- Provide individual refugees and refugee associations with updated information on rights and legal obligations pertaining to land use, wage labour, self-employment, business registration, and training.
- Build the capacity of refugee associations to engage with and contribute to local and national institutions, avoiding the creation of parallel groups and services.
- Advise refugees with diplomas and professional certification from their home-countries about procedures to obtain their recognition.
- Provide local authorities, employers, businesses, and public service-providers (e.g. banking, social security) with information about what refugees have to offer, and what they require.

Investing in national public and private institutions

- Partner with and invest in building the capacity of local and national institutions to deliver services for refugees, while ensuring that benefits extend to hosting communities. Both public and private institutions should be considered that include a broad range of service providers, social protection systems,⁵ microfinance and banking institutions, agricultural extension, business development and business incubators, education and training, job placement, legal aid, and communications systems. It should be noted that many of these services will be short term, necessary only until refugees can achieve a level of self-reliance and contribute on their own to the economic well-being of host communities.

Objective 1: Promote the right to work and the right to development	
Enabling activities	Indicators of achievement
Advocacy and policy dialogue	# of persons of concern (PoC) receiving work permits
	# of PoC businesses registered
	# of PoC clients in national microfinance institutions or banks
	# of PoC with access to bank accounts
Awareness raising and legal aid	# of PoC with recognized diplomas from their country of origin
	# of PoC provided with legal advice for accessing work opportunities
	# of PoC with recognized diplomas working in a related sector
Partnerships with national institutions	# of vocational and technical training institutions that waive or reduce tuition fees for PoC

⁵ Social protection systems are public measures that a society provides for its members to protect them against economic and social distress caused by the absence or a substantial reduction of income from work, the provision of health care, and the provision of benefits for families with children (adapted from the International Labour Organization, Social Protection Sector).



ENABLE PEOPLE TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT THEIR PRODUCTIVE ASSETS AS WELL AS MEET THEIR IMMEDIATE CONSUMPTION NEEDS

Expected results

- Consumption support in cash and/or in kind will be provided for participants in livelihoods programmes implemented under the Strategy until self-reliance benchmarks have been met.
- Support to replace or recover productive assets will be provided to enable displaced individuals to resume or begin new income generating activities as early as possible.
- Household expenditures will be reduced through subsidized or free access to essential services during the emergency phase.

Refugees often lose critical assets during and immediately after a crisis, increasing their vulnerability. Humanitarian relief is the first short-term layer of support, which, if adequately planned and delivered, helps to preserve or recover essential productive assets. These immediate benefits will only last if medium and longer-term support is provided to grow livelihood assets and to improve people's economic capacities. The provision of humanitarian relief should be conceived within a broader framework of a comprehensive livelihood-support intervention that contributes to self-reliance goals.

UNHCR and partners will develop accurate profiles of refugees' assets, including real assets in their place of origin, and the level of immediate support required to allow for adequate economic recovery and protection. The Agency will also ensure that refugees have access to basic services and information about services available in the host community. Essential services, food, and other supplies should not be phased-out for households and individuals that show no sign of reaching self-reliance.

Enabling Activities**Conduct rapid socio-economic profiling**

- Carry out a socio-economic profiling exercise of refugees/IDP and local populations.
- Determine the appropriate target group for phasing-in cash-assistance if appropriate.

Provide and safeguard livelihood consumables

- Immediately provide essential goods and services to prevent the depletion of assets (e.g. health, household goods, cash savings).
- Ensure access to safe shelters to provide physical protection and safeguard household valuables and savings.
- Facilitate access to grazing land and water for refugees with livestock holdings.
- Provide access to renewable energy sources where possible.

Secure productive assets

- Facilitate access to productive assets through modalities such as vouchers, cash or in kind assistance. The modality chosen should stimulate the local market and allow refugees to choose their preferred products.
- Facilitate access to fund transfers from refugees' place of origin or third countries.

Ensure access to essential services

- Help to minimise household expenditures by providing basic services free of charge or subsidised.
- Disseminate information about safe locally available services, including financial services such as money transfers, banking, transport and communications.
- Define, in consultation with communities, a phase-out strategy for free/subsidized services, and to introduce the payment of fees and/or referral modalities when the emergency phase ends.

Introduce cash assistance when appropriate

- Explore options for providing cash-based assistance or introducing it as a temporary measure for targeted socio-economic groups during a set time period.

UNHCR AND WFP JOINT PILOT PROGRAMME

In 2013, UNHCR and WFP renewed their effort to build self-reliance among refugees receiving food assistance. While both agencies aimed to increase food security before reducing food aid, impact evaluations showed that this was not always done effectively. The new model will be a more systematic, gradual approach, using data to determine market opportunities, gain employment, monitor progress, and phase-out assistance. The programme, now in the pilot stage in Chad, Uganda and South Sudan (on hold due to the current emergency), will fundamentally change the ways WFP and UNHCR work together with refugees from the onset of a crisis, leading to increased dignity, productivity and self-reliance. Lessons from the Pilot Programme will contribute to an overall shift in the ways WFP and UNHCR work together with refugees from the onset of a crisis, leading to increased dignity, productivity and self-reliance of all persons of concern.

Objective 2: Enable people to preserve and protect their productive assets as well as meet their immediate consumption needs

Enabling activities	Indicators of achievement
Rapid socio-economic profiling	Socio economic profile and livelihood capacities of PoC defined and monitored (yes/no)
Provide and safeguard livelihood consumables	# of PoC provided with cash/vouchers for livelihoods provisioning
	# of PoC with specific needs provided with cash/vouchers for livelihoods purposes
	# of PoC receiving cash/vouchers for agriculture/livestock purposes
	# of PoC receiving production kits or inputs for agriculture/livestock/fisheries activities
Ensure access to essential services	% households with access to arable land or other productive natural resources



DEVELOP AND EXPAND PROVEN AND INNOVATIVE WAYS OF SUPPORTING REFUGEES' ECONOMIC SELF-RELIANCE

Expected results

- Partners are identified that can effectively implement quality livelihood support interventions (local, national, international, private, public).
- Refugees have increased access to technological advances in agriculture to increase yields and quality of products.
- Refugees have increased access to skills and vocational training according to market demand, individual interest and capacity.
- Refugees have increased access to information and services leading to employment and to greater market access.
- Refugees have increased access to micro-enterprise development opportunities and support.
- Refugees have increased access to financial services.

UNHCR and partners will support a range of activities and approaches to building self-reliance in the short, medium and long term. Interventions will be developed following analyses of refugees' interests, practices and capacities as well as existing economic activity and available opportunities. In all cases, programmes will build capacity and conditions for market access and positioning. Activities will be designed to help participants succeed in the local economy, avoiding UNHCR or partner- dependent activities.

UNHCR will place emphasis on developing livelihoods interventions that may be replicated and scaled up. The Agency aims to reach a maximum number of refugees and host community participants causing a significant increase in their ability to achieve self-reliance over a lifetime. Interventions must be context specific, yet provide lessons applicable across geographic and cultural lines. UNHCR will develop new partnerships with specialized NGOs and the private sector to help refugees enter new markets and take advantage of internet based opportunities.

Enabling Activities

Partner mapping

- Identify the range of potential partners locally, nationally, and internationally that are best suited to support market-driven livelihoods interventions.

Agricultural advancements

- Assess current yield and quality of agricultural products and livestock against potential yield and quality.
- Facilitate access to agricultural extension services to improve yield and quality.
- Assist agriculturalists and pastoralists to increase resiliency against socio-natural disasters and adaptation to climate change.
- Identify new markets and value chains for agricultural products, assist producers in production and marketing.

Generating employment

- Employ refugee workers in relief efforts wherever possible, including building, camp management and maintenance, and provision of essential services including food distribution, health, education, and protection-related functions. While employment may be temporary, it contributes to helping refugees maintain their assets and develop new skills.
- Implement cash-for-work, food-for-work or asset provisioning projects that provide maximum employment opportunities for displaced people. Projects should take care to provide opportunities to women, ethnic minorities and other particularly vulnerable people.
- Establish partnerships with impact-sourcing⁶ companies to build work opportunities for refugees.
- Identify new markets, value chains and potential employers for skilled refugees, including artisans, education or health care workers, technicians and other professionals.

⁶ Impact-sourcing is an initiative to bring internet-based jobs to disadvantaged communities. It aims to provide higher-income employment to people who might not otherwise be employed in information technology-enabled jobs.

Provide language, skills, vocational, and entrepreneurship training

- Ensure access to functional language training for youth and adults in collaboration with the operation's Education Strategy.
- Provide or facilitate access to business skills training, including financial literacy and numeracy where needed.
- Enable entrepreneurship through training on market analysis, business planning, resources and risk management, and expansion.
- Provide life-skills training to promote employment readiness, including negotiating a job, obtaining fair wages, and combating discrimination.
- Provide or facilitate access to skills that will enable refugees to enter global online marketplaces for their goods or services.
- Ensure access to Technical and Vocational Education and Training. Graduates of these programmes should receive locally-recognized certificates or diplomas. Trainings offered should include courses available through distance learning both within and outside of UNHCR's Community Technology Access centres.⁷

COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY ACCESS (CTA)

Access to technology is increasingly important for refugees to be able to participate in local markets and the global economy. Internet availability and communications applications provide information on opportunities and help them participate in economic activities. In 2009, UNHCR launched the CTA programme which gives refugees access to computers, the Internet and associated learning and employment opportunities.

In 2014, UNHCR will launch an expanded CTA programme aimed at providing more learning options and opportunities for diversified employment and entrepreneurship. The expanded programme will offer access to both certified and informal education programmes, provide expertise on information and communications technology (ICT) for development to partners and UNHCR staff, and develop more impactful partnerships with specialised companies and organizations. A new online resources platform will support these and other activities. The platform is envisioned to offer field offices a large percentage of uniform content and tools, plus the capacity to customize the interface to highlight and facilitate their activities. The new programme will also make use of social reporting, enabling UNHCR staff working on the CTA programme in the field to share information and lessons learned from their activities.

⁷ See UNHCR's Community Technology Access Programme document, forthcoming in 2014.

Provide employment information and job placement

- Design comprehensive employment promotion programmes in the refugee hosting areas based on assessments. Programmes should include job information platforms and job counselling services. They should also include a database of refugees' employment profiles to share with potential employers.
- Engage with private sector employment agencies where appropriate to provide these services.
- Develop agreements with local businesses or trade associations to offer on-the-job training, apprenticeships or internship placements to refugees.

INTERNET-BASED EMPLOYMENT

UNHCR is increasingly seeking ways to connect refugees with new employment opportunities in data-outsourcing and microwork. Within the data-outsourcing market, an increasing number of companies and organizations are turning to impact sourcing, as described above. UNHCR is exploring different models to partner with impact sourcing companies to generate work for refugees. Microwork is a series of small tasks that contribute towards a larger project and are completed by many individuals over the Internet. Online market places for microwork provide opportunities for employers to upload tasks and access a global workforce, while workers earn income on an ad hoc basis. Impact sourcing companies either group together tasks from microwork platforms or win contracts for bulk work directly from a company which allows them to hire workers on regular contracts.

Provide entrepreneurship and micro-enterprise support

- Develop programmes to support micro-enterprise development or work with existing business incubator programmes.
- Promote local-to-global networking and knowledge-sharing facilities through dedicated platforms for refugee entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs employing refugees or investing in refugee hosting areas.
- Assess micro-finance needs for potential entrepreneurs and develop programmes or partner with specialized financial institutions to provide cash or in-kind grants or loans, savings schemes, micro insurance or other services.
- Help form or support existing small business organizations or trade associations.

Provide increasing access to financial services⁸

- Assess household practices, demand and readiness for savings, loans, remittance transfers, insurance and other financial services.
- Develop programmes or partner with financial services providers to make individual or household financial products available to displaced people.
- Promote opportunities for refugees to access finance from crowd-funding platforms and other emerging sources.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

Services such as savings, credit, money transfers and micro insurance have the potential to be powerful tools for supporting livelihoods among refugee populations, if and when the minimum conditions exist. These services and products can help safeguard assets, build financial capital, and open economic opportunities. Reliable sources of credit can provide a basis for planning and expanding business activities. Access to financial products such as savings schemes, loans for learning or training, insurance and remittances can help refugees diversify their income sources to meet basic needs and cope with economic shocks. They also reduce vulnerability to risky lending practices or insecure financial schemes.

These structures are often lost during a crisis. UNHCR works with financial institutions, partners and local governments in host communities to allow access to services and products where they exist, and develop them where they do not. To work effectively, these services must be stable and reliable. Refugees must be able to trust service providers to protect their assets and help them build financial capital. Often, services should be paired with financial literacy training to teach people the value of products and how best to use them. Training is especially important where services available in the host community vary from those found in refugees' communities of origin.

⁸ See Investing in Solutions: A practical guide for the use of microfinance in UNHCR operations. UNHCR, 2011. <http://www.unhcr.org/4eeb17019.pdf>

Objective 3: Develop and expand proven and innovative ways of supporting people's economic self-reliance

Enabling activities	Indicators of achievement
Generating employment	# of PoC earning incentives/wages from partner and from community contracting projects
	% of participants in livelihood-support projects from host communities
Job information and placement	# of PoC registered in job placement services
	# of PoC enrolled in apprenticeship/on-the-job training schemes
Skills and vocational training	# of PoC provided with language training for livelihoods purposes
	# of PoC receiving life-skills training for livelihood purposes
	# of PoC provided with entrepreneurship/business training
	# of PoC provided with financial literacy training
	# of PoC enrolled in formal national institutions for certified skills training
	% of vocational or technical skills training students who graduate (successful completion and receipt of certification)
	% of vocational and technical skills training students who are youth aged 15-24 years
	# of PoC using CTA centres
	# of PoC provided with e-learning/education/skills training in CTA centres
	# of PoC provided with guidance on labour market opportunities
	# of PoC provided with guidance on market opportunities
Entrepreneurship	# of PoC receiving conditional grants for business start up
	# of small business associations formed/ supported
Financial services	# of PoC participating in community-based group savings/loans/insurance schemes
	# of PoC receiving loans through UNHCR partners (in current year)
	# of PoC clients in national microfinance institutions or banks
	# of PoC with access to bank accounts





IMPROVE PLANNING, LEARNING AND PRACTICE ON SUCCESSFUL APPROACHES TO LIVELIHOODS DEVELOPMENT AND THEIR IMPACT ON SELF-RELIANCE

Expected results

- Livelihoods programme development is informed by current research on approaches, practices, and technologies.
- UNHCR field operations have comprehensive multi-year strategic programmes for livelihoods development.
- Field operations have monitoring systems implemented to keep track of progress and allow for early detection of problems to make corrective changes.
- UNHCR documents experiences and carries out regular evaluations of livelihoods initiatives for increased learning, best practice sharing, scaling up and replication of successful experiences.

While the first three objectives are aimed at improving UNHCR's direct actions to build self-reliance with displaced people, this objective refers to creating the institutional systems necessary to continually expand and inform best ways of working. New knowledge from research projects, experiences of UNHCR field operations and others must influence how programmes are designed and implemented. UNHCR will continue to participate in knowledge-sharing networks and to learn from, collaborate with and contribute to global dialogues on building self-reliance. Our capacity to generate lessons requires an increased effort to track and learn from our own programming. It entails gathering reliable data and increasing our capacity to analyse and use it to inform our actions.

Generating knowledge also requires that we have good planning according to each local context. Plans should be designed based on socio-economic profiling of displaced people and the local community, including market and labour assessments. They should contemplate available resources, as described under Strategic Objective 3. Plans should be influenced by prior experience, practices from other interventions and innovative research. They should be designed in a participatory manner with persons of concern, NGO partners, governments, private-sector actors and others who may influence or be affected by livelihoods activities. Progress must be monitored at regular intervals to detect unintended consequences and make changes where necessary, as well as to expand activities that are effective. Regular internal and external evaluations should be carried out to document experiences and contribute lessons to the wider development community.

Enabling Activities

Research

- Expand participation in networks and communities of practice for knowledge sharing. Networks may be national, regional or international and provide a platform for continued learning and building of good practices.
- Invest in research and innovative ideas. Collaborate with experts and practitioners to adapt approaches and tools to specific contexts.
- Invest in an online knowledge-sharing and learning platform for livelihoods in refugee and displacement settings.

Assessments

- Undertake market assessments to understand and build on local market dynamics and prevent or minimise disruptions.
- Use available assessments and information on education, child protection and SGBV to understand existing power dynamics within communities, potential challenges in accessing labour and educational opportunities and capacities to address these challenges.
- Investigate and develop possibilities for refugees to engage in distance work, including data-outsourcing and micro-work.

VALUE CHAIN APPROACHES

Value chains are the range of activities required to bring a product or service from production to delivery. The term value chain incorporates supply, value addition, transactions, and market linkages. UNHCR works with displaced producers and artisans, traders, service providers and others to make the most of opportunities available in different value chains. Programmes promote market access and competitiveness to enter and succeed in new markets. They provide assistance and training to improve skills in production and processing, and incorporate productive technology where appropriate, helping to reduce costs and increase efficiency. The value chain approach is frequently used in combination with other market approaches and activities, as lessons from value chain analyses can help refugees make informed decisions on training needs, business opportunities or labour prospects.

UNHCR is currently applying a value chain approach with Syrian refugee artisans. Many Syrians are highly skilled in traditional arts and crafts including inlaid wood, hammered metal, embroidery and crochet. UNHCR is working to identify international markets for these products including direct and online retail outlets. UNHCR is also engaging with local designers to couple the skills of Syrian artisans with the labour demands and opportunities available in the regional arts and crafts sector. Established designers or design houses may help artisans innovate according to market demands. Artisans benefit by adding value to their crafts and generating regular income. Designers and design houses benefit by drawing on a uniquely skilled labour force that does not displace national workers. This approach strengthens the local economy with new products, injects income into the refugee and host community, and fosters social cohesion and stability.

- Implement value chain assessments to determine which markets refugees are already participating in, how their positioning might be strengthened, and where there might be opportunity to expand or begin engagement.
- Assess refugees' interests, skills and productive assets to match with potential market opportunities.

Planning

- Develop field operation plans for helping refugees engage in remunerated work. Plans should be based on market and labour assessments and socio-economic profiles of displaced people. A time frame should be included to ensure gradual progression from preparatory activities to income generating activities.
- Plan for specific approaches including economic baseline measurements, benchmarks, outcomes, and impact.
- Ensure the participation of NGOs, governments, and private-sector partners in planning.

Monitoring performance

- Measure performance progress at set intervals. This information should inform continuation of the livelihood intervention and what changes should be made to maximize impact.

Evaluation and knowledge sharing

- Include internal or external evaluations in new or expanding approaches to generate lessons. Evaluations should analyse actions, impact and sustainability.
- Document and disseminate lessons within refugee operations and with other development actors and networks.
- Use lessons learned as inputs to the planning cycle. Evaluations should help improve preparatory actions, connections with relevant stakeholders, scaling up implementation and adding innovative components to existing activities.

Objective 4: Improve planning, learning and practice on successful approaches to livelihoods development and their impact on self-reliance

Enabling activities	Indicators of achievement
Investment in research	# of new partnerships developed for knowledge generating purposes
	# of research projects developed or supported
Assessments	Market survey/labour sector survey conducted or available (yes/no)
	PoC engaged in participatory assessment (yes/no)
Planning	Strategic plan for livelihoods programming informed by assessment (yes/no)
	# of public sector partners engaged in strategic planning and implementation
	# of private sector partners engaged in strategic planning and implementation
	# of development agencies engaged in strategic planning and implementation
Monitoring	# of livelihoods interventions with economic baseline data
	# of livelihoods interventions with a functioning monitoring system
Evaluation and knowledge sharing	% of livelihoods interventions with a planned or implemented external evaluation
	# of plans that incorporate lessons from previous evaluations
	# of project evaluations published and disseminated

GRADUATION APPROACH IN CAIRO AND SAN JOSE

UNHCR is currently implementing two pilots of the Graduation Approach in Cairo, Egypt and San Jose, Costa Rica. Cairo hosts over 180,000 refugees, both Sub-Saharan African refugees in a protracted situation and Syrian refugees in an emergency situation. Testing the Graduation Approach with these populations will be an opportunity to learn how effective the model can be with diverse yet representative groups of refugees and asylum seekers. San Jose hosts approximately 12,700 refugees and about 4,000 asylum seekers, mostly from Colombia. The pilot will support 500 refugees and asylum seekers to pursue self- or wage-employment opportunities. The legal context in Costa Rica is favourable, allowing both groups to obtain work permits. In both cases, host country nationals will also participate in the programme (see annex 2).





STRATEGIC APPROACHES

STRATEGIC APPROACHES ARE THE ACTIONS UNHCR WILL CARRY OUT TO ENSURE APPROPRIATE, EFFECTIVE, AND INNOVATIVE PROGRAMMING. THESE APPROACHES ARE WAYS OF WORKING THAT CUT ACROSS ALL UNITS AND FIELD OFFICES OF UNHCR.

PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION

UNHCR will continue to build partnerships and coordination with a diverse range of host country governments, regional and donor governments, UN agencies, international organizations, national and international NGOs, and faith-based organizations. The Agency will increase engagement with specialized partners for market-based, targeted initiatives. The Livelihoods Unit will strive to increase collaboration among divisions, bureaux, and regional and country offices within UNHCR.

CAPACITY-BUILDING

All livelihoods activities will aim to provide people and organizations with more skills and knowledge than they had prior to participating. Programmes will go beyond transferring assets by adding a training component and other capacity-building activities to projects. UNHCR will ensure that staff, partner organizations, local governments, refugees and host communities benefit from livelihoods skills and knowledge exchanges as direct participants or indirect beneficiaries.

COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

UNHCR will communicate information about livelihoods programmes and related activities to refugees and host communities, internal and affiliated staff, partners, local governments and donors. Messages will be transparent and carried out in culturally appropriate and accessible ways. The Agency will engage in advocacy activities including awareness-raising events to promote ideas and receive feedback from communities and other stakeholders.

INTEGRATED APPROACHES

The livelihoods of refugee households are integral to many sectors including SGBV, education, health and nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, energy, environment, settlement and shelter. The Livelihoods Unit will work with other sectors in the Agency at the headquarters, regional and country levels to collaborate and coordinate activities. UNHCR will ensure that livelihoods interventions for refugees take into account the needs and interests of host communities and governments.

MEASUREMENT

UNHCR's results-based management tool is currently the main source of livelihoods data. Beginning in 2014, the Livelihoods Unit will invest in developing indicators with a specific focus on documenting baselines and measuring outcomes. The aim is to track how livelihoods interventions affect people, and detect problems or unintended consequences as early as possible. The system will use tools to measure baselines, income changes and quality of life shifts.

INNOVATION

UNHCR is committed to finding creative and innovative ways to ensure that refugees can access livelihoods that improve their well-being and dignity. The Livelihoods Unit, with support from the Innovations Unit, will explore ways of linking refugees and host communities to new technologies for training, employment and entrepreneurship. The Agency will engage advisors and partners to help refugees and host communities benefit from new opportunities.





ANNEXES

MECHANISMS TO FACILITATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

Priority countries

The Livelihoods Unit, together with Headquarters bureaux and UNHCR country operations will select priority countries for 2014-2018. While all countries should develop market-based livelihoods programming in line with this Strategy, the Livelihoods Unit will provide exceptional support to priority operations. Non-priority countries will continue to receive assistance where possible, and should be encouraged to contact the Livelihoods Unit when needed.

National and local livelihoods strategies should be context specific, incorporating both local needs and opportunities into planning. Operations may identify specific areas, urban or rural, to focus their efforts. Countries should obtain information available on refugees' skills and training in the internal registration database (proGres) as well as inventory productive assets and real property in their places of origin, and supplement this information where necessary. They should also develop or adapt a monitoring and evaluation system that meets their needs. The system should incorporate the global achievement indicators from UNHCR's results framework and develop context specific indicators for their own impact monitoring.

The Livelihoods unit will provide:

- Assistance to develop multi-year strategic plans or support implementation where country plans exist
- Support to supplement information available on skills and training with data collection on refugees' interests
- Assistance to conduct market assessments and value chain analyses
- Support to identify potential partnerships with market-oriented NGOs, the private sector and others who may assist helping refugees enter productive markets
- Livelihoods specific training for UNHCR staff, partners and government counterparts based on needs
- Support for fund-raising and advocacy
- Assistance to set up monitoring and evaluation systems
- Support for identifying lessons and good practices to document and disseminate

Country Task Forces

Depending on the scale and complexity of the operation, priority countries will be supported by either a dedicated Task Force or an existing country-specific committee. They will be accountable for achieving results in field operations, and will convene meetings to discuss progress and challenges in livelihoods initiatives.

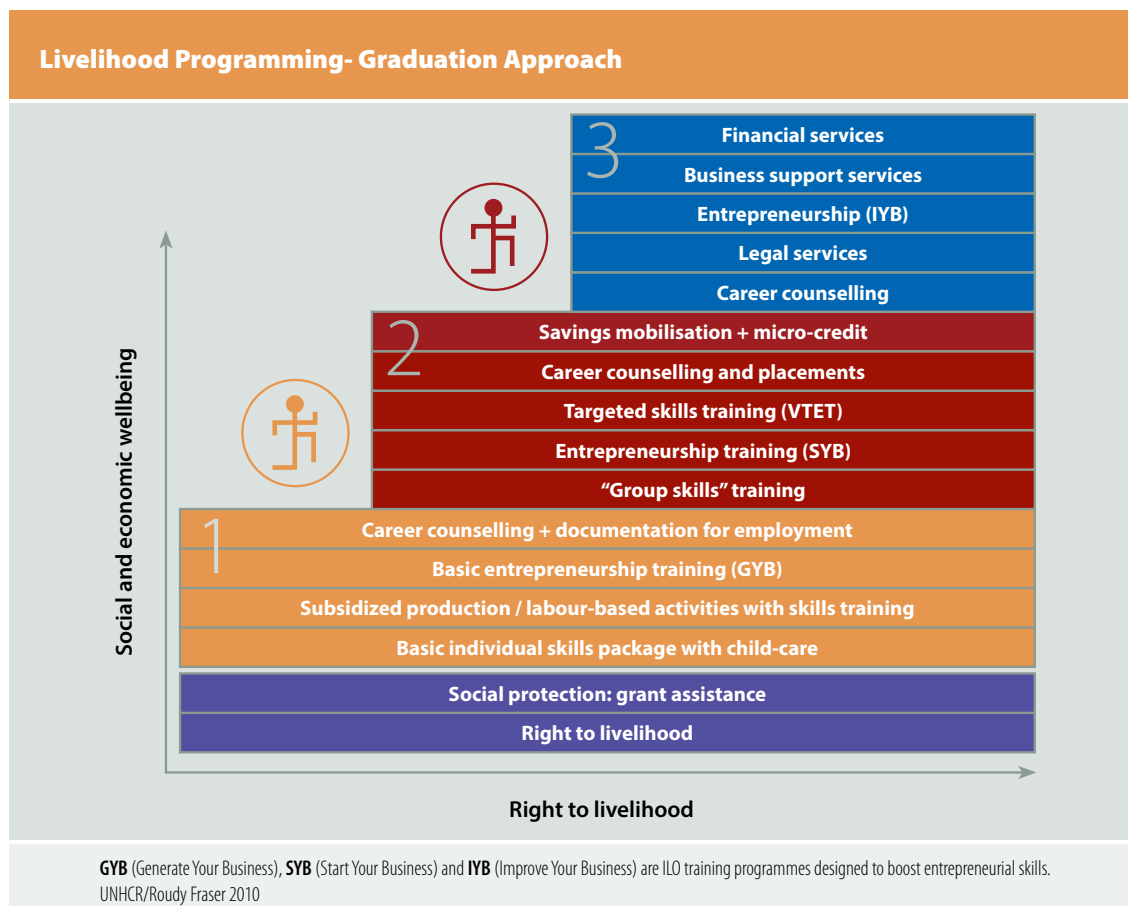
Advisory Board

The Livelihoods Unit will establish an Advisory Board to help guide the implementation of the UNHCR Livelihood Strategy. The Board will monitor progress, advise on potential partnerships and recommend learning opportunities. It will also raise awareness about UNHCR and its efforts to build self-reliance with refugees and other displaced persons. The Advisory Board will be a 12-member group made up of practitioners from NGOs, UN agencies, donors, researchers and the private sector. UNHCR will bring together board members with different areas of expertise, including agriculture, internet-based employment, entrepreneurship, engagement with the private sector and financial services.

The Graduation Approach

The Livelihoods Strategy will build upon global-level initiatives with NGO partners, UN agencies, governments and the private sector. These include poverty reduction models such as the Graduation Approach, developed by the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) and the Ford Foundation. This poverty reduction model is a global effort to understand how safety nets, livelihoods and access to financial services can be sequenced to create sustainable pathways out of extreme poverty. It is an interdisciplinary methodology that targets the poor and extreme poor with the goal of moving them out of extreme poverty in a sustainable and time-bound manner, adapting a method originally developed by BRAC in Bangladesh. The Graduation Approach:

- Draws on the most relevant aspects of social protection, livelihoods development, and access to finance to deliver results.
- Combines support for immediate needs with longer term human capital investments, thereby protecting participants in the short-run while promoting sustainable livelihoods for the future.
- Purposefully targets the extreme poor, people at the lowest level of the economic ladder, who usually have few or no assets and are chronically food insecure.



SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

UNHCR strategies, guidelines and reviews

Document series: Livelihood assessments and strategic plans from 16 field operations, UNHCR, 2008-2013.

Investing in Solutions: A Practical Guide for the Use of Microfinance in UNHCR Operations. UNHCR, 2011. <http://www.unhcr.org/4eeb17019.pdf>

Livelihood Programming in UNHCR: Operational Guidelines. UNHCR, 2012. <http://www.unhcr.org/4fbdf17c9.html>

Promoting Livelihoods and Self-Reliance: Operational Guidance on Refugee Protection and Solutions in Urban Areas. UNHCR, 2011. <http://www.unhcr.org/4eeb19f49.pdf>

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Action against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence: An Updated Strategy, UNHCR, 2012. <http://www.unhcr.org/4e1d5aba9.pdf>

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S. Jaspars and S. O'Callaghan, *Challenging Choices: Protection and Livelihoods in conflict - Case Studies from Darfur, Chechnya, Sri Lanka and the Occupied Palestinian Territories*, HPG, Overseas Development Institute, 2010.

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Document series: Women's Refugee Commission, Research series on urban livelihoods, 2011.

<http://womensrefugeecommission.org/resources>





