

# Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) in Refugee Situations: A Multi-Sectoral Framework for Action

## A UNHCR - Save the Children Initiative

### What is it?

The Framework is designed as a tool to assist with integrating and mainstreaming international policies, standards and guidance on infant and young child feeding (IYCF) with all other sectors operating in the context.

### Why is it important?

Most children do not die due to conflicts or natural disasters themselves, but rather due to resulting food shortages, lack of safe water, inadequate health care, inferior shelter and poor sanitation and hygiene. **Protecting and promoting optimal IYCF in refugee situations is crucial for survival, healthy growth and development in infants and young children.** Protection, promotion and support to IYCF practices are increasingly part of humanitarian responses but specific resource mobilisation and general attention to IYCF has still proven to be difficult.

Hence, the best hope for averting the resulting disabilities and mortality, which are so common among children during emergencies is to ensure that they are adequately cared for and fed.

### What is its purpose?

The purpose of the Framework is to provide guidance across sectors on what needs to be considered to create an **'infant and young child friendly'** environment and facilitate optimal IYCF in refugee situations.

The Framework specifically encourages protection of pregnant and lactating women (PLW), infants and young children through multi-sectoral integration of IYCF-sensitive activities by taking advantage of all contact points with PLW, infants, young children and caregivers. This Framework aims to bring IYCF higher up on the agenda in humanitarian responses.



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

### Where should it be used?

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

## What are its key objectives?

### Action 1: Advocate for relevant stakeholders to consider IYCF

- Advocacy is done to influence relevant stakeholders to take IYCF into consideration when planning a humanitarian response.

### Action 2: Mobilize resources for IYCF

- All stakeholders push IYCF higher on their agenda and actively look for resources.

### Action 3: Endorse key policies and adhere to operational standards

- Key policies and operational standards that will enable the protection of infant feeding and promotion of appropriate IYCF are endorsed and implemented.

### Action 4: Select appropriate IYCF activities

- Specific needs of infants, children and PLW in refugee settings are actively considered across all sectors and appropriate IYCF activities are selected.

### Action 5: Integrate IYCF with other sectors

- Opportunities are identified and activities are put in place in collaboration with all sectors and the community to support timely, appropriate IYCF programming.

### Action 6: Coordinate IYCF-sensitive activities

- Efficiency, coverage and effectiveness of IYCF-sensitive interventions are enhanced through coordination.

### Action 7: Implement monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning

- Quality of implementation is ensured by monitoring, evaluating, setting up accountability mechanisms and learning from experience.

## What is in the Sector Chapters?

The Framework has sector-specific chapters that consist of the following:

- Common strategic objectives for the sector and IYCF
- Key integrated activities between sector and IYCF to prioritise in a response
- Overarching opportunities for collaboration between the sector and IYCF
- Resources

### Who should use it?

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

### The Framework is applicable to all sectors:

- Camp management,
- Child protection,
- Education,
- Food security and livelihoods,
- Nutrition,
- Public health,
- Settlement and shelter,
- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)



© UNHCR/Georgina Goodwin

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