WASH

IN THE COMPREHENSIVE REFUGEE RESPONSE FRAMEWORK (CRRF)
INTRODUCTION

The WASH sector covers water supply, sanitation, hygiene, and solid waste management. Upholding the human right to water and sanitation (UN Resolution 64/292) is fundamental for the protection of refugees and persons of concern to UNHCR. In the context of the CRRF, ensuring access to safe water and sanitation services is an essential life-saving protection intervention and fundamental for achievement of all other longer term protection outcomes. WASH programming in a CRRF context means applying a multi-stakeholder approach and planning with relevant partners. Different partners are relevant in different areas and at different stages of WASH interventions and knowing how and when to engage them is key for a comprehensive response. Although it may be necessary to establish refugee specific services, particularly during an acute emergency, the overall aim is to ensure that refugee WASH services are integrated in to local and national systems and are alignment with development plans.

OBJECTIVES OF WASH PROGRAMMING IN THE CRRF

1. Protection: Refugees and other persons of concern (PoC) to UNHCR have universal and equitable access to affordable WASH services, which is essential and fundamental for achievement of international protection outcomes. WASH activities contribute to improved health and education and relieve refugees from poverty and hunger. Adequate sanitation facilities and menstrual hygiene management options contribute to dignified living conditions and safe environments.

2. Peace: Host communities benefit from equitable access to improved quality WASH services alongside refugees and other PoC to promote peaceful co-existence. UNHCR WASH activities are implemented in such way to promote peaceful co-existence with host communities and in an inclusive manner to protect the most vulnerable community members from violence, discrimination and other protection risks. Inclusion of refugees within national systems and development plans for WASH service provision will open opportunities for new streams of financing for shared development outcomes.

3. Prosperity: Refugees, PoC and host communities benefit from improved economic prosperity through improved access to WASH services, creation of livelihood opportunities and encouraged use of cash based interventions to strengthen local water, sanitation and hygiene markets where possible. Encouraging governments to allow refugees livelihoods opportunities within the WASH sector, ‘freedom of movement’ and the ‘right to work’ and pay for WASH services will promote economic prosperity, dignity and reduce the funding burden on the international community.

4. Planet: UNHCR WASH activities seek to prevent environmental degradation through sustainable groundwater use, solid waste management and safe management of the entire sanitation chain, including disposal or recycling of faecal sludge.
UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

- **International Protection**: Where a refugee or person of concern to UNHCR is denied access to essential life-saving WASH services in a country of origin or a country of asylum due to a ‘well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion’ then UNHCR must advocate on behalf of such refugees and persons of concern to ensure they have safe and equitable access to essential WASH services.

- **Human Rights to Water and Sanitation**: The rights to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation are human rights that are essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights (UN Resolution 70/169) and are fundamental for the protection of refugees and persons of concern to UNHCR.

- **Leave No One Behind**: In alignment with the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal commitments to “leave no one behind” and “ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” (SDG 6), UNHCR promotes universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water and access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all refugees and persons of concern to UNHCR. Access needs to be ensured regardless of location (camp, settlement, out of camp, urban, or rural).

- **Effective Coordination** with local government and WASH related line ministries (e.g. Ministry of Water, Infrastructure, Environment, Education, etc) is critical and should focus on how WASH services can be integrated into existing systems.

- **Humanitarian-Development Nexus**: Emergency responses need to transform into a more consolidated and stable programmatic response in the mid- to long-term. This would include seeking the engagement of relevant national and local government authorities and development actors. The Global Compact on Refugees envisages that refugee responses would be designed in a manner that would pave the way for more sustainable support and responses, where possible, integrating responses for refugees into national systems while ensuring these are adequately supported.
**STEPS TO TAKE AND ROLE OF UNHCR**

- **Data:** UNHCR needs to better understand its persons of concern in terms of their access to safely managed and affordable WASH services, and hold data on where and how many refugees and persons of concern are being denied access to essential life-saving WASH services in a country of origin or a country of asylum due to a ‘well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion’. Once UNHCR has this data it will be able to advocate for the protection of refugees and support solutions for improved access to WASH services for refugees and persons of concern where they do not have universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services.

- **Multi Year Multi-Partner Planning:** In each situation where refugees and persons of concern do not have universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, sanitation and hygiene services, UNHCR will need to develop a multi-year WASH Strategy to advocate for the protection of refugees and support solutions for improved access to WASH services. The WASH strategy should consider the transition from humanitarian (6 months) through to development (20+ years). Each phase of the programme will require different partnerships and technical approaches, and the transition from humanitarian through to achievement of SDG 6 development outcomes will need to be carefully designed.

- **Inclusion:** UNHCR WASH programmes will create linkages to SDG 6 “Sustainable water and sanitation FOR ALL” and promote strengthening of national WASH service delivery systems and expedite inclusion of refugees and PoCs, and accelerate realisation of national development plans through introduction of new financing mechanisms. Encouraging governments to allow refugees to be hosted ‘out-of-camp’ in urban areas with ‘freedom of movement’ and the ‘right to work’ and pay for WASH services will promote economic prosperity, dignity and international protection outcomes. Host communities will benefit from equitable access to improved quality WASH services alongside refugees and other persons of concern (PoCs), which will promote peaceful co-existence.

- **New Partnerships:** UNHCR works with non-governmental partners, governments, IOM and UNICEF, philanthropic foundations and academia institutions to implement, study and innovate WASH solutions responding to refugee needs. In order to achieve CRRF outcomes UNHCR will need increased engagement with a wider range of WASH development actors (UN Water, UN Habitat, UNDP, UNICEF, WB, ADB, Development Donors, Private Sector) at the global level and increased engagement at the national level with relevant WASH Line Ministries.

- **New Technologies:** UNHCR will focus on support for sustainable WASH technologies which will reduce the long term ‘life-cycle cost’ of WASH service provision. This includes use of renewable energy (solar) for water pumping and sanitation/solid waste-to-value, reduction, re-use and recycling technologies.

- **UNHCR’s role in WASH interventions is the following:**
  - **Protection:** UNHCR must ensure that protection considerations are taken into account in the activities of partners.
  - **Data Management:** UNHCR has privileged access to refugees and needs to be able to compile and provide all relevant data necessary for WASH programming for refugees and host communities.
• **Coordination:** As the agency ultimately responsible for refugee responses, UNHCR has a coordinating role and needs to ensure that all needs of refugees are covered by partners.

• **Technical expertise & support:** Partners providing WASH services for refugees should be able to count on technical and general support from UNHCR as we retain the overall responsibility for our PoCs.

• **Advocacy:** UNHCR should advocate and support relevant counterparts (Ministries, UN) for the inclusion of PoCs in national and local development plans as well as planning frameworks such as UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework-UNSDCF. In addition, PoCs should be integrated in national monitoring and data systems. Where relevant, UNHCR should provide technical support to legislative or policy change.

To ensure predictability and sustainability in WASH responses through timely and meaningful engagement with all relevant stakeholders including local/national government and ministries as well as humanitarian and development partners (e.g. UN agencies, civil society)

- Situation analysis and mapping of relevant actors in each area of this sector and for every stage. They include other UN agencies, civil society, public and private actors.

- Refugee participation and consultation during all phases of WASH programming is of paramount importance to ensuring optimal outcomes related to WASH including those linked to protection, health, and livelihoods.
General
- Identification of WASH capacities in the areas likely to be affected during refugee influx
- Analysis of community practices in sanitation and hygiene
- In collaboration with the supply team, the sourcing strategy for WASH materials and contractors has been identified.
- Conduct other relevant assessments using available tools: Needs Assessment for Refugee Emergencies (NARE); Preparedness Package for Refugee Emergencies; UN-Habitat City Resilience tool.
- Identify suitable refugee hosting sites particularly in urban areas using “urban population absorption capacity tools”

Focus on improved timely provision of lifesaving WASH services to those fleeing conflict and persecution
- Life-saving interventions: water trucking; chlorination; emergency sanitation; hygiene promotion; Non-food Item distribution.
- Reduce transmission of diseases of public health importance.
- Support identification of suitable refugee hosting sites
- Ensure government led response with inclusion of refugees and PoCs in to the national systems to the extent possible.
- Where the need is identified, support the development of parallel or additional WASH services.
- Close monitoring of WASH service provision and rates of scale up.
- Mainstream WASH Protection Principles within response to reduce protection risks.
- Mobilise Humanitarian Partners
- Mobilise humanitarian financing

- Transition to cost-efficient WASH services with low operation and maintenance cost, with reduced reliance on fuel, energy, chemicals and expertise.
- Support to national WASH authorities and WASH service providers (Grand Bargain).
- Improve access to WASH services.
- Reduce WASH protection risks.
- Investment in durable infrastructure when funds are available
- Switch from emergency to post-emergency/national standards
- Transition to household level services where possible to promote ownership and cultivate willingness to pay for WASH services among refugees and host community.
- Explore revenue collection options ensuring relevant linkages with cash based interventions and support development of refugee livelihood opportunities.
- Build capacity of refugee and host community groups for basic service provision and the capacity of local/national government for the service authority functions including regulation, monitoring, technical backstopping, asset management, etc.
- Phased integration of all WASH services in to national systems
- Introduce revenue collection if refugee livelihood opportunities exist (fees collected to cover the costs of WASH service provision).
- Monitoring of WASH service provision – gather data on Refugee access to WASH to measure against SDGs, and reduce WASH protection risks.
- Handover to Development Partners (eg. UNICEF, UN-Habitat, WB, Line Ministries)
- Advocate for Development financing, and link to SDG processes – “Leave no one behind”.

Key Partners
Government ministries responsible for water, infrastructure, and energy; UNICEF; UN-Habitat
Relevant line ministries; UNICEF; SBPs (DRC, MSB, SDC, DSS Water, Irish Aid, etc.); MSF; other INGOs; NGOs
UNICEF; UN-Habitat, relevant line ministries; local authorities; local NGOs; private sector
Relevant line ministries; local authorities; development partners, private sector

Data Sources
High Alert List for Emergency Preparedness
Rapid Household WASH Assessment
Knowledge Attitudes Practices Household Survey
Knowledge Attitudes Practices Household Survey