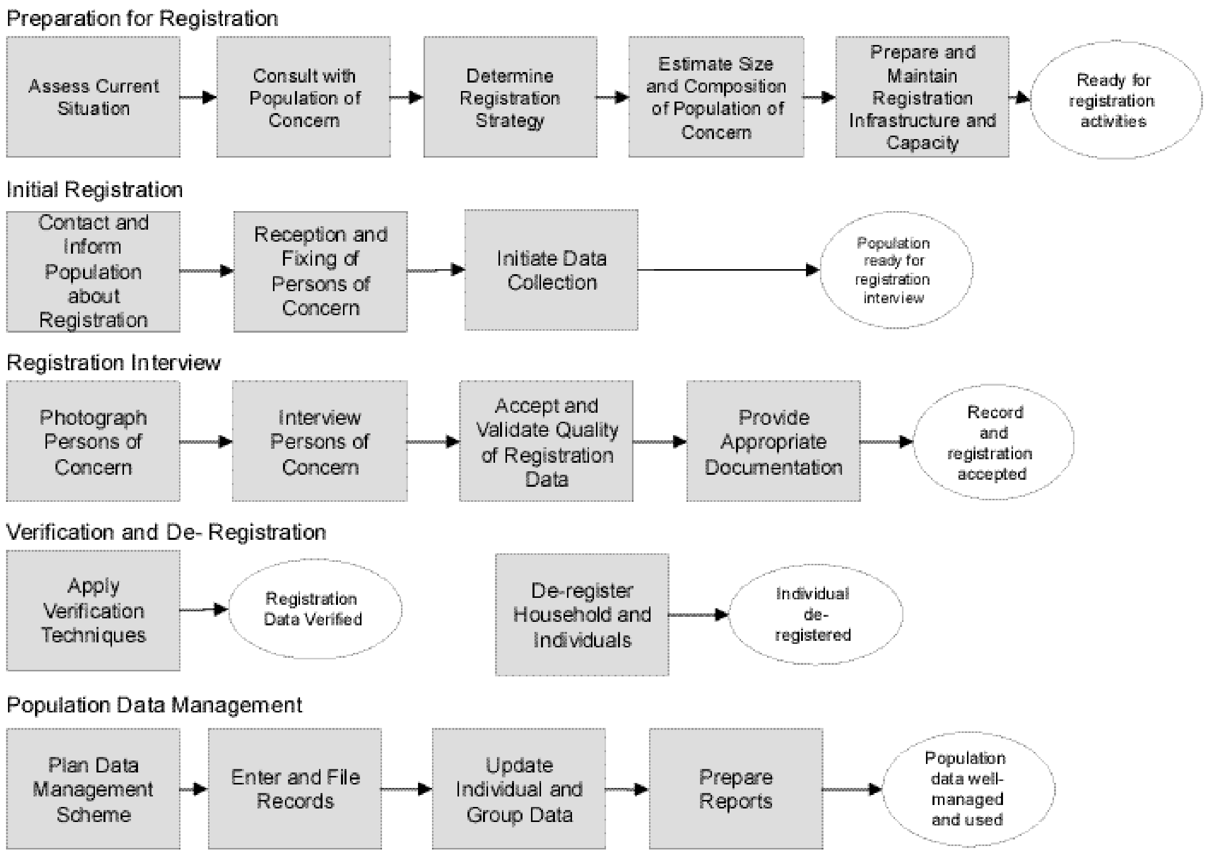
Part Two:
— How to Register, Manage Population Data — and Issue Documentation

Introduction

Part II of the Handbook focuses on the details of how to perform each step of the generic process for registration described in Chapter 4 – *Overview of the Generic Process.* The information is presented according to the recommended order of the steps (repeated below for reference) and is divided into the following five processes:

- Preparation for Registration
- Initial Registration
- Registration Interview
- Validation and Deregistration
- Population Data Management



The guidance provided is applicable to most operational environments. Nevertheless, the Handbook recognizes the diversity of registration environments and objectives. For each step, general information is followed by specific guidance for adapting the generic step to specific contexts such as emergencies, voluntary repatriation operations, refugee status determination and resettlement. This information is targeted at those with responsibilities for planning and implementing registration and related activities, including the documentation of refugees, asylum-seekers and others of concern.

As with Part I, the information provided in Part II of the Handbook can be used by any entity engaged in registration activities: UNHCR, governments or NGO partners.

Preparation for Registration

In additional to general guidance on preparing for registration, this part of the Handbook contains specific information on:

- ***Using the operational standards*** set out in Chapter 3 to assess and evaluate current registration practices (*Section 8.1*)
- Where to find the ***relevant operational goals and objectives*** needed to situate registration activities in the overall context of the operation (*Section 8.2*)
- Who ***the stakeholders*** are and what their roles should be (*Section 10.3*)
- The ***data*** to collect and the ***forms*** to use (*Section 10.2 and Section 10.5.*2)
- Using ***surveys*** to compliment registration data (*Section 11.2*)
- Creating an ***address system*** for a refugee camp (*Section 12.3.2*)
- Setting up proper ***security procedures*** and ***crowd-control*** tips (*Section 12.7*)
- Procuring registration ***materials*** (*Section 12.4*)
- Hiring and training registration ***staff*** (*Section 12.5*)
- Setting up ***registration locations*** and sites (*Section 12.6*)

Overview

UNHCR includes the principles of both results-based management and participatory planning in its planning cycle and processes. These principles underlie the steps described here: assessing the current situation, consulting with the population, determining the registration strategy, estimating the population, and preparing the infrastructure and capacity.

Depending on circumstances, it will not always be necessary to go through all planning steps in every situation. Offices with more continuous registration practices will undertake the planning steps less often than offices with less regular registration activities. Some of these steps, such as Assessment, are linked to evaluation and reporting, and may be done independently of the others.

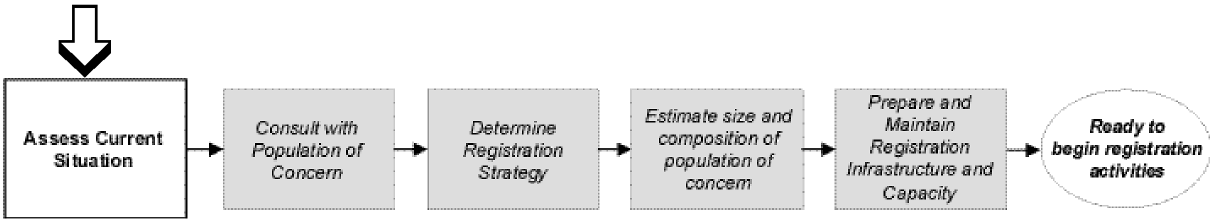
The establishment and implementation of a semi-formal strategy for registration is one of the essential aspects of the unified approach. In most operations, a registration strategy already exists and is in use. However, that strategy may need to be updated or changed to respond to new circumstances, such as an unforeseen influx or opportunity for voluntary repatriation.

A successful result depends on two things: good planning and shared ownership. The most constructive planning processes are those that actively engage key partners and encourage collaborative problem-identification and problem-solving. The least constructive are isolated, independent exercises with little or no involvement of the staff, refugees, and partners responsible for implementation.

The following are recommended resources on planning and planning techniques:

UNHCR Manual, Chapter 4: Part 3 – Planning

Participatory Planning in UNHCR – a Practical Guide: (IOM/10/2002- FOM/09/2002 of 16 January 2002)



8. Assess Current Situation

➢ ***Planning for registration activities starts with an assessment of the current registration systems and the overall context of the operation.***

To improve registration, operations must assess their current registration activities against UNHCR registration standards.

The assessment step is an analysis or evaluation of the current registration, documentation and population data management systems as they compare to UNHCR standards and indicators. Unfortunately, this step is frequently skipped or absorbed into other processes, such as setting objectives. Without a proper understanding of how current registration practices measure up to the norms, it is hard to set good objectives and get the desired results from a revised registration system.

➢ ***A good assessment process is also a measure of progress against indicators, also important for evaluation and reporting.***

8.1 Assess current registration system

Assessing any existing registration system implies a focused and critical comparison between the standards set out in this Handbook and existing registration systems in the country or operation. When recent and current registration procedures are assessed against the standards in this Handbook, the result is called a ***"gap analysis".*** A gap analysis measures the difference between the current situation and the desired standards in terms of the:

- comprehensiveness of the ***registration data collected*** as per standard data set and levels of registration;
- integrity and completeness of the ***registration process in place*** as per the operational standards and the standard registration process;

- ***documentation provided*** to persons of concern as per the operational standards and the generic process; and
- ***use made of the registration-related data*** as per the operational standards and the standard indicators.

➢ ***Use this analysis to identify key issues and problems, define the priorities and objectives of registration intervention, and take stock of existing resources, their limitations and potential.***

8.1.1 Using the standards

Apply the following questions to the results of the latest or current registration practices and compare them with the steps of the standard registration process outlined in the various Sections and Annexes of this Handbook as indicated. ***See Annex 2 for an Assessment Matrix showing the standards to assess current registration activities.***

1. What data elements are collected and maintained for household, family, cases and individuals and how does these compare to the standard data set?	
Standard Information Set	*See Annex 8*
Operational Standards:	*See Annex 2 for relevant standards*
2. How is information collected from the persons of concern? How is the registration process currently conducted?	
Generic process for registration	*Chapter 4 – Overview of generic Process*
Operational Standards:	*See Annex 2 for relevant standards*
3. What kinds of documentation have been issued and to whom? How does this compare to the standards?	
Operational Standards:	*See Annex 2 for relevant standards*
4. How is registration information being managed? What use is being made of the information collected?	
Operational Standards:	*See Annex 2 for relevant standards*
Indicators	(See below, Section 8.1.2 – *Indicators)*
5. What is the accuracy or validity of the current data? Are statistics done on the basis of verified data or are they based on estimates?	
Accuracy and validity of current data depend largely on the continuous recording and updating of registration data. To assess the accuracy and validity of current data, compare the data with standards indicated in the Assessment Matrix, Annex 2.	

8.1.2 Indicators for registration, documentation, and population data management

The most important performance indicators for registration, documentation, and population data management are:

- Percentage of population(s) of concern in country for whom age/sex breakdowns are available
- Percentage of population(s) of concern for whom the core registration data elements have been collected
- Frequency of reporting and sharing of aggregate population records with Headquarters, regional offices, country offices and partners
- Availability of aggregate statistics in country on core data elements for population(s) of concern, and the use made of these figures by UNHCR and partners
- Availability of information for individual members of the population(s) of concern, and the use made of these records by selected UNHCR staff and partners
- Percentage of populations of concern issued with individual identity documents conforming to the standards
- Frequency with which existing data is updated to record births, new arrivals, deaths and departures, marriages, and other changes
- Percentage of population(s) of concern interviewed and registered individually
- Percentage of population(s) of concern issued with family entitlement cards in the name of the primary female and male household representatives

➢ ***Use these indicators when planning and monitoring registration activities as part of larger operational plans, such as the Country Operations Plan (COP), and when reporting on registration activities in normal reports, such as Annual Protection Reports and Country Reports.***

Other useful indicators for registration activities include:

- Food lists are generated from refugee databases
- Convoy lists and passenger manifest are prepared using the registration database
- Absences at commodity distributions are noted and kept with registration information
- Voluntary repatriation processing uses existing registration data

Further sample performance indicators are provided in Annex 4.

8.2 Assess operational objectives and environment

The exact nature of the registration, documentation and population data management needs related to a particular population and for a particular time can be determined from the relevant operational goals and objectives. The goals and objectives of an operation, as well as the environment in which the operation is taking place, should be assessed from a registration perspective. Reflecting on those goals and objectives will help define the:

- Role that registration will play in bringing about the protection, solutions and assistance objectives in a particular operation
- Data required and how it will be used
- Documentation needed by beneficiaries for protection and management reasons
- Linkages to national civil-registration systems

Combine the assessment of the current registration system with the requirements for population data into a **prioritized summary of the problems** related to registration, population data management and documentation. The level of movement within the population will influence the registration objectives as will the security situation. Be sure to involve any security focal points in making this assessment.

The following documents are common sources of the goals and objectives that inform and influence the registration strategy for a particular population or context. These documents contain explicit or implicit goals and objectives that will determine or will be dependent upon registration and related activities.

Table 4: Sources of operational goals, objectives and outputs related to registration

Formal Sources	Informal Sources
• Country Operations Plans (COP) • Project descriptions • Sub-agreements • Tripartite Agreements • Annual Protection Reports • Country Reports • Inter-Agency Joint Assessment Missions (e.g. WFP/UNHCR)	• Regional protection and solutions strategies • Contingency plans • Emergency-response plans • Registration strategies • Repatriation plans • Recommendations of support missions, inspection missions and evaluation missions

8.3 Variations

8.3.1 Emergencies/mass movements

Where formal registration systems for refugees or others of concern exist, assess them using the operational standards suggested above. In some situations, there may be no registration system in place. In these cases, take stock of any existing preparedness measures and systems, including existing government, agency or other plans. Such plans often define the roles of the key partners, including the sectoral arrangements for registration and protection.

The following questions, based on the *UNHCR Contingency Planning Guidelines*, Section B of Annex C, are also relevant in such situations.

- What major protection concerns are the refugees likely to face concerning access, status determination, *refoulement*, and movement from the border?
- Who is or will be responsible for the security of refugees? What could be the role of refugee groups in security?
- What kind of problems may the refugees face regarding identification and documentation?
- What will be the needs of special groups: single women, unaccompanied and separated minors, the elderly and the disabled, combatants, etc?
- What registration capacity exits with border guards and immigration officials? What training could be given to them?
- What qualified registration staff and material resources are available in the areas likely to receive refugees or other persons of concern?
- Are there arrangements to monitor and gather statistics as refugees pass through the border-crossing points?

8.3.2 Refugee status determination

The RSD *Procedural Standards* provide clear and detailed guidance on appropriate registration processes to support mandate RSD processing.

A few key points to examine in assessing registration are:

- Who has responsibility for overseeing procedures to register applicants for RSD, including supervision and support of registration staff?
- What training is provided to registration staff?
- Are individual registration forms filled out for all persons applying for RSD regardless of age or potential eligibility?
- Do all principal applicants, regardless of age, and all adult accompanying family members or dependants complete all parts of the application form?
- Are each principal applicant and each adult accompanying family member given an individual and confidential registration interview? Are all adult women interviewed individually and confidentially by a qualified interviewer? Are all unaccompanied and separated children interviewed by a qualified interviewer?
- Are photocopies taken of all original documents provided by applicants, and a description of the document noted in the appropriate section of the RSD applicant form?
- Are photographs taken of each applicant, including all women and children?
- Are all registered applicants, including women and children, provided with some kind of documentation attesting to their status as persons of concern, either by the government or by UNHCR?

8.3.3 Voluntary repatriation

Assess registration systems in all of the major countries participating in the return activities and assess the registration capacity and objectives within the country of origin itself. The assessment process requires the participation of registration staff and expertise from the major territories of asylum and the country of origin. The office co-ordinating the overall repatriation efforts should host regional meetings in order to ensure that the registration component of the repatriation process will adequately support the operational plan for repatriation. Early in the planning stages, give one person or office responsibility for overseeing the registration activities in all relevant countries.

In addition to the assessment processes described in Section 8.1 – *Assess current registration system*, consider the following points:

- In addition to the standard information for registration, the country of origin may have special information or documentation requirements for returnees that must be taken into account.
- The level of compatibility and incompatibility in both the information collected and the quality of the registration data amongst different asylum locations.
- Requirements and procedures for registration and/or recognition, by the country of origin, concerning births, deaths, marriages and divorces that have taken place on the territories of asylum.
- How and when it will be determined that returnees are no longer of concern to UNHCR and can be deregistered.
- Provisions for the registration and documentation of any residual caseload.
- How current identity and entitlement documents will be invalidated, updated and/or replaced.

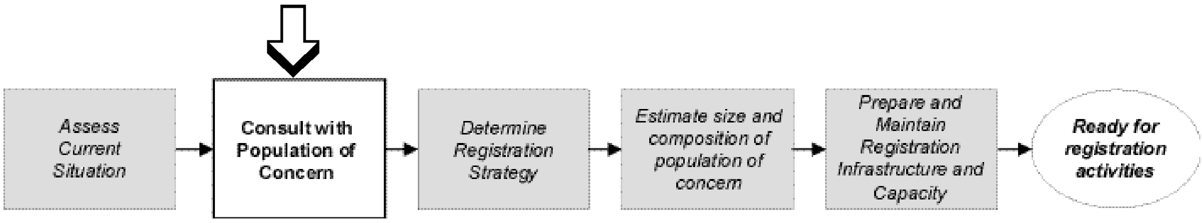
Existing registration data in countries of asylum should be the point of departure in assessing readiness to support a voluntary repatriation operation. The assessment may show that the data needs to be improved to some extent in each participating country and location to meet the agreed standards and to achieve a regionally consistent standard of information.

8.3.4 Stateless non-refugee persons of concern

When working with stateless persons and assessing their registration needs, it is important to understand how they are legally viewed by both the state of origin and the host state and whether they are currently registered anywhere. Few national registration systems are equipped to accurately identify the number of stateless persons on the State's territory. In reality, some stateless persons are registered as foreigners, some as non-national residents, and many are categorized as nationals of another State even in instances in which the State in question does not consider them to be their own nationals either and will therefore not extend national protection to them. In other cases, persons may be registered as stateless but this information is not widely available due to political sensitivities. Numerous stateless persons are categorized as refugees or asylum-seekers even in cases where they have not sought asylum.

UNHCR's role concerning statelessness is primarily a catalytic one with States. In this regard, the Office regularly provides legal advice to States of origin on issues such as access to nationality. The Office also provides advice to host States on matters such as issuance of identity and travel documents, registration of births and marriages and, in appropriate cases, naturalization. Efforts are aimed at normalizing the legal status of stateless persons and, ultimately, facilitating their access to an appropriate nationality.

Non-refugee or asylum seeking stateless persons should not be registered as refugees or asylum-seekers, or as the foreign nationals of another state. However, in cases in which refugees or asylum-seekers are or could be stateless, this information should be properly reflected to assist UNHCR in addressing statelessness when it arises as a root cause of displacement. Design and prepare registration systems accordingly.



9. Consult with Population of Concern

If protection is to be effective, information acquired through the registration process must be accurate, up-to-date, secure and available to those who need it. Most important, registration must be used to improve the lives of refugees.

With that aim in mind, it is essential that refugee men and women are consulted when planning a registration strategy. They can best explain the needs and expectations of their communities; they know the problems some individuals, particularly women and girls, might face during registration, and how best to overcome the problems. The approach to registration, the methods and tools used and the ultimate success of registration depend on the degree to which the refugee population and the local population co-operate in the process.

➢ ***Registration activities will be most successful when the refugees themselves are involved in designing, preparing and implementing them.***

Ignoring the needs and worries of refugees is potentially detrimental to their protection and could result in sabotage and disruption, non-participation, or open hostility and violence. In some cases, loss of refugees' trust has led to security problems that have put the staff of UNHCR and its partners at risk. Factions, groups and individuals may, for their own purposes, use rumors, intimidation, defamation and other means to disrupt the planning and implementation of registration, prevent their fellow refugees from registering, or otherwise sabotage the process. Close monitoring and a continuous dialogue with the refugee community can help to minimize the influence of these groups.

➢ ***UNHCR and governments should always be sensitive to the refugees' cultural and religious backgrounds and to the genuine protection concerns the refugees may have.***

Sabotage

In recent years, sabotage has threatened a number of registration activities. In most of these cases, disruption occurred because the refugees and host communities were poorly informed or misled by incorrect information about the objectives of the registration. In several instances, refugees were openly hostile to registration activities and rioted. Disruptions are more likely to occur during high-pressure or large-scale registrations than during a continuous registration activities in which refugees report to a registration office/site in small groups or individually.

Registration activities can be disrupted for a variety of reasons:

Perceived injustice or punitive intent: Particularly where there is a history of confrontation between the community of concern and the registering party, populations will tend to reject any move to further reduce overall numbers without at the same time improving the chances of each individual and family to gain full and fair access to registration and to any subsequent benefits, such as distribution of food and non-food items.

rumors: Refugee leaders or elements within the refugee community or host population who have a vested interest in inflated refugee statistics are likely to spread various rumors.

Rejection of registration practice based on religion, customs or superstition: Disaffected groups in search of a pretext may reject the use of certain registration practices, such as invisible ink or wristbands, biometrics, or taking of photographs.

No show: A well-organized refugee community may boycott registration entirely.

Whatever the scenario, analyze the situation carefully. The security and safety of refugees and staff should not be put at risk at any stage of registration.

9.1 Engage persons of concern

Consult with refugees and others about registration: they have a lot of good advice about how to plan and implement registration activities.

Organize meetings with both women and men of the refugee community to discuss issues related to registration and documentation. Women should participate equally in planning registration activities.

Debate the following issues with the community to identify shared interests and a mutually beneficial approach to future registration activities.

- ✔ How registration processes can be improved or changed.
- ✔ How registration can be used to improve the refugees’ situation.
- ✔ What new documents are necessary and important.
- ✔ Difficulties boys and girls face in accessing registration and being registered.
- ✔ Segments of the population that will be harder to register than others.

- ✔ How to get a full and accurate registration of the population.
- ✔ Special protection and assistance needs that registration staff should look for.

Consult with women refugees and others of concern. Particular issues to address with women include:

- ✔ Problems women have concerning registration and related processes, including problems of access.
- ✔ Gender-specific security concerns.
- ✔ The names to appear on family entitlement documents.
- ✔ Specific problems confronting un-registered women and girls.

Engaging with the refugees also means explaining why registration is important for UNHCR and its partners. Explain to the community how the registration system is intended to ensure that each individual and each household will have an accurate and lasting record, a means of identifying themselves, and a full and equitable share of benefits. Explain the rights, obligations and benefits that come with registering and the consequences of failing to register.

Document and share the results of these discussions.

9.2 Work with the local community

Depending on the specific refugee situation, it may also be important to ensure the co-operation and understanding of the local community and its leaders. In areas where local populations benefit, directly or indirectly, from assistance provided to the refugee community, fixing, screening, registration and enumeration may be seen as a threat to their well-being.

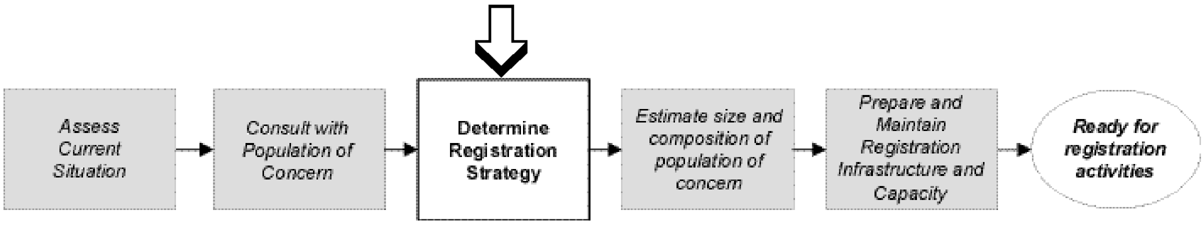
Inform and consult closely with the local community. Persuade and perhaps compensate them with food or community-development assistance. Involve local authorities in the planning to ensure that local people don’t pose as refugees or disrupt the registration process.

Mobilize local communities for registration activities. Request the use of government premises or community facilities for registration activities and/or engage government staff as registration clerks, screeners or security personnel. Local authorities and local humanitarian personnel will be instrumental in gaining this co-operation.

If there is pressure on the refugees to boycott registration or persistent attempts by local people to sabotage and disrupt the process or to pose as refugees, postpone registration activities until more favorable conditions prevail.

9.3 Variations

This step is essential to all registration processes. Even in the early weeks of an emergency and in the most chaotic of situations, consultations with refugees about registration and related processes are critical to success. Registration staff should identify key refugee leaders who can assist in organizing household or "control sheet" registration activities and who can disseminate information to new arrivals. Sensitization and mobilization campaigns should be conducted on an ongoing basis as the refugees arrive. In all cases, failure to consult with the populations concerned leads to mutual distrust between the registrars and those being registered.



10. Determine Registration Strategy

A registration strategy is normally the revision of an existing plan, adjusted and updated to meet changes in circumstances, solutions opportunities or resource availability. The establishment of a registration strategy is necessary for any registration-related activities.

➢ ***Registration is not a stand-alone activity. It must be part of and in harmony with the agreed protection strategy at the country level and, where appropriate, at the regional level.***

Registration and data-management activities must be planned as an integral part of general operations planning. Only when the registration methodology, techniques and deliverables are aligned with the overall strategic objectives of the operation can registration serve protection, solutions and assistance goals. Therefore, it is important that the registration strategy be developed with the participation of all the major stakeholders, including refugees, the government, and other UNHCR offices. NGOs also provide essential resources and advice in planning and managing registration activities.

There are five steps in determining a registration strategy:

1. Determine registration objectives in light of problems, gaps and opportunities identified.
2. Determine the roles of stakeholders.
3. Determine specific operational opportunities and constraints.
4. Choose methodology and tools.
5. Determine resource and infrastructure needs.

The number and involvement of stakeholders will vary from one situation to another; however, the steps remain much the same in all types of operations.

Support in creating and updating registration strategies can be sought from regional registration officers and technical units at Headquarters.

A checklist to use when preparing a registration strategy is provided in Annex 3.

A good registration strategy:

- ✔ Defines the population to be registered.
- ✔ Ensures compliance with the minimum standards and respect for other relevant principles.
- ✔ Aligns the registration plan, including methodology, techniques and deliverables, with the protection objectives of the operation.
- ✔ Involves all stakeholders and co-ordinates their activities.
- ✔ Finds the most appropriate tools and mobilizes the necessary resources.
- ✔ Is solutions-oriented.

Country strategy or population-based strategy:

Normally a registration strategy should be for a 'population'. Different registration systems may be required to register camp-based refugees and to register those refugees living dispersed in urban environments. Refugees from different countries of origin or ethnic backgrounds may require different registration methodologies.

Operational capacities and resource implications should be examined before deciding if one comprehensive registration system can be applied to different groups of refugees or if each population requires its own approach and system for registration.

10.1 Determine registration objectives

Using the assessment of operational goals and objectives relevant to registration activities and the prioritized list of problems developed in Section 8.2 – *Assess operational objectives and environment,* develop objectives for registration and related activities that describe:

- **Serve operational goals and objectives.**
- **Enhance the legal and physical protection of the population of concern.**

Registration objectives should be clear statements of the progress to be made towards meeting the standards for registration, documentation and population data management (operational standards, standard data set and generic processes). They must reflect the level of registration to be achieved given the circumstances.

10.1.1 Formulating the objectives

Formulate objectives that, where possible, refer to and explicitly mention **beneficiaries** and **benefits,** particularly protection benefits. Objectives should be formulated as affirmative sentences in the present tense, using Subject + Verb + Object. They should be statements of desired impact or improvements in the situation of the beneficiaries expected to result from the actions of UNHCR or its partners.

Essential guidance on the formulation of objectives, outputs and indicators is contained in the *Practical Guide on the Use of Objectives, Outputs, and Indicators*, also known as the "blue guide"[14]. UNHCR staff and others involved in determining the registration strategy should be familiar with its contents.

Standard objectives, outputs and indicators for registration should be used whenever possible. Some examples are in the *Practical Guide* under the examples for Sector O.

An updated and expanded list of samples is contained in Annex 4.

10.1.2 Documenting the registration strategy

Write down and share the registration strategy with stakeholders, including refugees. Any registration plan must include a clear statement of what the refugees can realistically expect from registration and which problems are not solved by registration or by registration alone.

A sample Registration Strategy is available in Annex 5.

This type of format can be useful for recording decisions and communicating with those involved in planning and carrying out registration. The strategy should be shared with stakeholders, kept on file in the office and referred to when describing the quality of registration data (see Section 18.2 – *Assess quality of registration data*).

Objectives, outputs and indicators related to registration appear in Country Operations Plans as follows:

- The goals and principle objectives related to registration, documentation and population data management activities should appear in the Executive Summary, Part 1.
- The goals, objectives, outputs and indicators should also appear in the full hierarchy of objectives for each population and/or theme in Part II, Section A.
- There is a specific narrative paragraph required on registration in Part II, Section C.
- The UNHCR-provided resources required for registration, documentation and population data management should appear in the appropriate annexes. Operational costs are normally budgeted under Sector-Activity O.22.

[14] UNHCR IOM/26/2002 – FOM/25/2002; 15 March 2002 – Updated 2002 Version: Project Planning in UNHCR – A Practical Guide on the Use of Objectives, Outputs, and Indicators.

They also appear in Project Descriptions and Sub-agreements as follows:

- The goals, objectives, outputs and indicators should appear in the full hierarchy of objectives, Annex A, Section 5: Description of Objectives and Outputs (by Sector/ and Sector-Activity). They should appear under Sector-Activity O.22 – Refugee Status Determination/ Registration/ Identity Cards.
- UNHCR-provided budget requirements should appear in the Budget, Annex B, normally under Sector Activity O.22.

10.2 Decide on data to be collected and verified

Deciding on the data to collect is one of the key steps in setting the registration strategy. The data set to be collected and/or verified should correspond to the level of registration to be achieved. Use the standard data sets for the different levels of registration, as described in Chapter 5 – *Standard Data Set and Registration Levels* and Annex 8, to decide on the to data collect and/or verify.

Consider additional, non-standard, data elements to collect and verify due to governmental requirements or specific operational goals (see Section 8.2 – *Assess operational objectives and environment).*

Always capture as much data as possible as early as possible. Earlier data capture is more likely to produce an accurate and representative picture of the population of concern. This is true even if the information captured is not used or processed immediately. Later on, persons of concern may be influenced by assistance or solutions concerns, such as non-food items and resettlement.

Decide what new data elements are needed at this time and what data elements should be checked and verified. It may not be possible to verify all elements of a data record at a given time and it may be necessary to set priorities as to which elements should be verified.

Collection of certain elements of the standard data set may constitute a protection risk in certain contexts. For example, in some voluntary repatriation operations, religious information recorded on registration forms that are used as temporary identity documents can pose protection risks. Managers may decide not to collect or not to display a particular piece of information.

Decide on the best way to collect and verify the desired information. Some types of data are better collected or verified through surveys rather than individual registration (see Section 11.2 – *Use of surveys).* Some data-collection activities, such as initial medical screening or longer-term health monitoring, can be linked to registration activities.

Decide on what information should be collected in consultation with other stakeholders, including the government(s) and partners involved, to ensure that the registration data will be complete and will meet the priority needs of the stakeholders.

Determine what use will be made of the data. In general, always try to collect the full data set and make full use of the information. Many data element require some degree of standardization before actual registration activities begin. See Section 12.3 – *Standardize locations, names and other categories.*

The process of deciding what population data is needed is distinct from and precedes the decisions about the forms to be used. However, it is helpful to look at model forms when considering what data should be collected. Section 10.5.2 – *Selecting registration forms,* describes how to select and modify the standard forms once the roles of the different stakeholders have been determined and the registration methodology is set.

10.3 Determine stakeholders and their roles

One of the principle objectives of the planning process is to determine the operational roles, functions, responsibilities and accountability of the different stakeholders in a registration procedure. This facilitates co-ordination and effective management by determining, area by area, how the different registration-related activities are to be handled.

➢ ***In participatory planning critical stakeholders participate in the formulation of the registration plans and agree to them.***

Identifying the relevant stakeholders in registration operations is key. Regardless of the type of operation, some sub-set of the following parties will be the stakeholders to bring into the planning process:

Persons of concern: individual refugees (men, women, boys, girls, elderly, disabled) and groups within the community (clans, ethnic or religious groups, refugees from a particular country, refugees with special protection needs, leaders, community representatives and those with registration skills).

Governments: countries of first asylum (distinguish between local/provincial authorities and central governments), countries of subsequent asylum (neighboring or other), countries of origin, donor countries, resettlement countries, multi-lateral organizations.

UNHCR: Headquarters, regional and field offices, “functional” stakeholders, such as refugee status determination resettlement, and other protection staff, assistance and camp-management staff, durable solutions officers, field security advisors, and programme officers.

Primary registration partners: WFP, ICRC, UNICEF and implementing partners.

Other partners: Other international agencies and organizations, such as IOM, WHO, UNFPA and ILO; NGOs, and other voluntary organizations, such as National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Others: local population, third-country nationals, private donors.

10.3.1 Role of UNHCR

➢ ***UNHCR must ensure that registration activities adhere to minimum standards and that refugees and other persons of concern are better protected through the registration process.***

UNHCR's role in registration and population data management varies from simple oversight and monitoring to full design, implementation and maintenance of a registration system. In a few cases, UNHCR will, itself, have to register and provide documentation for refugees and other persons of concern. The table below lists some of the more common roles for UNHCR.

Table 5: Activities of UNHCR in Registration

Activities for UNHCR
• Dissemination of standards for registration and documentation • Fact-finding and monitoring visits to national registration institutions • Monitoring and intervention in individual cases • Training of government officials in registration standards and techniques • Technical assistance for improvement of registration • Financial and technical assistance for actual registration • Implementation of registration and documentation activities

10.3.2 Role of the government

Registration is the responsibility of States and is implemented as part of national asylum systems and refugee-protection frameworks.

Nevertheless, in some countries although both the political will and legal basis to register refugees exist, the government may not have the operational capacity and resources to create, implement and maintain a functioning registration system. Other countries may be fully capable of assuming their responsibilities for part or all of the refugee population, but refuse to do so. For these reasons and others, UNHCR may have a more active role in registration activities.

Joint UNHCR-government participation registration activities is the preferred option.

However, building government capacity for registration should be part of every registration strategy. This involves gaining the government's understanding and approval and offering technical expertise and financial support. Providing technical and financial assistance, alone, does not constitute capacity-building.

➢ ***Take into consideration the government's objectives and concerns relating to refugees and any constraints on the governments when designing capacity-building activities. Do not assume responsibility for registration without planning for greater government involvement in the future.***

Build governments' capacities to conduct registration by:

✔ Sharing knowledge, tools, techniques and project-management skills.
✔ Organizing and facilitating study tours for government officials and parliamentarians to countries with functioning refugee protection and registration systems and procedures, including issuing identity documentation.
✔ Providing technical training and education.
✔ Providing financial support in key areas of registration and documentation.
✔ Conducting joint registration activities.

10.3.3 Role for refugees and persons of concern

Some aspect of the important role played by refugees in registration are described in Chapter 9 – *Consult Population of Concern,* and in Chapter 13 – *Inform and Contact Population about Registration.* Refugees and others of concern should be involved in registration as much as possible, including planning, implementing and evaluating registration activities. Ensure that women and men participate equally in the registration process.

Identify refugees and others of concern with prior registration experience who can assist in organizing the population and identifying particular groups or individuals that will have difficulties in registering. Use refugees to explain to their communities the aims of and procedures for registering.

Women refugees and persons of concern have a specific role in registration activities. Women must participate as equals in the decision-making bodies and processes. They have a say in analyzing security risks, including potential risks to girls and women in terms of abuse and violence. They must contribute to the selection and validation of the registration methodology, and ensure that it has the appropriate gender-sensitive components. Women refugees and others of concern should participate fully in informing the community about registration objectives and activities; they are particularly effective in reaching those less likely to come forward for registration and identifying those with special registration concerns. Women should also monitor access to registration sites and assist in verifying identities whenever refugees are involved in doing so.

10.3.4 Role of operational partners

UNHCR and governments cannot register large numbers of people by themselves; they must act in partnership with other stakeholders. Fostering understanding about the need for registration among all stakeholders – the host government, refugees, and national and international organizations – will not only improve protection for the refugees, it will also ensure efficient use of resources and help to avoid duplication of efforts.

Draw on the resources and expertise of other partners, particularly ICRC, WFP, UNICEF and NGOs. In most situations, these agencies will be directly involved with registration activities. Data-collection standards, procedures and sharing mechanisms need to be negotiated with them.

Once the operational partners have been identified and contacted, they should be encouraged to participate in all levels of the registration planning and implementation.

✔ Hold joint design and planning meetings with partners.
✔ Consult with partners, bilaterally and multilaterally, on the feasibility of registration methodologies.
✔ Review the specific information requirements to be met by the registration methodology.
✔ Determine appropriate ways of sharing data among the actors involved.

Partners' involvement in the registration does not end after the design and planning phases are over. Implementation requires continued close co-operation and co-ordination with all partners. Co-ordination meetings should be held at regular intervals and partners should be kept informed about the progress made and the results achieved.

10.3.5 Role of WFP

The revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP)[15] specifies that registration activities should serve to identify beneficiaries for

[15] A revised Memorandum of Understanding between UNHCR and WFPsigned by the heads of the two agencies in June 2002.

food and related non-food items (see Articles 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5). Article 3.5 of the revised MOU states that

UNHCR will fully involve WFP in the planning and execution of refugees' enumerations, registration and verification exercises for actual or potential beneficiaries of food and related non-food items.

Food distribution should be based on valid registration records.

Considering that there are nearly 4 million refugees and returnees who are assisted by WFP, and that in many cases registration and identification of food-aid beneficiaries are essentially the same activity, close collaboration with WFP in planning and implementing registration activities is essential. Discuss the objectives, strategy, data to be collected, possible cost-sharing measures and expected results with WFP.

Despite this close relationship, linkages between registration and assistance/entitlements can be problematic. Whenever possible, registration activities should be separate from beneficiary identification. Modalities for this should be worked out with WFP.

10.4 Determine opportunities and constraints

A sound registration strategy takes into consideration all the factors that have or will have an impact on registration activities.

The following table lists some of the most important considerations.

Table 6: Factors Influencing Registration Strategy

FACTORS	POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES AND/OR RESPONSES
	Environmental Constraints/Opportunities
Weather and Climate	Weather and climatic conditions may influence ability of persons and staff to access registration locations.
Timing	Be sensitive to public and religious holidays of country of asylum, country of origin and staff. Avoid large registration actions in times of heightened alert (national or local elections, security curfew), peak trading season, harvest or other important milestones of agricultural cycles.
Security	Security problems may influence the ability of refugees to access registration. Registration activities should not put people, either refugees or staff, at risk, and should be non-threatening. Capacity of local police and security forces may not be adequate. Refugees may not wish to leave their houses all at once for fear of burglary or theft. (this is one reason why families are split in registration; consider house to house registration as an alternative).
	Capacity of Persons of Concern (skills/literacy, history of displacement)
Temporary absence of refugees from the camps for reasons of work, school, etc.	Make provisions for the registration of latecomers, absentees and missing family members. However, be alert to the possibility of people registering more than once.
Reluctance of refugees to come forward for registration	Refugees need to be consulted as early in the preparation phase as possible. Analyze and understand the reasons for refugee reluctance.
Low educational level (literacy) of refugee population	Registration questions should not be too complicated for refugees and should be tested prior to use. Select and train refugee helpers to assist registration desks.
	Abuse and Manipulation
Widespread abuse and fraud (recycling, multiple registration, "borrowing" children)	This is a significant problem in some environments. A more continuous registration system, supported by regular and varied verification, can help. Fixing methods such as ink, wristbands, photographs, fingerprints or biometrics, can help reduce multiple registrations. Use the techniques in Section 20.1 – *Choose verification techniques*.
Mixing with local population and "borrowing" children from local community to inflate family size	Offices should always work with local authorities to explain why it is important to preserve the integrity of refugee registration, and should solicit their advice and assistance in preventing fraud.

	Capacity of UNHCR and partners (resources, technology, skills)
Insufficient resources	Registration is a core activity and therefore should remain a priority even when budgetary restrictions are imposed. If the funds necessary are not available, it may be possible to reduce requirements by adjusting the strategy.
Insufficient or inadequate staff	Searching for and recruiting staff for registration activities takes time. Establish partnerships with governments, universities, national civil registries and local authorities. If possible, provide incentives.
Insufficient training	Conduct training-of-trainers workshops helps to ensure availability of qualified trainers. Delay activities until staff are ready.
Insufficient materials	Plan for a reasonable reserve. Order in advance. Ask for release of materials from stockpiles or neighbouring offices.
	Co-operation (refugees, local population, national authorities, partners)
Government not ready to embark on registration	Government reluctance to conduct registration may stem from serious political concerns. Analyze the reasons for reluctance and try to address them at appropriate political or technical levels. Remind the government of its responsibilities. Foster understanding that registration not only protects refugees, but also enables the government to know whom it is protecting and to have better control over a potentially sensitive situation.
Disagreement about registration methodology with partners or stakeholders (WFP, resettlement countries, donors, others)	Partners may withdraw support for the planned registration activities or mayrefuse to accept the results of the registration. Involve the partners and even embassies in designing, planning, and implementing registration activities. Inform stakeholders of the obstacles to meeting standards.
Internal stakeholders (UNHCR) disagree on the necessity for registration and/or methodology	Resources may be scarce and other priorities may prevail over registration efforts. Half-hearted support by managers or insufficient prioritization of registration over other activities may result in failure.
Corruption or sabotage by registration personnel	Occasionally UNHCR staff or government registration personnel are victims of pressures imposed by the local population or refugees. Monitoring, particularly through spot checks, helps to identify corruption early. Staff suspected of inappropriate behaviour should be dismissed quickly, and a programme of incentives should be set up to reduce the motivation for corruption.

10.5 Choose methodology and tools (including registration forms)

Once the registration objectives and the respective roles of the stakeholders are set it is time to select the most appropriate methodology and tools, and to determine the resources needed to implement the registration strategy. The three components of the overall strategy developed at this point are:

- **Methodology:** The exact configuration of the standard process to used, the timing of activities, and the division of responsibilities.
- **Tools:** Registration form, data-capture and – management tools, software, and fixing systems.
- **Resources:** Staffing, training, financial requirements, physical and logistical support needs.

10.5.1 Methodology

Registration methodologies are always based on the generic process. They describe how the standard steps will be carried out in a given context. As with the strategy, it is important to get the agreement of key stakeholders on the methodology; this is best achieved if they participate in its formulation.

The methodology is a detailed plan of how the registration objectives will be accomplished. It also defines the level of continuous registration that the office wants to achieve. Activities should be described as either one-time events or part of a regular routine that will be periodically reviewed. The methodology also includes the time frame for verifying and updating data and the intended period of validity for any documentation issued.

The registration methodology contains:

- Division of labor and responsibilities amongst stakeholders (who does what)
- Provisions taken to be sure women and children are treated fairly
- Procedures to determine eligibility for registration and priority (*see Chapter 14*)
- Procedures to fix people to ensure they are registered only once *(see Section 14.2)*
- Procedures to collect and verify data about the men, women, girls and boys of concern (*see Chapters 5, 15, 17, and 18)*
- Procedures for registering unaccompanied and separated children and others with special needs *(see Sections 1.6 and 17.3 on unaccompanied and separated children)*
- The frequency of updating and verifying the data collected
- The verification techniques to be used to check information about households, families and individuals *(see Chapter 20)*
- Documents, such as ID cards and/or entitlement cards, to be issued *(see Chapter 19)*
- Procedures for combating fraud and ensuring the integrity of registration results (*see Chapters 7 and 20*)

- Procedures for recalling, entering and processing data (*see Chapters 23 and 24)*
- Processes for sharing information with partners

A registration methodology always has sustainable components that, at a minimum, describe procedures for updating the following information:

- ✔ Births and new arrivals
- ✔ Deaths and announced departures
- ✔ Absences
- ✔ Deregistration of households and individuals

10.5.2 Selecting registration forms

Based on the information needs identified in Section 10.2 – *Decide on data to be collected and verified* – **the registration form should be chosen from one of the standards shown in Annex 6**. Protection staff should take the lead in choosing the proper registration form and designing the interview.

The standard forms to be used in registration are:

- ✔ **Control sheet:** *[See Annex 6(a)]* This is the registration form normally used when conducting Level 1 registration. It is used in other levels of registration as a 'control sheet' and for some basic data-collection purposes. The form is generally used as a record of the interview schedule, a control on family or ration cards issued, a temporary list for distribution purposes, a passenger manifest for organized movements, and initial temporary registration for new arrivals.

- ✔ **Registration Form (Level 2):** [*See Annex 6(b)*]. This form captures individual information for the members of a household or family on a single A4 sheet. Level 2 registration data is gathered for almost all family or household members, although some data elements, such as country of birth, are collected only for the household representatives.

- ✔ **Registration Form (Level 3):** [*See Annex 6(c)*] This is the form to be used in level 3 registration. It gathers the full data set at the individual level. It must be complemented by the family/household form which is used to collect information about the family (or household) including the relationships between the members.

- ✔ **Registration Form for Unaccompanied and Separated Children:** [*See Annex 6(d)*] This inter-agency common form is to be used for the supplementary registration of ***all unaccompanied and separated children in all circumstances.*** Unaccompanied and separated children should also be registered according to the standard registration methodology in use. Different forms should be linked by the individual's unique numerical identifier as well as any household, family, or case identifiers that are relevant to them.

- ✔ **Application for Mandate Status Forms**: [*See Annex 6(e)*] This form has been designed by DIP as part of *the Procedural Standards for RSD under UNHCR's Mandate*, and it should be used for registering asylum-seekers applying for individual status determination. The form is not purely a registration form because it captures additional information related to the nature of the individual's claim and constitutes an official application for refugee status. See the *Procedural Standards* for details on use of the form.

The design of registration forms is important to the quality and effectiveness of the registration activities. Use the standard form that corresponds to the targeted level of registration as a starting point and modify it as little as possible. The standard forms reflect lessons learned in registration operations and ensure the standards for registration, documentation, and population data management are achieved.

Acceptable variations to standard forms are:

- ✔ **Language:** The language used on the form will depend on what the government(s) involved may require, on the language proficiency of the registration clerks and data-entry personnel, and on the availability of interpreters.

- ✔ **Number of Copies:** Determine how many copies of the form are needed and who will get each copy. Multiple copies of the voluntary repatriation forms are usually needed, while one version of the RSD registration form is usually sufficient.

- ✔ **Code lists:** Supply code lists to explain the coded fields, either on the form, itself, or as an annex. Create a concise code book using a colour-coded sheet with plastic lamination for quick reference. If local code lists are used in addition to the standard UNHCR codes, they should be clearly explained.

- ✔ **Instructions:** Provide clear and comprehensive instructions on how to fill in the form, anticipating questions, problems and variations.

- ✔ **Data Elements:** Some additional data elements may be needed to meet operational objectives or as required by the host government or other partners. Alternatively, not all of the standard data elements may be desired in a particular context (see Section 10.2 – *Decide on data to be collected and verified)*.

When adapting registration and other data-collection forms:

- ✔ Be sure the spaces are large enough to accommodate the data comfortably, so the registration clerk does not have to struggle to make the information fit onto the form.

- ✔ Provide sufficient space for punching holes, otherwise valuable information might be lost when punching holes for filing.
- ✔ Eliminate or reduce vertical lines if the form will have to be faxed. Vertical lines can substantially reduce the fax transmission speed and consume great quantities of photocopy and printer toner.
- ✔ The layout of the form should reflect the sequence of the interview so the data-collection elements are in a logical sequence and registration clerks can navigate easily and quickly through the form. Proper form layout can save time and contribute to accuracy in data processing and in data collection.
- ✔ Label the form with a name, version number and release date (for example, Form XYZ, version 2, 01/04/04) to avoid confusion.

More information on the use of registration forms in contained in Section 17.1 – *Use standard registration forms.*

10.5.3 Other tools

Details on other tools are found in other sections of the Handbook. Fixing methods are described in Section 14.1 – *Fix persons of concern.* Information on how to take photographs and the tools required are provide in Chapter 16 – *Photograph Persons of Concern.* Some information on data – capture and – management as well as tools required are given in Chapters 22-24.

Seek technical advice from people with registration expertise in neighboring countries or at Headquarters. See Section 7.4 – *Advice and support* for information on whom to contact.

10.6 Determine resource and infrastructure needs

After designing the methodology, determine the resources and infrastructure needed to register the target group.

10.6.1 Resource plan

Each step in the methodology requires specific resources. Write down each step in a table and list the necessary staff, tools, materials and infrastructure required to complete each step. A precise resource plan will help mobilize the resources on time, distribute tasks, and follow up on the progress of preparations. It will also serve as a checklist to ensure that the registration office is ready to receive refugees for processing.

In addition to the resources needed for each of the step in the methodology, there are generic support elements needed, depending on the specific location and circumstances.

Examples and some resource benchmarks are listed in the table that follows.

Table 7: Resources needed for each step of registration process

STEP	RESOURCE NEEDED
Prepare and Maintain Registration Infrastructure and Capacity: *Training*	• 1 Trainer per registration location • Training facility and equipment (20 persons / training) • Training modules and materials
Prepare and Maintain Registration Infrastructure and Capacity: *Logistics*	• Transportation of staff to and from registration venue • Transportation of refugees, including persons with special needs • Transportation of equipment, furniture, supplies and materials
Prepare and Maintain Registration Infrastructure and Capacity: *Telecoms*	• Radios, and handsets (1 radio/vehicle, 1 handset/registration team or 3 persons, 1 radio/registration sites, 1 handset/security staff) • 1 dedicated E-mail account, 1 dedicated telephone and fax, and other communications
Prepare and Maintain Registration Infrastructure and Capacity: *Security*	• Protection of registration venue (fencing, guards, video cameras) • Protection and security training of all staff • Training of security personnel • Additional crowd-control measures
Prepare and Maintain Registration Infrastructure and Capacity: *Registration Sites*	• Staff needed for: Construction, cleaning, repairing • Water and food for refugees and staff • Generators and fuel • Materials and equipment to construct and furnish sites
Contact and Inform Population	• Public-address system (megaphones, interpreters, standard messages) • Bulletins, posters, radio announcements
Reception and Fixing: *Fixing*	• Fixing materials and equipment (wrist bands, ink, finger-printing machines, printed registration lists as per methodology)

	• Staff needed: perform fixing (wrist-banding, taking biometrics, checking photographs, operating technical equipment, checking ink, etc.) • Woman persons of concern and staff to monitor access
Reception and Fixing: *Screening*	• Staff needed: interviewers, protection officers, supervisors (equal men and women staff) • 1 protection officer always on duty to respond to protection related issues • Guidelines for screening • Procedures for handling priority and rejected individuals
Reception and Fixing: ***Special cases/Special needs***	• Staff needed: Community services and health staff to received referrals. 1 person on duty at all times when registration is taking place • Training: reception staff and registration clerks in identifying and handling procedures for special cases
Initiate Data Collection	• Staff needed: registration clerks, EDP staff, supervisors, data entry staff • Lists and other sources of data • Equipment and materials: registration forms, data processing equipment, printers, scanners
Photograph persons of concern	• Staff needed: 1 photo clerk, 2 assistants per photo station • Equipment and materials: 1 camera, 2 lights, 1 white backdrop, 1 table, 2 chairs per photo station. 1 extra camera and 2 lights per 4 photo stations
Interview persons of concern	• Staff needed: interviewers, clerks to fill out forms and verify data • Interpreters: volunteers, government helpers or refugees • Guidelines for completion of forms • Code tables for interviewers and other registration staff (standard codes, operational specific codes, and location codes)
Issue documents	• Staff needed: document or card preparation, controller (person authorized to sign) • Documentation materials: blank cards, control sheets, other supplies • Equipment: embossing and laminating machines, stamps/ink

10.6.2 Determine budgets

The budget for registration must be based on the standard methodology and the detailed resource plan. Registration activities are budgeted and financed within the normal UNHCR annual programming cycle. Any amounts to be covered by UNHCR must normally be part of the COP, submitted annually to the Operations Review Board for review and approval. Costs not budgeted for at this stage have to be covered through reallocation of budgets at the country or regional level. Guidance on budgeting can be obtained from the programme unit or programme staff, resource managers or desk officers.

Costs should be presented comprehensively, with indications as to the source of funding for each component. Recording the total cost of the operation is essential; listing only those items that are to be procured through Headquarters does not make a complete budget. The total cost of the operation comprises all costs to establish and run the facilities and services necessary for registration. This is particularly important when registration activities are continuous.

All activities and resources that require funding should be listed with the respective costs and the source of funding. Compile a list of those things that need to be procured. Some materials may exist and can be made available, without incurring extra expenditure, from the operation itself or from other operations. Governments and other partners are often able to contribute substantially to registration activities. In many cases, projects or sub-projects already exist through which government counterparts or other partners can be used to provide staff, materials, and other requirements.

Elements of a registration budget include:

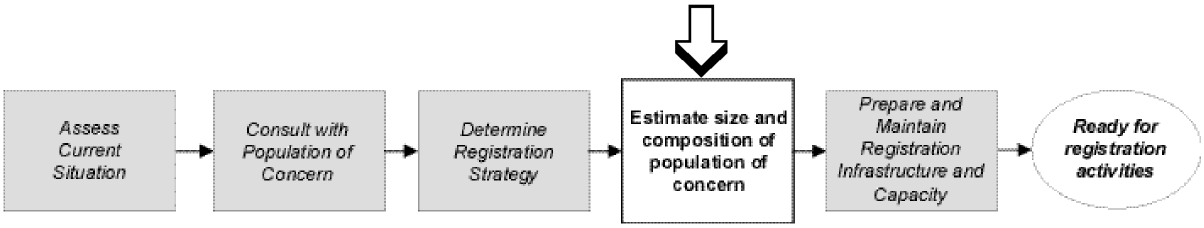
- ✔ Staff, including travel, daily subsistence allowance and incentives
- ✔ Training costs
- ✔ Security of personnel and installations
- ✔ Infrastructure, construction, rent of premises, furniture
- ✔ Logistics and telecommunications
- ✔ Information technology equipment, peripherals
- ✔ Registration forms, cards, and other materials
- ✔ Public-information campaigns
- ✔ Running costs (electricity, communication, consumables, services)

See Annex 5 for a sample registration budget.

Expenditures for registration activities should be closely monitored. Changing assumptions and adjustments in the methodology will normally result in budget changes. Bring any adjustments promptly to the attention of the appropriate managers and programme staff so unspent balances can be returned or additional funds can be requested well in advance.

10.7 Variations

Registration planning and strategies are required in all situations, and there will be very little variation in the basics of the above processes. Some nuances related to working in different environments are discussed in Chapter 5 – *Standard Data Set and Registration Levels.*



11. Estimate Size and Composition of Population of Concern

Some of the work involved in estimating the size and composition of the population of concern may be spread across or absorbed into other steps. Since the number and location of the population being registered will have an impact on the registration infrastructure and resources required, these estimates could be done during the assessment step or when determining the registration strategy.

The objective of this step is to get a good working estimate of the size and composition of the population prior to registration. Estimates can often be made from existing or partial registration data. Limited information can be supplemented by surveys and extrapolated for the entire population. For example, age and sex breakdowns for a small segment of the population can be extrapolated to estimate these statistics for the whole population. Similarly, current trends in registration activities can be used to predict future levels.

To the greatest extent possible estimates should be broken down by block or zone within a camp. This will allow for more precise planning and targeting of registration interventions and will provide a more accurate basis for evaluating the results of registration or surveys (see Section 18.3 – *Accept or qualify registration data).*

In situations without pre-existing registration information, it is important to work with host governments, the persons of concern themselves, and other entities, such as ICRC, UN agencies and NGOs, when estimating the size and composition of the population of concern.

➢ ***When registration is not possible, estimated population figures will be the only information available for planning the delivery of protection and assistance.***

11.1 Estimate population demographics

11.1.1 Lists compiled by others

Border guards' lists
Border authorities are often accountable to their central authorities for daily border-crossing statistics. Efforts should be made to obtain at least the statistical data from these lists. It is important to remember that border guards may not focus on refugees alone. They may not record the difference between a person seeking asylum and other migrants, such as returning citizens and third-country nationals.

Refugee lists
Very often, refugees themselves undertake rudimentary registration shortly after they arrive in an asylum country. This should be encouraged and supported through simple coaching and by providing basic supplies, such as paper and pens. Civil servants, clerks, teachers or refugees with similar professional backgrounds should be mobilized to compile simple lists of all refugees. Although these lists will not include all the necessary information, they can be a good basis for estimation and for subsequent registration and verification. Spot checks, for example during food distributions, can give an indication about the quality and integrity of the data provided. Ask refugees to compile separate lists of the most vulnerable refugees and any unaccompanied and separated children.

Administrative lists
Existing administrative structures in the country of asylum may be able to conduct simple registration, compile lists of refugees living in their villages and communities, or simply count the refugees. Sometimes refugee populations preserve their own administrative structures, and village chiefs or elders can be asked to count the refugees or conduct simple registration activities.

11.1.2 Credible estimation techniques

When registration is not possible but numbers and basic data must be obtained, alternatives and incomplete registration may be used.

UNHCR and its partners have acquired substantial experience in various alternative techniques and methodologies which can help field offices estimate the size of the refugee population, gather baseline data and provisional refugee lists.

Counting
The simplest way of arriving at credible, and sometimes fairly accurate, population estimates is to establish a counting system. Depending on the magnitude of the population influx, monitors can be deployed near entry points with hand-held mechanical counters. Border authorities, military forces stationed in the area of population movements, partner agencies, including WFP, NGOs, and the refugees themselves can be involved. Individual counts by the monitors should be recorded in simple spreadsheets, consolidated and reported on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. Counting should be consistent and regular including, if necessary, 24-hour coverage. Snapshot counting and extrapolation can be used if continuous counting is not possible.

Hand-held counters can help when large numbers are on the move.

Correlation with heath data, food-distribution lists and water-consumption levels
Data about other aspects of living conditions may help determine the size of the population. Health data may indicate family size or inoculation coverage. Food-distribution lists often record the

number of persons per family or household. Water consumption may be known for a small sample population, which can be extrapolated to a larger group. Rather then relying on any one source, estimates based on two or three such sources may be used to reinforce each other. The use of different sources of data to cross check a result is sometimes referred to as **"triangulation".** More detailed information on this can be requested from DOS (PGDS and Project Profile).

Extrapolation from Shelter Counts
Population estimates can also be obtained by calculating the total area of the camp, then counting shelters in one or more sub-divisions of the camp, from which the population of the whole camp can be extrapolated. See the *UNHCR Emergency Handbook* (2nd edition), Chapter 11, for details.

The basic process is as follows:

1. Determine average number of people per shelter.
2. Determine the total surface area of the site.
3. Count the numbers of family shelters in at *least three* sample areas, each representing about one thirtieth of the total camp area, to obtain an average number of shelters within one thirtieth of camp area.
4. Multiply this average number of shelters/area by 30 for the total number of shelters in camp.
5. Multiply total number of shelters by the average number of persons per shelter established earlier to calculate the *estimated* total population.
6. Discuss test and how to improve the methodology and results with key operational partners and stakeholders.

11.1.3 Aerial Photography

Aerial photographs (or sometimes video tapes) of a camp can be used to count the number of family shelters. This can be accomplished to a limited extent by taking a picture from a nearby hill, tower or tall building. In addition to professional aerial photography, amateur photographs taken, for example, from a UNHCR plane can be used for estimation. Permission from the authorities may be required before flying over the site.

It is important to define an appropriate scale for the photography. This will depend, in part, on the size of the camps. High altitude flights produce fewer photographs to handle and interpret, but it will be more difficult to distinguish the shelters. UNHCR has begun to use high-resolution satellite images to facilitate the mapping of refugee settlements to support registration activities.

The results of aerial surveys or satellite images can be integrated with the Geographic Information System (GIS) from which maps can then be produced. The basic process is as follows:

- Aerial photographs or satellite images must be accompanied by a ground survey to establish the average family size per shelter and the percentage of empty shelters.

- The number of shelters appearing on the image or mosaic of photographs multiplied by the average family size per shelter will give an estimate of the overall population.

Please contact PGDS/GIMU/DOS for further information on the use of this technology.

11.2 Use of surveys to supplement registration

Registration makes it possible to gather and maintain a range of information on the distinguishing characteristics of the population of concern at an individual level. However, even where current registration data exists, some variable information on the prevailing conditions, including the condition of the population, is best obtained through surveys.

Surveys commonly used in refugee settings include three main types: *sample surveys, inventory surveys and in-depth studies.*

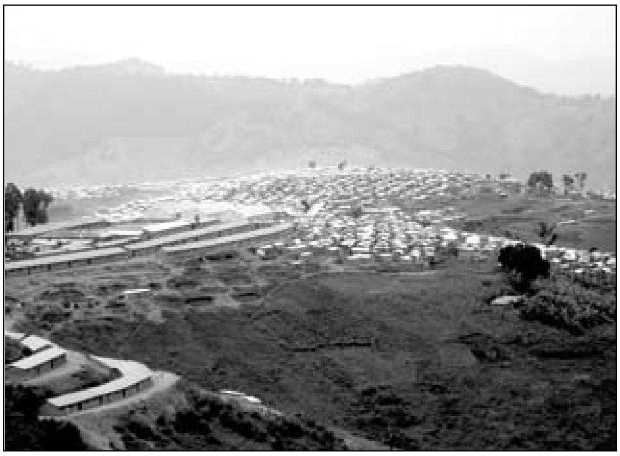
11.2.1 Sample surveys

Sample surveys are suitable for gathering information on nutrition and food security, health status including mortality, morbidity and vaccination coverage. Durable solutions intentions of the population can be assessed either through sample surveys or through registration directly, depending on the time available. Sample surveys can also be used to establish household size and characteristics for use in estimating population size and population trends.

Information from sample surveys is one of the best means of estimating population size where registration has not yet taken place. The results will not only assist in planning registration but will provide working estimates of population size and profiles and a reasonable basis for initial protection and distribution of assistance.

In refugee situations, sample surveys are typically conducted at the household level, noting, when available, the physical address of the household. Depending on the type of survey, information on the country of origin and the sex and age grouping of the respondents and/or the name of the individuals concerned should also be gathered to facilitate subsequent analysis. Where registration has taken place, this information can be drawn from the registration records for the households concerned. In these circumstances, sample surveys can be used as a monitoring and verification technique to determine if registration data is still accurate, and in which parts of the camp or settlement there may be a more urgent need to update it.

Sample surveys aim to report findings that can be considered valid for a specified population segment living in a specified geographic area. Each sample survey should limit its scope to an area where a given set of circumstances applies with reasonable consistency, and where the prevalence of the phenomena being examined is expected to be the same. Wherever the prevalence is expected to be significantly different, a separate survey should be conducted.



Combining registration data with geographical data and survey data in GIS is a particularly effective tool for protection and assistance planning and monitoring. Contact PGDS/GIMU for more information about using GIS.

The names and boundaries by which the overall geographical area of concern is sub-divided, and the related sub-divisions of the overall population of concern, should be standardized and adhered to for all information gathering, so that data can be organized according to consistent units of analysis.

Within the area and population covered by the survey, a sample is chosen that is large enough to be representative. The sample normally consists of clusters of households. Clusters are normally designed to have the same surface area and are selected at random (for example on a site layout map) in order to minimize bias. Within the cluster, households are approached for interviews on a random basis.

The principle of a sample survey is that the findings for a representative sample of households or individuals are extrapolated to produce results that, within the margin of error expressed as the 'confidence interval' of the result, are then held to be valid for the overall population of the area covered by the survey.

Any errors inherent in the methodology used for a sample survey can significantly distort the final result. In particular, while the data for the sample itself (the 'numerator') may be reasonably accurate, the overall population figure for the area covered (the 'denominator') may be unreliable. This is situation is rectified where up-to-date registration data already exists. Registration data on household and individuals provides a very accurate 'denominator' on the basis of which sample and other types of surveys can be conducted with great accuracy. Expert guidance should be sought in the design of sample surveys.

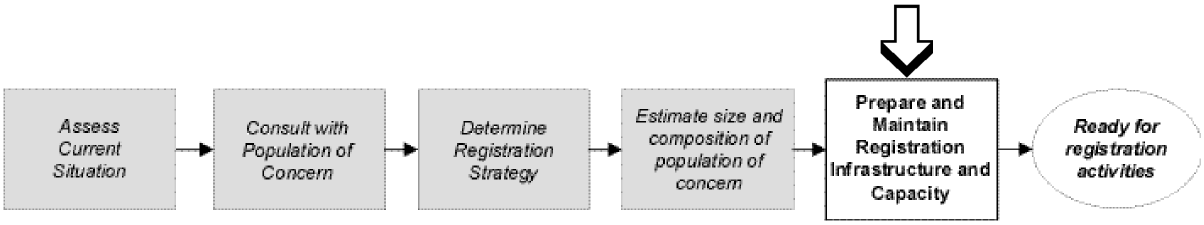
To ensure comparability of results, adopt standardized methodology and reporting formats for sample surveys. In the case of nutrition and mortality surveys, consistency should be ensured with the guidance provided by recognized standard-setting bodies for survey methodologies. These include the Refugee Nutrition Information System of the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (www.unsystem.org/scn/Publications/html/rnis.html) and the resources and tools collected by the SMART initiative (www.smartindicators.org).

11.2.2 Inventory surveys

Inventory surveys involve a comprehensive and systematic check in which all examples of a particular asset or facility are visited, measurements are taken, user-interviews conducted and observations made. A survey of water availability in a camp or settlement can be undertaken by taking a systematic inventory of type, quantity, quality, accessibility, etc., of all water sources available for use in the area. The same can be done to assess the condition of shelter, sanitation facilities, or the availability of domestic items at the household level. In a registration context, the same approach can be used as a verification technique to check the physical presence of persons registered as part of each household (See Section 20.1.1 – *Check physical presence)*.

11.2.3 In-depth studies

In-depth studies are needed where satisfactory answers can only be found by means of an analytical enquiry applying a specifically tailored combination of methods and techniques and weighing the value of varied sources of information. This is the approach needed in order to assess the environmental impact or socio-economic impact of a refugee situation for example, the livelihoods and level of self-reliance of the population, or the durable solutions intentions and prospects of the population. Where registration data exists, it should be consulted and considered as the point of departure for such studies.



12. Prepare and Maintain Registration Infrastructure and Capacity

This is the final step before registration activities can begin. Depending on the registration strategy, this step may focus on the maintenance or upgrading of existing facilities and infrastructure for registration, or may require the establishment of entirely new capacities and facilities.

The eight sub-steps involved are 1) preparing the operational framework; 2) establishing standard operating procedures; 3) standardizing locations, names, and other categories; 4) procuring materials and equipment; 5) hiring and training partners and staff; 6) setting up registration locations; 7) establishing evacuation and security plans; and 8) testing the methodology.

12.1 Prepare operational framework

In certain situations, it may be desirable to conclude a formal agreement with the authorities regarding the registration strategy or specific registration activities. This agreement may be drawn up when the government wishes to issue identity documents to those registered, when UNHCR supports the government's efforts, and/or when other partners will assist. The agreement should be revised with the government regularly. Elements of an agreement on refugee registration include:

- ✔ scope of registration activities (which refugees, what time frame, geographical areas);
- ✔ objectives (protection, issuance of identity documents, assistance, durable solutions);
- ✔ reference to national legislation and *Accord de Siège* (if applicable);
- ✔ governing principles (use, maintenance, access and sharing of data, confidentiality and data protection);
- ✔ roles and responsibilities of each party;
- ✔ methodology (summary of registration operating procedures and steps);
- ✔ forms and card design (samples);
- ✔ data-processing plans and equipment.

A 'protocol', or agreement, between the relevant State and UNHCR can clarify the distinct roles the two parties should play in the registration process.

A sample protocol is included in the Handbook as Annex 9.

However, formal agreements may be counter-productive in some situations; for example where the continued presence and protection of refugees and asylum-seekers is not supported by explicit government approval.

12.2 Establish standard operating procedures

Each office must have standard, written operating procedures for registration and documentation processes. These will also include the procedures for registering new arrivals, births, deaths, and departures, as well as any other changes in the population, such as relocations, marriages, divorces, special needs or changes in address or location.

Sample standard operating procedures are provided in Annex 10.

The procedures should be accepted by the different functional units and partners working on registration, particularly by the protection staff. Standard operating procedures should also designate the staff accountable for every aspect of registration activities. These procedures should be periodically reviewed and reconfirmed.

Prepare standard operating procedures for the range of registration activities in the office:

- ✔ **Reception** (fixing, identifying and referring those with special needs, verifying identity of persons of concern, scheduling registration interviews, managing flows of persons through the premises, and security procedures).

- ✔ **Registration** (retrieving and reviewing existing data, filling in forms, interviewing techniques, checking completed forms, taking pictures, working with interpreters, managing flow of persons through interviews, and security procedures during interviews).

- ✔ **Issuing Documents** (who should get which document, procedures for issuing and checking, control of document numbers and stock, renewal, cancellation and replacement of documents, signatures required, and filing of duplicates or copies).

- ✔ **Data Management** (filing and storage of registration records, entering data, validating data, updating data, managing database, retrieving registration records, printing and distributing reports, handling special report requests).

- ✔ **Deregistration** (criteria for deregistering persons, procedures for informing persons of concern regarding deregistration and policy and procedures for recalling and invalidating documentation).

Operating procedures will also include the daily procedures for the registration office, including storage and release of materials, and operating and maintaining equipment.

12.2.1 Special cases

The standard operating procedures should include provisions for special or problematic cases. These cases include:

- families who should be split or reunited;
- family members who claim not to have been registered before;
- deregistered persons now back in the territory of asylum;
- individuals who have special protection or assistance needs (see Section 14.2 – *Identity and refer persons with special needs*);
- persons who have valid registration documentation but who cannot be found on the master lists or in the database;
- persons who claim to have lost their cards or those with questionable documents (suspected forgeries or tampered cards);
- persons who wish to discuss non-registration related matters.

12.3 Standardize locations, names and other categories

It is essential to agree on standardized registration names/labels *before* refugees are registered. Set aside ample time to focus and agree on these standards. Allow for governments, UNHCR, other agencies and implementing partners to make suggestions and agree, in writing, on the standard naming system to be used. Do not change standard UNHCR formats, such as dates of birth, occupational skills and special needs categories. Global standard categories and codes exist for many types of registration data, but not all.

Annex 7 provides a list of standard categories and codes for use in recording registration data.

12.3.1 Agreement on non-standard categories (local standardization)

The following four types of data must be standardized by the operation, updated regularly, and the agreed system respected and used by all parties involved in registration:

- ✔ **Locations (place names and addresses):** The hierarchy of locations and the standard set of place names must be set out in advance. Standardize the structure, spelling and coding of these addresses. The number and levels of geographical administrative units will vary country to country. Set standards at the local level then shared and agree upon them globally. This becomes particularly important when refugees are repatriated and their data is consolidated and shared in the country of return.

- ✔ **Personal Names:** Agree on a common way of recording and spelling personal names.

✔ **Personal Documentation:** Determine which and how personal documentation will be recorded.

✔ **Refugee addresses in the country of asylum:** Linking refugee data to where refugees reside means that UNHCR and partners can find people whenever an assistance or protection intervention is required. Locations where refugees reside can be divided into three broad categories: urban, rural or dispersed, and camp-based. Standardize the way this information is recorded. In urban settings, refugees can frequently be contacted by telephone, so record telephone numbers.

Registration needs a well-organised system of addresses and locations.

12.3.2 Creating an address system for a refugee camp

Staff responsible for site planning and those responsible for registration should collaborate on a camp layout before the refugees arrive. In existing camps, field offices should try to establish an appropriate address system, to the household level, if possible.

Camp planning is normally based on the following hierarchy of subdivisions of the camp (the number of persons has been averaged out for ease of presentation and can be adjusted according to actual conditions):

Level	*Entity*	*No. of persons*	*Total area of plot (sq.m.)*
1	Family	4 to 6	225
2	Community = 16 families	80	3,600
3	Block = 16 communities (approx. 250 family)	1,250	56,250
4	Sector = four blocks	5,000	225,000
5	Camp = four sectors	20,000	900,000 (90 ha.)

Whatever layout pattern is agreed, a sub-division of the camp should be undertaken, as described above, so that an individual or family can be linked to a particular "address" and so families with specific needs can be easily located.

For consistency and clarity, the following alphanumeric labels should be used to designate the sub-divisions of the camp:

4 Sectors, labelled A, B, C and D;
16 Blocks, numbered A1 to D4;
250 Communities, 16 per block, numbered A1/1 to D4/16;
4,000 Individual Family Huts or Plots, 16 per community: numbered from A1/1/1 to D4/16/16.

Example: A family or a plot located in Sector B in Block 3, Community 12, Plot 5 and House 2 would have a label B3/12/5/2.

12.3.3 Country-of-origin place names

Offices should determine accurate place names in the country of origin and the level of detail in which this information will be recorded during registration. Whenever possible, a single, standardized name with only one spelling should be used when naming a distinct geographical unit. Cities and countries may have different names or different spellings in different languages; names of places may have changed over time. Only one set of spelling and names should be used.

Most refugees know their address in the camp.

Since geographical information is used for tracing family members and also during repatriation to determine the "readiness" of a specific place of return, it is essential that this information be standardized. The Geographic Information and Mapping Unit at UNHCR Headquarters should facilitate this process, as its information is based on material from governments and UN agencies with a Geographic Information System (GIS) capacity on the ground.

In general, information about location of origin should be collected during registration in as much detail as possible, usually to the name of the town or village of origin.

➢ ***A standard list of geographical names, addresses, location codes, and maps should be made available to all staff in the operation.***

12.4 Procure equipment and materials

A list of standard registration items and their specifications is found in Annex 15.

A stockpile of these standard registration materials is maintained at Headquarters. To order supplies from this stockpile, use the normal purchasing procedures. Offices in the field should address their requests for registration materials, preferably by e-mail, to their respective desks at Headquarters, with a copy to the Population and Geographic Data Section.

Field offices in the regions covered by a Regional Registration Officer (such as Central and West Africa, East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes, and CASWANAME) should obtain clearance for their registration methodologies and orders for materials prior to placing the order. Regional stockpiles of registration materials may be available at the regional technical support hubs.

12.4.1 Procuring materials

The request for registration materials should contain:

- ✔ the precise specifications and quantities required (it will be useful to attach the registration plan and/or methodology);
- ✔ relevant authorized budget code(s) for the replenishment of the stock, including freight costs; and
- ✔ shipping/pouching address and contact person (name and title of responsible administrative or logistics officer in the receiving field office).

Standard items will normally be shipped immediately upon clearance by the registration officers at Headquarters. The Mail and Stationery Unit is responsible for releasing the registration materials from the central stockpile at UNHCR Headquarters and for dispatching the goods to the field offices. This Unit will notify the requesting field office of the shipping arrangements and expected date of arrival. It will also copy the Airway Bill to the field office for smooth customs procedures.

The Mail Unit at Headquarters is responsible for dispatching registration materials once their release is agreed to by DOS and the Bueau.

All items taken from the stockpile must be replenished immediately, to be paid for by the respective operational budgets. To ensure that stocks at Headquarters are readily available for field operations, the respective desks are responsible for forwarding Purchase Requests to the Supply Management Service.

Materials can normally be released immediately (same day for requests received in the morning and next working day for requests received in the afternoon). Small quantities of up to 15 kg are pouched at regular pouch dates; large quantities are shipped at the earliest time, depending on air traffic, connections and availability of freight capacity. Official travellers can carry limited amounts of materials as part of their accompanied luggage if other arrangements would take considerably more time.

Place orders well ahead of planned registration/verification activities and replenish local stocks well before they are depleted. Allow ample time, normally 6-8 weeks from the date of the purchase request, for production and shipment to the field – not including time for customs clearance procedures and in-country transportation from port of entry to field destination.

➢ ***Order supplies well in advance of planned registration activities.***

12.4.2 Standards materials verses customized materials

Customizing registration materials is possible although not encouraged. Use customized registration materials only when the standard items are not suitable for the agreed registration methodology. Advice on specifications must be sought from the registration officer(s) at Head-quarters and/or from the regional registration officers at the regional technical support hubs.

Customization allows operations to:

- Differentiate between different camps: use of the standard registration cards, tokens and wristbands can be problematic when different camps are located close together.

- Distinguish new cards from old cards.

- Satisfy particular information requirements that are not addressed in the standard materials.

The features of registration materials, including cards, tokens, wristbands and forms that are most commonly customized are:

✔ numbering (prefixes, numbers)
✔ language
✔ colour
✔ security features (fraud-proof patterns, micro-printing, etc.)
✔ packing (number of items in one box)

See Section 10.5.2 – *Selecting registration forms* for specific information about customizing forms.

12.5 Hire and train partners and staff

Engaging adequately trained personnel is key to the success of a registration exercise. Try to involve existing government and UNHCR personnel as much as possible, particularly those who are familiar with refugee protection issues, camp management and, ideally, registration.

12.5.1 Roles and responsibilities

Every staff member needs to know exactly what she or he is responsible for, what to do at which stage of the process, whom to report to and how to account for the work accomplished. Short but concrete terms-of-reference or job descriptions will be helpful for managers and staff alike.

As registration progresses, adjustments in staffing may be required. Staff should be rotated to avoid burn-out, to allow them to do different jobs, to minimize exposure to stress and security threats, and to prevent abuse and corruption.

12.5.2 Briefing and Training

Good training makes a difference in achieving quality registration.

A succinct general briefing will put everybody in the broader picture. For individual staff members, a basic understanding of the whole protection strategy, the planned registration activity, the linkage between the different steps (fixing, registration, data-processing) and other general information is essential to understanding their own role in the strategy. Save time by preparing and distributing a briefing note to staff in advance of the official briefing.

Conduct targeted training sessions with all staff and temporary personnel to ascertain they understand what is expected of them. Training should involve hands-on practice and simulations and also include discussions on the principles and standards of refugee registration. For large-scale registration activities, consider asking Headquarters to deploy an experienced trainer to the operation.

Training for all UNHCR registration staff should address the following:

- ✔ The mandate of the UNHCR Office
- ✔ Refugee protection principles and the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees
- ✔ UNHCR registration standards and specific procedures for registration of applicants for RSD where appropriate

- ✔ Identifying and assisting individuals who may have special assistance or protection needs
- ✔ Age, gender and cultural sensitivity when working with persons of concern
- ✔ Interview techniques, including conducting interviews with children, mentally ill or traumatized individuals, and other vulnerable persons
- ✔ Working with interpreters

12.5.3 Hiring Staff

Identifying and selecting staff requires time and preparation. Have a clear idea of the qualities and proficiencies necessarily for a given post. It can be difficult to find qualified staff in remote locations. Arrange incentives for people from the capital or big cities to come to remote registration sites. When possible, applicants should sit a short test to ascertain that they have the required qualifications. UNHCR has often hired university students to assist during large-scale registrations. Be aware, however, that overqualified staff may be as disruptive as under-qualified personnel.

The number of staff required for each stage of the registration will be based on the methodology. Having a few staff in reserve or on stand-by will ensure that pressure can be reduced during peak hours. Extra staff can also trouble-shoot and help out in unforeseen situations. In large-scale registrations or for mass data-processing, it may be necessary to organize several shifts. Alternatively, staff may be asked to work long hours but short weeks. Whatever the schedule, staff should be allowed sufficient time to rest and recuperate, especially if they are working in a stressful environment. When overtime is unavoidable, administrative arrangements should be made in advance.

Be aware of tensions between different ethnic groups and avoid engaging personnel whose ethnicity may be a source of discomfort or anger amongst the refugees being registered.

Engage a sufficient number of staff fluent in the refugees' mother tongue and also able to write in an official UN language. Make special arrangements for minority refugees who may not speak the majority language. Have stand-by arrangements for interpreters and translators in place.

Be sure that there are equal numbers of men and women officers, interviewers, and interpreters working in registration activities. In addition, ensure that women leaders from the community are placed at the entry points to registration sites to monitor the access of women and girls.

➢ ***There should be an adequate number of female staff at every stage of the registration process. They should be trained to look for women and girl refugees who may need particular assistance and should be prepared to intervene both sensitively and effectively.***

Ensure that there are a minimum number of staff working in the registration process specifically trained and qualified to identify and handle the protection and registration needs of boys and girls. This may mean engaging experts from line ministries, UNICEF, ICRC, or qualified NGOs.

In general, registration staff should be committed, have a basic technical understanding and good handwriting (clerks), have the ability to adapt to pressure and stress, show flexibility concerning working hours (long days, no or short breaks), and demonstrate a readiness to travel and work in remote areas for several days.

12.5.4 Administrative procedures

Work with the administrative and programme staff to determine the appropriate mechanisms for hiring staff for registration activities. Depending on the type of registration activities foreseen, the number and duration of staff required will vary as will their contractual arrangements with UNHCR.

Staff can be hired, seconded, or loaned to work on registration activities. They can be hired through implementing partners or directly by UNHCR. Hiring by UNHCR is less flexible due to UN administrative rules and procedures, but provides greater control, supervision, and stability with regard to the persons hired.

Managers will need to determine whom to pay, particularly if refugees and government officials are participating in the activities. They also need to determine how much to pay and when to pay (in advance or once activities are completed). Payments can be made on the basis of time worked or worked performed, depending on the tasks and responsibilities.

Contracts, regardless of who is issuing them, should indicate level or grade (i.e. pay scale), duration of the contract, the number of training days to be covered, specific responsibilities or tasks, arrangements for insurance or hazard payments, and conditions under which the contract can be severed.

12.6 Set up registration locations

The registration facilities and sites have a direct impact on the ability of persons of concern to present themselves to UNHCR for any purpose, including registration and making a claim for refugee status. In all operations, measures should be taken to ensure that the facilities established for registration promote the dignity of the persons of concern and due process in registration and other mandate functions, and ensure the safety and security of staff and other persons on the premises.

Site design should foster the logical flow of people through the registration process.

Two models for site design are shown on the following pages. One plan shows small or medium scale registration operations, where the registration process is more continuous and a manageable number of persons is seen each day and on a regular basis. The other model demonstrates larger scale operations in which a large number of persons must be processed in a relatively short period of time.

Consider the following when choosing and designing a site or location for conducting registration:

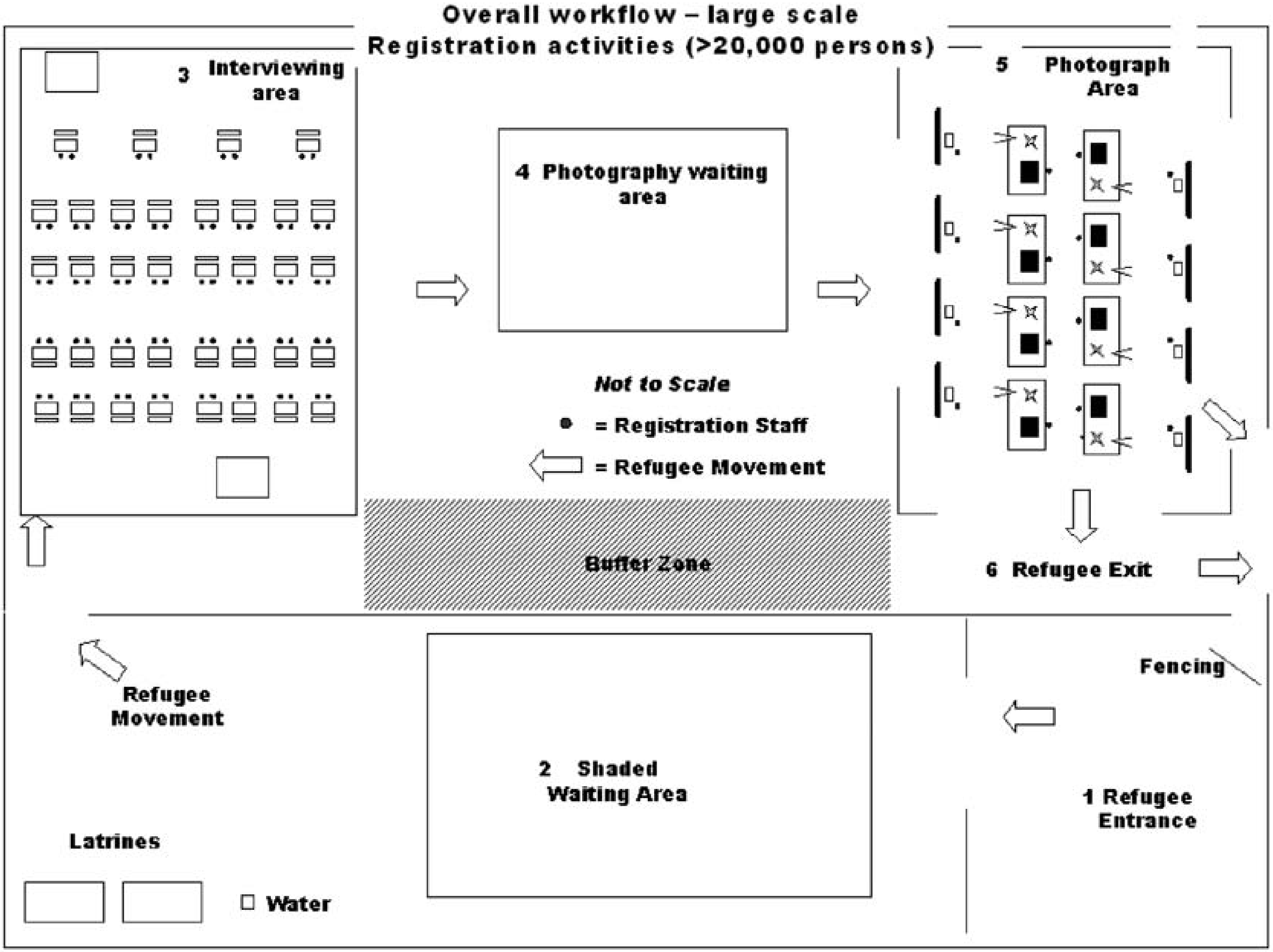
- ✔ location (accessibility to refugees and staff, proximity to camps or refugee settlements, communication and distances between sites/offices);
- ✔ space (right size to accommodate sufficient number of registration desks or booths);
- ✔ waiting areas, including private waiting areas for women, sufficient space for children, and isolated spaces for special cases;
- ✔ security and crowd control, both personnel and installations; staff safety considerations (evacuation);
- ✔ electricity;
- ✔ water and toilets;
- ✔ furniture and office equipment;
- ✔ heating or air conditioning;
- ✔ lighting, especially for photography;
- ✔ secure storage facilities for registration materials and equipment;
- ✔ permanency of site(s), construction of new buildings, repair of existing structures;
- ✔ data-processing site and facilities.

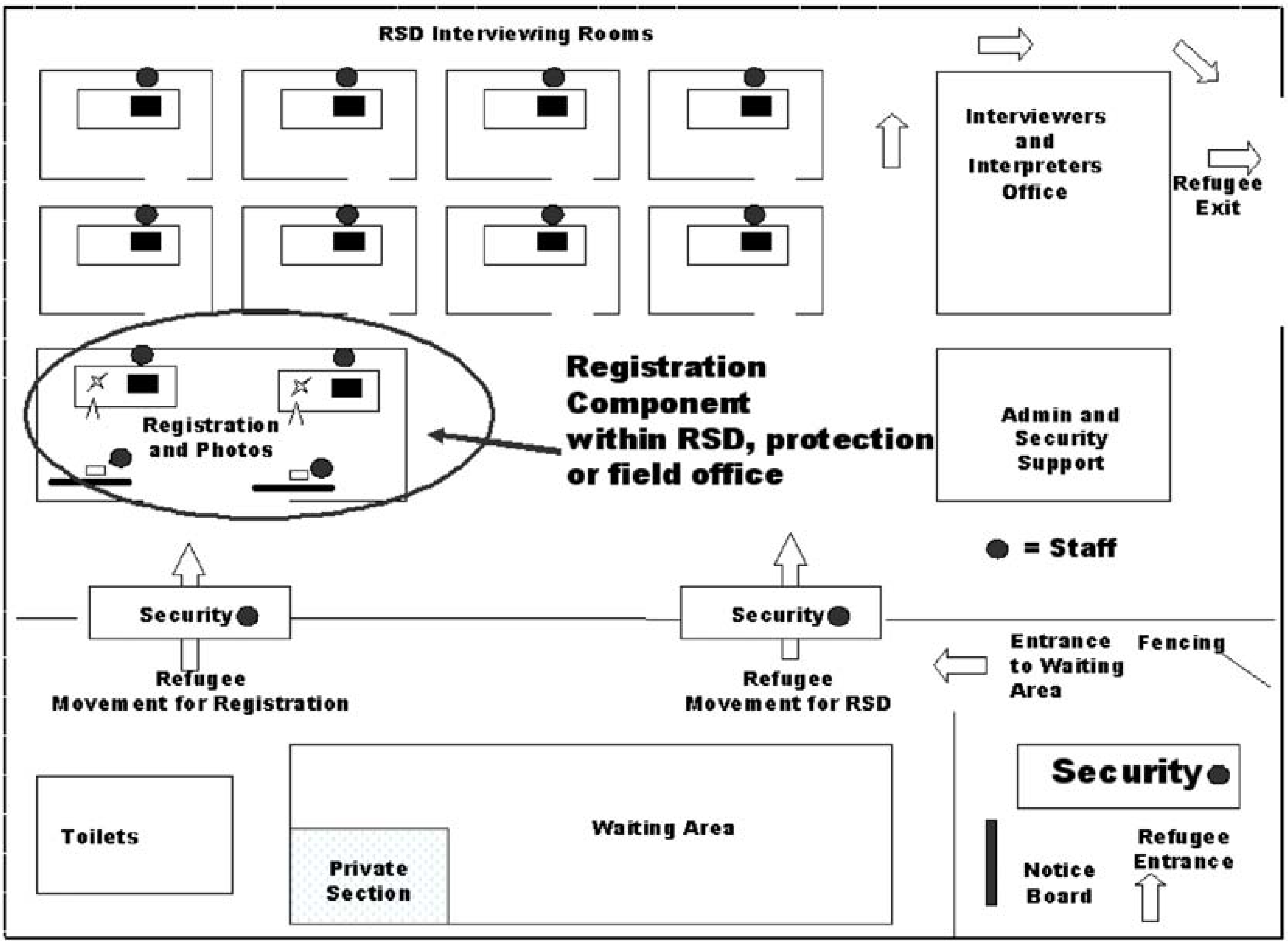
12.6.1 Waiting areas

However well the flow and scheduling of people is organized and regulated, it will always be necessary to set up areas in which people – potentially large numbers of people – can wait their turn to be registered. Shade/heat and protection from wind and rain should be provided. Water and/or other drinks and sanitation facilities should be available. Private space should be set aside for mothers to nurse and care for their children. Protected and monitored areas should be set up for unaccompanied children, single parents, single women and adolescent girls, elderly men and women, and disabled persons so they are not overwhelmed by the process or the crowds.

12.6.2 Mobile registration units

Consider taking registration locations out to the places where refugees or those of concern are located. Mobile registration offices or teams can be set up to go to the homes and dwellings of refugees, or to the remote locations where they are living. This strategy is particularly effective when verifying existing registration data. The units do not have to be technically complex; clipboards and pens can be enough.


Overall workflow – large scale
Registration activities (>20,000 persons)
3 Interviewing area
4 Photography waiting area
5 Photograph Area
Not to Scale
= Registration Staff
= Refugee Movement
Buffer Zone
6 Refugee Exit
Fencing
Refugee Movement
2 Shaded Waiting Area
1 Refugee Entrance
Latrines
Water


RSD Interviewing Rooms
Interviewers and Interpreters Office
Refugee Exit
Registration and Photos
Registration Component within RSD, protection or field office
Admin and Security Support
= Staff
Security
Security
Refugee Movement for Registration
Refugee Movement for RSD
Entrance to Waiting Area
Fencing
Security
Toilets
Waiting Area
Private Section
Notice Board
Refugee Entrance

Mobile registration units in Colombia: reaching out into the community.

12.6.3 Emergency environments

Be sure that first aid or health facilities are available at or near the registration site. Local health providers or core medical staff of health-related NGOs should be placed on stand-by.

If possible, establish reception or transit areas where counting and initial registration can take place after the first relief interventions, such as health screening and the provision of emergency food rations, are administered.

If fixing tokens were given to the newly arrived refugees at the border or elsewhere, these should be exchanged here for provisional family cards. Basic information entered on the card should also be captured on the registration form for future reference.

12.6.4 Refugee status determination

The *Procedural Standards for Refugee Status Determination under UNHCR's Mandate* contains specific training requirements for registration staff in the RSD context. Specifics on registration locations and physical arrangements are described in Section 2.3 of the *Procedural Standards*.

12.7 Establish security and evacuation plans

The security of the refugees and the safety of the staff are paramount in any registration exercise. Managers are responsible for ensuring that registration takes place in a secure environment, at the appropriate time, and that precautions are taken against potential security threats.

- ✔ Make a general assessment of the security context, including timing of the registration, the prevailing political climate, and the likelihood of disruption.
- ✔ Have security officers from UN/UNSECOORD, UNHCR, or government authorities, assess the site and offer recommendations for improvements/reinforcements.
- ✔ Discuss the nature and aim of the planned activities with central and local authorities and security forces.
- ✔ Consult with persons of concern, **including women,** on security issues and possible responses.
- ✔ Develop a security plan, which would include staffing and personnel, equipment for radio communication, plans for an evacuation, etc.

- ✔ Change security features periodically.

It is imperative to plan an evacuation procedure in the event the situation becomes too dangerous. A good evacuation plan is based on the regular procedures for finishing up and leaving a registration site. Evacuation plans, routes and procedures should be understood by all staff members.

➢ ***Rehearse security plans to avoid panic and chaos during a real security incident.***

Before letting people into a registration site, it may be necessary to use hand metal detectors to screen people for weapons or other items that people could use against themselves or others. Remove any items from the reception and interviewing areas that could be used as weapons.

Consider installing a sturdy physical barrier between the petitioner and reception staff or interviewers if there is a risk of staff being assaulted during the course of their duties. When appropriate, install noise-making devices and a panic button to alert colleagues.

Maintain a list of persons who have threatened or attacked staff in any way and at any time, and ensure that their names and photos are posted and are known to all staff in the office.

Always limit the number of persons in the registration area at any one time. Establish clear procedures for managing the movement of people through the registration site.

Telecommunications equipment, radios and alert systems should be checked periodically to be sure they function. Cars should always be parked pointing in the right direction and ready to move.

12.7.1 Crowd control

Crowds are a security concern for staff, host communities, and persons of concern alike. When crowds get out of control, it can be difficult to ensure the well-being and safety of all involved. Refugees or others may become violent and threaten or even physically assault staff or other persons of concern. Crowds outside a UNHCR office may make local authorities uncomfortable which may lead to the arrest of asylum-seekers or severe restrictions on physical access to UNHCR offices. When planning registration activities, ensure that site layout and scheduling of the activities minimize the likelihood of crowds.

Crowds tend to get out of control because:

- ✔ People are not sure what is happening.
- ✔ People do not agree with what is happening.
- ✔ People feel that time is running out for a particular action or service.
- ✔ There is no internal organization of the crowd.
- ✔ People are tired of waiting.
- ✔ There is deliberate sabotage, poor planning or cultural insensitivity.

Avoid crowding whenever possible.

The following actions should be taken to mitigate crowd-control problems:

- ✔ Share clear information with the community prior to the exercise.
- ✔ Post information on the registration period and opening hours in visible locations and translated into the refugees' language(s).
- ✔ Ensure that there are facilities (shade, water, medical assistance) where people are waiting.
- ✔ Work with community leaders and respected committees to organize people into manageable groups.
- ✔ Allow refugees with special needs to move to the front of the queue.
- ✔ Ensure sufficient communications equipment (megaphones, loudspeakers) to address the crowd.
- ✔ Provide clear and regular messages or updates so people will know how long they will have to wait.
- ✔ Deal quickly and fairly with cases of cheating or disorderly behavior.
- ✔ Ensure the presence of an appropriate number of adequately trained/ briefed security personnel.
- ✔ Maintain a reserve of security forces or police officers who can be deployed to re-enforce normal security personal as and where needed.

Crowds cannot always be managed; prepare for the worst-case scenario. Devise contingency plans that cover increasing security staff, reinforcing registration staff to increase processing speed, changing registration methodology and objectives, and in the worst case, evacuating staff from the registration site.

12.8 Test the methodology

Testing the methodology can take place in the office or on the drawing board; however, it is preferable to test the methodology in real conditions, involving refugees and registration personnel.

Testing allows operations to:

- ✔ **Refine planning assumptions:** Test how long it takes to register one person or one household to project the time required to register the entire population. Identify loopholes and possible contingencies. Try to predict the refugees' reaction to the registration methodology.

- ✔ **Confirm the feasibility of the registration form:** Validate the contents of the form. See if the questions are asked in such a way that the refugees provide the desired information easily, without registration staff having to explain or repeat the question. Confirm that questions asked are culturally correct and age- and gender-sensitive. Confirm the order of questions. See if space on the form is adequate to capture the information. Observe how long it takes a refugee or refugee family to fill in the form. Identify gaps and/or unnecessary parts of the form.

- ✔ **Prepare instructions to registration staff/clerks:** Single out important messages that registration personnel must be aware of. Identify possible ways of providing false information and share these with registration staff.

- ✔ **Prepare for contingencies:** Identify measures necessary to preserve the integrity of the process.

- ✔ **Test security arrangements and response plans.**

- ✔ **Confirm the feasibility of other elements of the registration methodology:** Test fixing techniques (wrist-banding, fingerprinting, etc.) and photography. Also, test family/ration cards for durability and forge-proof features.

In some situations and with some methodologies, there are risks associated with public testing. Refugees and others learn fast, particularly if it is in their interest to hide the truth. Testing the methodology may give them the opportunity to devise ways of undermining the activities.

When mass registration is planned in several sites and involving new techniques and technology, it may be necessary to choose one or two locations/sites to conduct pilot registrations before expanding to the other sites. This will allow for any adjustments in the methodology, techniques and technology before large-scale investments are made.

Once the methodology has been agreed to, stick to it. Ensure that any modifications are applied consistently. Inform partners of any changes; and be sure that the appropriate managers are alerted to any budget and staffing implications of the changes.

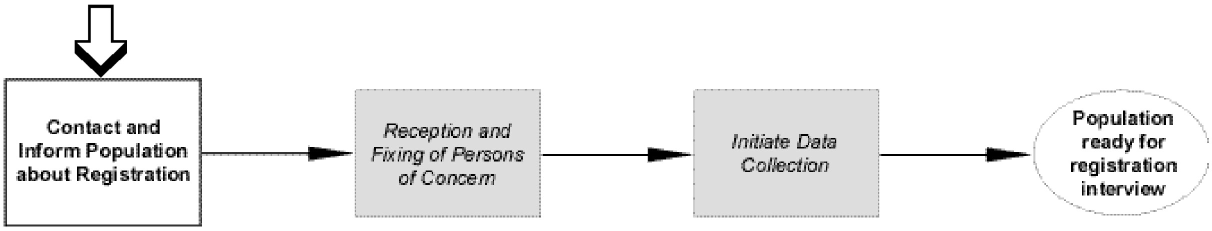
Initial Registration

In addition to general guidance on how to complete these steps, this part of the Handbook contains information on:

- ***What to tell*** the individuals and the community about registration (*Chapter 13*)
- Setting up ***complaints procedures*** (*Section 13.3)*
- ***Fixing materials*** and techniques, including biometrics (*Section 14.1*)
- Using ***tokens*** (*Section 14.1.2*)
- Identifying persons with ***special protection and assistance needs*** (*Section 14.2*)
- ***Scheduling registration interviews*** (*Section 14.5*)
- ***Pre-populating*** registration forms (*Section 15.2*)

Once the methodology has been tested, the registration sites prepared, staff in place and trained, and the security arrangements prepared and tested, actual registration activities can begin.

The first steps of the registration activity are: contacting and informing the population of concern about the registration process, receiving and fixing the population, and beginning to collect data.



13. Contact and Inform Population about Registration

This step differs from consultation with refugees and others during the planning stage. The objective of this step is to inform and counsel persons of concern about the registration activities that have been agreed to and will take place.

Information about registration is particularly important to refugees when they first seek asylum. The initial enumeration or household registration may be a refugee's first encounter with UNHCR. The link between registration and protection and assistance may not be evident to arriving refugees. Individuals may be traumatized to such an extent that they balk at participating in any sort of information-gathering exercise. Some persons of concern may not come forward for registration. However, once refugees understand that registration is conducted to provide basic assistance (by providing shelter or issuing a ration card, for example) the level of co-operation is likely to improve. Messages should therefore be delivered promptly and be easy to understand.

13.1 Inform the refugees

Talk to refugees and others about registration plans and objectives.

Persons of concern to UNHCR, whether asylum-seekers or refugees, should be informed of the purpose and expected outcome of the registration process. They should also be made aware of their rights and obligations before being registered and should be informed, in clear and simple terms, about the practical steps that UNHCR will take to collect data about them.

Information campaigns must accurately represent the aims of the planned registration activities. Do not make promises that cannot be fulfilled. Refugees may remain anxious and suspicious even after they have received thorough explanations and despite their close involvement in the process. UNHCR and its partners should be sensitive to any concerns individuals or groups of refugees express about registration.

Prepare a registration information strategy that makes sure the entire community of concern has access to the registration process. Make information about standard registration procedures, from reception onwards, available ***at all times*** to refugees and others of concern, and in the ***native language*** of the individuals concerned.

Be aware that refugee expectations will be considerably higher when refugees know that registration or verification activities may be associated with resettlement. Information campaigns should be able to manage these expectations.

An **information campaign** should include detailed information about:

- ✔ **The purpose of the registration:** Why should the refugees register? What does registration mean? What benefits are associated with registration? What may be the consequences of a failure to register?

- ✔ **Confidentiality and sharing of data gathered:** Why might data be shared with others, such as host government and other interested parties? What data will be shared with others? What are the refugees' rights to privacy and to refuse to share data? What are the consequences of refusing to share data?

- ✔ **The basic steps in registering:** How does it work? What does the refugee have to do? Do the refugees have to come with their whole families? What do they have to bring? Which documents will they be asked to produce? Do they need to bring original or copies of certain documents?

- ✔ **Opening hours and scheduling:** When is the UNHCR office open? When does each individual or family have to go to the registration office?

- ✔ **Pre-conditions for being registered:** Who is to be registered? What are the criteria? Who will decide? What happens to those refused?

- ✔ **Procedures for absentees and others:** What happens to those who are not able to attend the registration on the day they are scheduled to be registered? Are there arrangements for individuals who are sick and for persons with special needs? Can detainees get registered?

- ✔ Procedures for reporting misconduct by staff or other difficulties in accessing the UNHCR office and registration procedures.

➢ ***Registration procedures are free of charge and voluntary. This information must be posted outside the office and made prominent in any information campaign.***

UNHCR standards for the protection of refugee women require that UNHCR staff take all possible measures to ensure that women have access to UNHCR registration and receive any necessary assistance and support in understanding the registration procedures. In certain cultures or family units, women may be excluded from participating, or may be reluctant to participate, in registration activities. Registration staff should be sensitized to this issue when addressing the refugee community.

Allow for refugees and asylum-seekers to ask questions about registration, documentation and related activities. UNHCR registration staff should be prepared to dispel rumors when required. Be prepared to answer the following questions from refugees and others of concern:

- What are the government and UNHCR going to do with the information collected during registration?
- Can I change the information I give to UNHCR later on?
- What happens with the data collected during registration when I return home?
- Will my family and I have more food?
- What if I divorce and start a new life with another man/woman? Will I get a new ration card? Is my national ID card (from country of origin) still valid?
- Will my refugee ID card remain valid when I go back to my country?
- Does registration mean that I will be forced to return against my will?
- Will I be resettled to Europe or America if I register?
- Will my sick mother have to walk to the registration office by herself?
- Will there be food, water and toilets at the registration point?
- How long will I have to wait in the queue?
- Will my personal information be sent to the government in my home country?

13.1.1 Refugee status determination

Usually more detailed information, such as the reasons for flight from country of origin, will be collected during an RSD registration than during basic registration. Criteria for RSD-derived status will often mean that families are grouped differently than refugees may expect. Refugees should be informed accordingly.

The *Procedural Standards for Refugee Status Determination under UNHCR's Mandate* (Section 3.1.2 – Dissemination of Information to asylum-seekers) provides detailed instructions on how to do this in RSD operations. Please refer to these standards whenever RSD is being conducted or facilitated by UNHCR.

13.2 Disseminate information

Information about registration should be disseminated through a variety of media and well enough in advance to be sure that persons of concern have time to react. Information can be disseminated through:

- ✔ Meetings (formal information-sharing at meetings with elders, women's groups, in schools and clubs).
- ✔ Posted announcements (in market areas, at food-distribution points and water points, in schools and churches, at the entrance to the camp, in UNHCR, government or other partners' offices, in the collective shelter).
- ✔ Leaflets (handed to individuals or groups).
- ✔ Mass mailings (mainly used for urban caseloads).
- ✔ Press announcements (TV, radio, newspapers, Internet).
- ✔ Public-address systems in camps (or by megaphone).
- ✔ Word of mouth (through refugee leaders, during mass gatherings, such as cultural and sporting events).
- ✔ Informal information-sharing (through health workers, community service personnel, social workers, teachers and other refugee workers).

Always post information about registration outside of UNHCR and government offices.

➢ ***Ensure that women refugees participate in information campaigns and sessions. They can identify and pass messages to segments of the community that might not be reached through other means.***

All information about registration should be posted **outside** the office premises. See Annex 11 for sample registration announcements.

13.2.1 Timing of announcements

➢ ***Information campaigns should be launched as early as possible.***

Timing is important. A single announcement will probably not be enough to get the message about registration across to the refugee population. Avoid giving notice too late – people may have to plan to attend registration; but avoid making the announcement too far in advance: people may forget important details.

In some circumstances it may be better to list or use refugee numbers rather than names in announcements and public postings.

13.3 Establish complaint procedures

Each office should establish procedures to allow refugees and others of concern to file complaints about and make suggestions for improving registration activities in all phases.

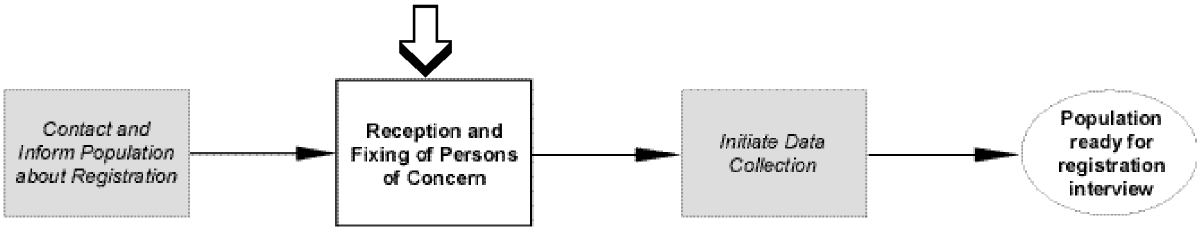
Information regarding the procedures for reporting mistreatment or misconduct by UNHCR or any partner staff should be disseminated to persons of concern as part of any information campaign. Information should also make clear that the services of UNHCR and any implementing partner are free of charge and are open to all persons of concern, regardless of age, sex, nationality, religion or ethnicity.

Refugees should be told that any request by UNHCR or partner staff for monetary compensation or other favors, including sexual, should be immediately reported through the established procedures, and will be examined by UNHCR.

Complaint procedures should:

- ✔ Include a standard Complaint Form, but be able to review all complaints received, regardless of format.
- ✔ Advise that any unfounded or malicious accusations against UNHCR may result in prosecution in the host country.
- ✔ Require that persons submitting a complaint identify themselves.
- ✔ Include provisions for illiterate persons to submit complaints to a staff member other than the one about whom the complaint is made.
- ✔ Ensure that complaints are submitted directly to the Registration Manager, RSD Supervisor, or other staff member with oversight responsibilities for registration and related activities.
- ✔ Require staff to report on action taken concerning complaints.
- ✔ Permit staff members to report misconduct of other staff engaged in registration-related activities to the Office of the Inspector General.

The *Procedural Standards for Refugee Status Determination under UNHCR's Mandate*, Section 2.6, contains additional information on establishing complaint procedures applicable to all situations.



14. Reception and Fixing of Persons of Concern

Reception and fixing is when people or groups of people are assessed for their eligibility for registration and for their immediate priority for registration processing.

This is a complex step that will vary considerably, depending on the situation, and consists of five sub-steps: 1) fixing persons of concern; 2) identifying persons with special needs and referring them for appropriate care; 3) determining if a person needs to be registered; 4) providing each person with a unique identifier; and 5) scheduling the registration interview.

It is important to determine exactly who is to be registered, and fixing the population will help to do this. It can also help members of the local population from posing as refugees and trying to get registered for protection and assistance. It will also prevent registered refugees from re-registering, with the same or different name, perhaps in a different office, in an effort to obtain extra benefits. Fixing the population, by using tokens (see below), biometrics (see below) or simple wristbands, also enables the government/UNHCR to maintain current statistics on the refugee population and to ensure that newly arriving refugees have access to protection and assistance.

➢ ***Receiving and fixing consists of both seeking out persons of concern where they live and receiving them at known and processing centers to which they have ready access.***

14.1 Fix persons of concern

➢ ***The goal of the fixing process is to help ensure that only persons of concern are registered, that all such persons are registered, and that each person is registered only once.***

Successful fixing of the population is critical to managing many other registration processes. In the future, one of the best ways to prevent multiple registrations by one individual is expected to be the use biometrics (fingerprint or iris verification). However, factors such as cost, volume, and manageability will make these technologies more or less well suited to different operations. Wristbands or tokens, distributed one to each individual, can also be effective, as can the use of visible or invisible ink (election stain) on the hands (fingernails) following the registration process. In the latter case, the registration procedure starts with a check of the hand for traces of the ink.

14.1.1 Organized relocations

Organized relocations between sites offer excellent opportunities to register refugees or verify existing registration information. A simple registration process can easily be added to the relocation plan. At the point of departure, for example, refugees can be given tokens or wristbands to distinguish them from those refugees who have already arrived at the point of destination. Depending on time and resources, control sheets or registration forms may be filled in and cards distributed.

14.1.2 Using tokens

Counting can also be accomplished by handing out pre-numbered UNHCR fixing tokens. The tokens are given to each individual refugee of both sexes and all ages at the border during relocation or on arrival at a camp or refugee settlement. The use of fixing tokens also enables UNHCR to later differentiate newly arrived refugees from local people and from those refugees who arrived earlier and have already been registered. Until registration becomes feasible, the fixing tokens may serve as food tickets or temporary ration cards. Their durability, however, is limited.

Take advantage of organized movements to new locations to fix populations.

For fixing new arrivals

Refugees arriving as part of an influx can be counted by using standard, pre-numbered fixing tokens. The tokens are handed out in numerical order to each refugee at a border crossing, during relocation or on arrival at a camp or settlement. Subtract the serial number of the first token handed out from the serial number of the last token handed out during a given time period, usually one working day to determine the total number of refugees passing through a particular area.

Do not forget to keep a note of the serial numbers of the tokens issued.

This counting system is predicated on a well-controlled, physical separation between incoming refugees and other populations already residing in the country of asylum. Once the refugees begin to mix with the local population or with previously registered refugees, the tokens will help UNHCR distinguish between the groups. Be sure that only one token is issued to any individual. In an uncontrolled, chaotic environment, people may return to the end of the line to collect more tokens.

In a pinch, the new fixing tokens can also be used as temporary ID and entitlement cards.

For providing assistance

If it is not feasible to issue ration/family cards after a refugee influx, the fixing tokens may serve as food tickets or temporary individual ration cards until registration becomes possible. The numbered boxes at the bottom of the token may be used to indicate distribution of weekly food rations. In this case, a hole would be punched through one of the numbered boxes on the day of distribution. However, the fixing token should not be used for these purposes for more than three months. Registration must take place within that time.

For identifying special protection and assistance needs

Observing the physical condition of refugees, especially during an initial influx, is crucial to saving lives. The token has been designed to flag specific refugee needs at initial contact. When staff at the border identify a special need that does not require an immediate, life-saving intervention, they should simply mark the appropriate code. Since during an influx, the goal will be to process refugees quickly, in an effort to move them away from danger or to admit them to a more organized assistance infrastructure, marking tokens for special needs is really a kind of referral process. It implies that individuals will be seen in the very near future for the required protection interventions. The holder of the token will be always be flagged as requiring special assistance until indicated otherwise. In an emergency, the need to process refugees quickly may mean that staff do not have time for this step.

As a temporary identification card

In keeping with UNHCR's commitment to provide individual identity documents to refugees, the token has been designed to collect vital data about the individual. At some point between the initial influx and the full registration process, the refugee should write his or her name, sex and date of birth on the token. Once this information is recorded on the token, the token will serve as a *temporary* ID card. When registering the refugee at a later stage, the interviewer should make use of the token as a *de facto* written record of the refugee, subject of course to verification and validation.

Deactivating tokens

The special box on the token should be punched with a hole to show either that a person has been registered individually or through a household (control sheet) registration. Punching a hole will ensure the token is not used more than once during registration. This allows the refugees to retain the token if it is to serve as a temporary identification card.

14.1.3 Wristbands

In the wristband method of fixing, a single "tamper-proof" plastic bracelet is tightly secured around the wrist of each man, woman and child to be registered. It is, theoretically, impossible to remove the bracelets without damaging or destroying them. After all persons have been given a wristband, the registration process can begin. Before each person is interviewed, her or his bracelet is checked for any signs of tampering. Once the person has been interviewed and her or his personal data recorded on a registration form, the bracelet is removed by a member of the registration team.

This method is commonly used in larger registration activities, when a large number of persons are to be registered or validated in a short period of time. The bracelets do not last indefinitely, and should therefore only be used during registration processes that will be concluded relatively quickly.

Using wristbands is a low-tech, low-cost, low-trauma method of fixing. However, in most large or extended operations, and despite successive improvements in the quality of the wristband, refugees have often found ways of removing and re-attaching the wristbands without damaging them. This allows individuals to get more than one wristband and, consequently, to be registered more than once.

14.1.4 Ink/Stain

Like wristbands, this fixing method is most applicable when a larger number of persons are to be registered and validated in a short period of time.

The process consists of marking the fingers, hands or toes of those registering with a special form of ink that is hard to remove and can be seen only under ultra-violet light. Before persons are registered, they are checked to see if there is ink on their fingers (or toes in the case of small children). If none is detected, then the designated finger(s) or toes are sprayed with the ink or stain and the person is allowed to proceed to the registration interview process.

This fixing method is not entirely satisfactory. In some situations, unfounded rumors have spread that the ink is a poison or will cause birth defects or sterilization. Refugees and others have discovered simple ways to remove the stain, such as washing their hands in citric acid, which is found in lemons and vinegar.

14.1.5 Biometrics

In the coming months, UNHCR will further test and use biometrics for fixing and verifying populations. Biometrics have been developed into automated methods of recognizing the identity or verifying the claimed identity of an individual based on a physical characteristic. The most common features that can be measured are the face, fingerprints, and the iris.

Biometric devices consist of a reader or scanning device, software that converts the scanned information into digital form, and a database that stores the biometric data for comparison with previous records. When converting the biometric information, the software identifies specific points of data as match points. The match points are processed, using an algorithm, into a value that can be compared with biometric data scanned when an individual tries to gain access to something.

Iris recognition is one form of biometric fixing.

Biometric technologies are becoming the basis of an extensive array of highly secure identification and personal-verification methods. For UNHCR, if tests prove successful, biometrics will help ensure that an individual has only one valid registration record.

UNHCR is likely to use biometrics sparingly because of their technical complexity and their costs, both initial and long-term. The use of biometrics may be recommended in only a few situations and only after a rigorous analysis of the complexities involved in, and the potential alternatives to, using biometrics.

14.2 Identify and refer persons with special needs

Refugee protection is UNHCR's primary obligation and responsibility. While many refugees who are registered usually obtain essential protection through UNHCR's assistance programmes and the support of their own families and communities, registration represents a unique opportunity to ensure that those persons with special needs receive assistance appropriate to those needs. Indeed, registration may provide the **only** occasion during the refugee life-cycle when staff will have an opportunity for direct and thorough contact with the entire population, since registration staff will, at some point, interact with every individual refugee during a face-to-face interview. Nevertheless it is recommended that persons with special needs be identified as early as possible in the registration process ideally during reception procedures.

UNHCR has broadly defined a number of **special needs categories** for the purposes of identifying persons requiring special protection or assistance interventions. See Section 17.4.9 – *Record special protection and assistance needs* for definitions of these categories.

➢ ***Engage women leaders from the community to monitor access to registration sites and processes and to identify women and children with special protection needs***

Special attention is often needed to identify women and children with special protection needs; solicit the assistance of women from the community in identifying such cases, and maximize the use of female registration staff.

Registration can help those with special needs.

In most cases, common sense will dictate how these needs are identified. As refugees are interviewed, specific questions will assist the interviewer in flagging problems. When a particular problem is identified, the code associated with the particular special need should be entered into the record. Additional comments regarding the special need category can be entered in the individual-remarks field. The date the special need is identified should also be recorded.

Identifying and recording the details of an individual with special needs does not imply that assistance is automatically provided. While it is important that registration staff be trained to identify and record information about persons with special needs, it would be impractical in most cases to expect the same staff to conduct follow-up on each case requiring further protection intervention/s. It would also be unrealistic to assume that reception and registration staff could accurately assess, in a five-minute interview, whether a person is truly in need of further assistance. Operations should therefore implement prompt **referral** procedures and ensure that cases are systematically followed. See Annex 12 for a sample referral slip.

Be sure that those with special needs are registered in a manner that is consistent with the standards in Chapter 3 and as described in Chapter 17 – *Interview Persons of Concern.*

There are other ways that women, men, and children with special needs are identified and referred, including through protection and health monitoring, women's groups and other community structures, information campaigns, schools and counselling. Special-needs data should be shared between units and partners whose work brings them in contact with these people on a regular basis. Some special needs, such as those of traumatized or abused children, are harder to spot than others and should be addressed outside of registration.

Key references for identifying and working with persons with special needs:

> *Health, Food, and Nutrition Tool Kit*, UNHCR Health and Community Development Section, September 2001
>
> *Assisting Disabled Refugees, A Community-based Approach*, UNHCR Community Service Guidelines, 1992
>
> *Sexual and Gender-based Violence Against Refugees, Returnees, and Internally Displaced Persons: Guidelines for Prevention and Response*, UNHCR Health and Community Development Section, May 2003
>
> *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women*, UNHCR, July 1991

14.3 Determine if a person needs to be registered

The screening and identification of those persons not qualified for and consequently not granted access to registration has implications for protection and for staff security. Persons wrongly screened out will not receive the international protection they may need and deserve. Those screened out may also threaten staff or the security of the entire registration activity. It is important, therefore, to implement this step carefully and conscientiously to avoid both protection and security risks.

Persons who do not qualify for registration include nationals seeking to be registered as persons of concern, those who have already registered with UNHCR at some other time, and those caught up in the registration process by mistake. In some *prima facie* operations, the screening-out of armed elements and others who are determined not to be refugees is a difficult process that may be linked to registration activities.

This step may be carried out as an informal process during which people are informed about registration, in general, and are asked why they have presented themselves to be registered. It may be a more formal screening process, consisting of several steps and techniques to determine eligibility for registration. Whatever the degree or type of screening used, this screening does not replace or constitute eligibility screening used for refugee status determination.

To determine if a person is eligible for registration, establish eligibility criteria that spell out who is to be registered and how this will be determined. Protection staff are responsible for reviewing these criteria. Train reception staff in the criteria and in techniques for doing this kind of screening.

Use any of the techniques for verification described in Chapter 20 that are appropriate to the situation, such as these to distinguish between nationals and refugees (*Section 20.1.4*):

- ✔ Establish a set of targeted questions about the country of origin – history, geography, customs and other features that only a native would know.
- ✔ Check for a particular dialect distinct to the region of reported origin.
- ✔ Engage the assistance of refugees and local authorities in separating locals from refugees.

Grant access to registration procedures whenever in doubt. Eligibility can be confirmed during future verification activities.

14.4 Provide each person with a unique identifier

The unique identifier should be a number or other identifier that remains with the person for as long as they are of concern to UNHCR. In some environments, assigning a registration number may be done during the fixing process; other times, it may be done at a later stage, for example, when taking a photograph of the person.

Details on establishing registration numbering systems for refugees and others of concern are being established and will be available with new software tools. However, **the following principles should be applied when devising numbering schemes and assigning numeric identifiers to individuals and groups:**

- ✔ Numbers given to persons of concern should be unique.
- ✔ Each person should be given only one number whenever possible. Those who have already been registered and already have a unique identifier should not be given another one.
- ✔ The numbers themselves should not contain information that could in any way compromise the protection of the individual at any stage of the operation. For this reason, it should not contain any direct reference to the person's territory of origin or any information about his or her arrival on the territory of asylum.
- ✔ The number should be used to link the person to the groups to which they belong (household, families, cases) and to the record of their personal information.

✔ This number should not be the ration or family card number, except in special circumstance and for limited time only. Ration and family card numbers may change and are country-specific. Individual identifiers should remain with the individual throughout the time that he or she remains registered as a person of concern and should not change during this period.

✔ Numbers should be issued once. Do not re-issue numbers even when the previous holder has been deregistered and his or her record de-activated.

Refugees and others of concern have a hard time identifying themselves by numbers only. Whenever dealing with refugees directly or in large groups, use names or addresses to the greatest extent possible.

14.5 Schedule registration interview

The registration or verification interview may take place during registration or at a later time and place.

➢ ***Waiting makes people anxious and, in many cases, angry.***

Organize the registration so crowds and pressure are reduced. Registering large numbers of people is time-consuming, no matter how basic or detailed the information collected. The physical and emotional pressure created by crowds or long queues should not be underestimated. Even a seemingly small crowd of a few dozen refugee families may mean long hours waiting for those who are last. Dividing large populations into smaller groups will make registration more manageable.

Crowd-control measures help keep registration activities safe and acceptable to all involved.

The following categories of persons should be given priority for registration and verification interviews:

✔ Unaccompanied and separated children.
✔ Child-headed households.
✔ Single parents and families with small children.
✔ Elderly persons, particularly the unaccompanied ones.
✔ Persons with disabilities and their families.

- ✔ Persons with special protection concerns and their families.
- ✔ Single women (in certain circumstances).
- ✔ Persons with special medical needs.

➢ ***No matter how the registration procedure is organized, arrangements should be made to register, as a priority, persons with special needs, including single women and unaccompanied and separated children.***

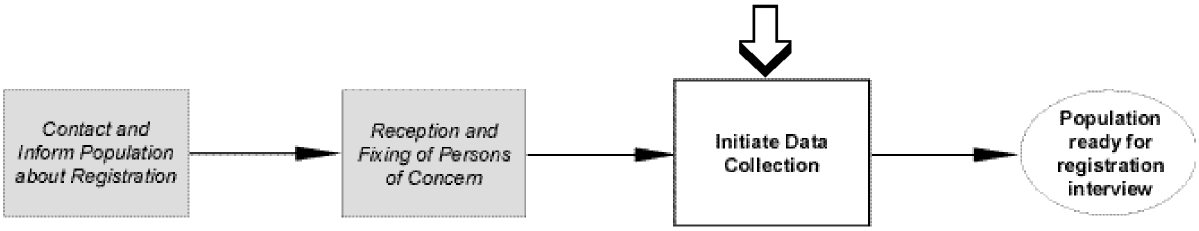
Organize and announce a schedule to reduce crowding and potential safety problems at a registration site. Refugees could be called at specific times according to old card numbers, by section (block, sector, quarter, tent, etc.), first letters of family names, etc. Scheduling tickets could be distributed before the registration, handed out to refugees in the early morning hours or on the first day of the process. Refugees are then invited to report back to the registration office according to schedule. Leaflets or some other form of public information document that explains the scheduling system should be available in front of the registration office or at a central point in the camp.

Information gathered at this step often corresponds to level 1 registration, or the Control Sheet: name of at least one household representative, size and composition of household, country of origin, date of arrival, and current location or address.

Queue-control structures

If necessary, simple fencing or barriers may be erected to reduce crowd pressure. The presence of too many security personnel, especially armed personnel, should be avoided and their crowd control methods strictly regulated, to maintain the non-intimidating, non-threatening character of registration.

Scheduling of registration can be done by block group or address.



15. Initiate Data Collection

Registration activities can begin once staff have fixed the refugee population to be registered and have created a manageable and stable working environment.

15.1 Retrieve existing information

UNHCR has already recorded and stored data on the vast majority of the refugees it serves. Using and building on this existing data to collect additional information on refugees helps to develop an accurate picture of the entire refugee population in the country of asylum. It also helps to provide assistance and achieve solutions for refugees. Using existing data about a refugee will help to ensure that the person receiving assistance is the same person who approached UNHCR for assistance when she or he first became a refugee.

Continuous population data management is based on the principle of using existing data as a baseline. Refugee records should be continuously updated, validated and built upon while preserving the integrity of the master record. Registration records should reflect any changes in the status of the refugee and/or his or her entitlements. Information about possible or actual durable solutions should also be recorded in the registration database.

Before filling in a completely new registration form, existing information should be printed and the original form or a copy of it retrieved from the registry.

Alphabetical or sequentially ordered master lists, filing systems and computers at the registration desk will greatly facilitate this task. In many cases, refugees who have been registered possess a unique number, a registration card or a copy of their registration form. These should be produced to accelerate the retrieval of the existing registration data.


Registration forms populated with previously recorded data should be used whenever possible.

When working with large populations, retrieving existing information could be part of the steps to assess the situation or fix the population. For smaller populations, particularly those in which secondary movement is believed to be occurring, this step may require some research with other offices, and could be combined with the activities to validate the registration.

Existing data can be subjected to some of the simple verification techniques described in Chapter 20 – *Apply Verification Techniques,* before proceeding with the registration interviews. In particular, the data can be checked for use of standard personal and location names (*Section 20.1.2)*, for multiple records (*Section 20.1.3*), and use of services (*Section 20.1.8).*

15.2 "Pre-populate" registration forms

Whenever feasible, registration forms should be "pre-populated" with data from previous registration activities. Pre-population means using existing information in a database to print registration forms with personal data. These forms are then used as the basis for further information gathering and verification.

The blank registration forms should be filled in with any known or static data elements, such as registration location (camp name, town), date of registration (at least year or month/ year), and origin. This will do away with the need for refugees or registration staff to fill in or repeatedly verify information that should not normally change.

15.3 Gather additional data

Additional information can be gathered by having persons of concern complete the registration from prior to the interview. Having a person of concern fill in his or her own registration form is not the same as interviewing the person. These are two separate activities; in all cases, a registration interview is required. Sometimes, clerks may fill in registration forms on behalf of the persons of concern. At this stage, all proofs of identity should also be collected and checked (see *Section 20.1.7* for appropriate techniques).

Additional data may also be gathered from other sources, such as protection officers, other offices, operational partners, and host government officials. Whenever possible, this information should be included in the registration record and verified. Specific techniques useful for gathering additional data on persons of concern relevant to registration are checking physical presence *(Section 20.1.1),* checking household composition, *(Section 20.1.5),* checking special needs status *(Section 20.1.9),* and checking durable solutions status *(Section 20.1.10).*

15.4 Variations

15.4.1 Emergencies/mass movements

In order to speed up the processing, it may be necessary to forego gathering certain pieces of information. Managers of the registration process should determine which fields are mandatory and which can be skipped or postponed. A short version of the form or an improvised emergency form may be used in consultation with PGDS. In some cases, registration forms may be replaced by copies of the refugee's travel documents or national ID card.

15.4.2 "Irregular" or secondary movements

Registration records may already exist for an individual refugee, but in a different UNHCR or government office. Before creating a new registration record or file, the office responsible for the refugee's previous registration should be asked to share the existing record and all related information. If uncertain as to whether data already exists, a temporary registration record should be created. The two records can then be linked or aligned to ensure continuity.

15.4.3 Refugee status determination

The form used for registering applicants for refugee status is likely to be more elaborate than the forms used for other levels of registration. While the same principles apply when filling out any form, it may be prudent to alert the refugee that much more time will be needed to fill out the RSD form. Please refer to the *Procedural Standards for Refugee Status Determination under UNHCR's Mandate* for the form to use (also shown in Annex 6(e)) as well as for specific instructions on how this is to be handled in RSD situations.

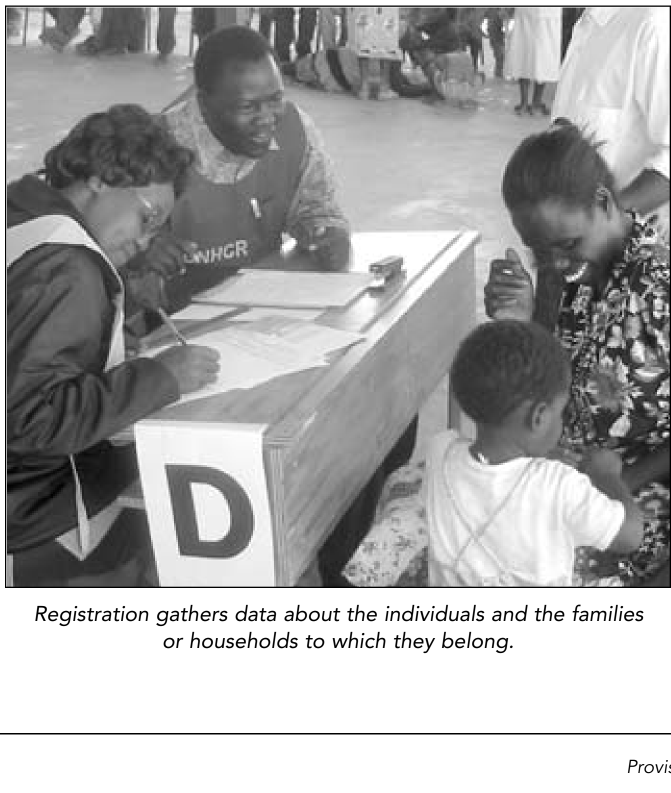
15.4.4 Voluntary repatriation

The voluntary repatriation registration form (VRF) is a special form used to record the willingness of refugees to repatriate. This is a standard form based on the 1996 UNHCR Voluntary Repatriation Handbook. The use of additional fraud-proof patterns on the form is recommended in cases where the form also serves to administer and disburse cash grants or other repatriation or reintegration assistance.

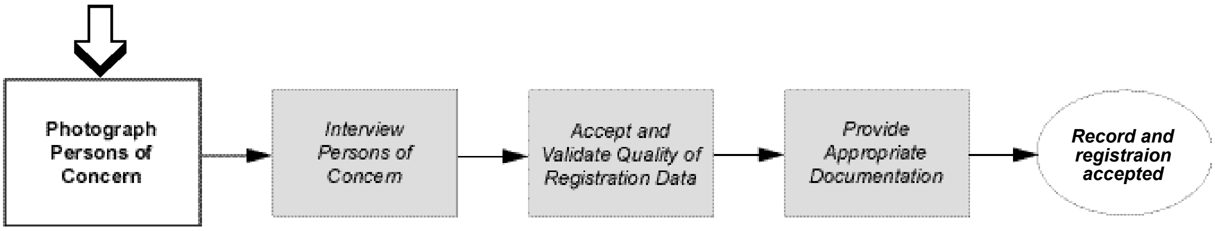
Registration Interview

In addition to general guidance about interviewing persons of concern, this part of the Handbook contains specific guidance about:

- Taking ***proper photographs*** (*Chapter 16*)
- ***Grouping people*** into proper families and households (*Section 17.2*)
- Identifying ***household representatives*** (*Section 17.2.1*)
- Standards for ***recording relationships*** between family or household members (*Section 17.2.2*)
- Standards for ***recording personal data*** such as date and place of birth, education level, occupation, and current location (*Section 17.4*)
- Getting ***permission to share information*** from persons of concern (*Section 18.1.1*)
- ***Signing voluntary repatriation*** forms (*Section 18.1.2*)
- Standards for ***identity documents*** – cards and 'protection letters' (*Section 19.1*)
- Standards for ***entitlement documents*** – ration cards and family cards (*Section 19.2*)
- ***Accepting*** or rejecting registration data (*Section 18.3*)



Registration gathers data about the individuals and the families or households to which they belong.



16. Photograph Persons of Concern

ExCom Conclusion 91 states that photographs should be taken of **all** refugees when they are registered. Photographing refugees and maintaining their photographic records over time enables the office to confirm that the person who was initially registered is the same person who presents himself or herself at a later time. In all registration systems, the task of photographing refugees will require considerable human and financial resources. In general, UNHCR has determined that the use of digital equipment for photography is more reliable, less costly and less subject to fraud and abuse than using Polaroid film photography. Offices should therefore plan to use digital equipment to photograph refugees whenever possible.

Photographs of refugees should be stored on a computer's hard drive or similar storage device and linked to the individual's record. UNHCR is developing dedicated software to make it easier for registration staff to take and store digital photographs. The software will automatically "embed" the photographs directly into the individual record in the database. Once a photograph is stored in the database, it can be used to verify the identity of the refugee and produce refugee-identity documents at a later stage.

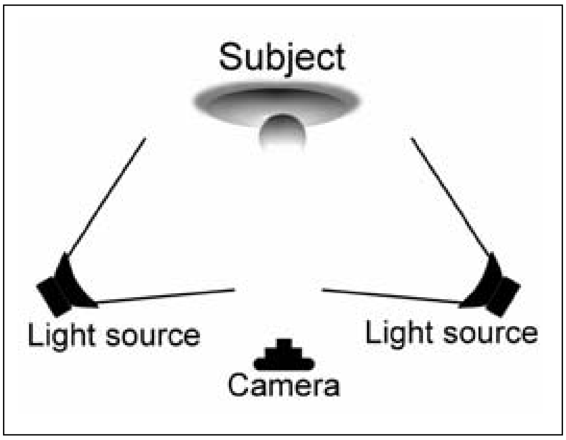
Taking quality photographs is not always easy: good lighting, a white backdrop, and tripod are essential for good photos.

Polaroid or traditional printed photographs may be preferable in some cases, such as very remote locations without electricity or for persons in detention or hospitals. The refugee's name and identity number can be written on the back of the photograph that should be scanned at a later date and added to the electronic records.

Consider hiring professional photographers to take the photos of refugees and others of concern, but ensure that they follow the requirements described in the following section.

16.1 Take photographs

Offices should ensure that there is a dedicated photo area set up where photographs of refugees will be taken. The environment should be well lit, free of refugee traffic, private and secure. Use only a white backdrop one meter wide and two meters high that shows the UNHCR logo in a light colour, preferably grey. The backdrop should be placed 0.5 meters behind the subject. When using a ‘web-camera’ the camera should be mounted on a tripod placed on a desk and linked to a desktop or a laptop containing the registration database. The camera should be positioned at the subject’s eye level and approximately 0.5 meters from the face.



Proper lighting when taking photographs.

Correct lighting is key to obtaining a good photograph. Additional electric lighting should be considered even if the lighting conditions in the working environment already seem adequate. The angle at which the light hits the refugee’s face is also very important. Normally, two lights should cross the face at an angle from both sides (see figure above) so there are no shadows cast on the face. This is the best way to capture facial details.

Since photos will often be taken before or after the registration interview, care should be taken to ensure that the person who is registered is the same as the person who is being photographed. For this reason, the individual’s unique identifying number is recorded when the photo is taken so that the photo can be linked to the correct record. A common error UNHCR staff make when photographing refugees is mixing up individual family members. For example, a father’s photograph might be accidentally linked to a mother’s data record. If a photo is being taken of a refugee whose data already exists in the database, be sure to confirm that the name of the individual sitting for the photo is the same as the name in the database. When the photographer finds an existing record, either in paper form or in the database, he or she should ask the refugee to confirm his or her name before taking the photo.

➢ ***Be careful of family-member substitutions when photographs are being taken. Refugees often feel that it is better to substitute an unrelated person for an absent family member rather than risk not having a photo taken at all. Information campaigns should address this issue early on and measures should be taken to allow absent family members to be photographed later.***

Registration photos must be clear and well defined. A full front view of the subject looking directly at the camera with his or her eyes open is required. Only the subject’s head should be within the photo frame. Glasses, earrings and other jewelry, hats, wigs and head-scarves should all be removed or pulled fully away from the face to expose all facial features. Facial cosmetics are

Proper positioning of face in a photograph.

acceptable as long as they do not disguise the natural appearance of the refugee. Special measures may be required to ensure respect for cultural and religious customs when asking a refugee to remove a head-scarf or head-dress. This might involve having separate locations for photographing men and women. Usually, separating the photo area from other public areas and keeping the family together when individual family member photos are being taken will create the best working environment.

➢ ***Privacy is required to obtain good photographs.***

Refugees will often be intimidated by the technology and strangers surrounding them during a photo session. Adults may also raise or lower their heads unnaturally when photographed. For these reasons, operations should make arrangements to have a trained photographer's assistant available to position individuals' heads correctly before the photographs are taken. The photographer will generally be too busy to do this.

Children often associate photo sessions with a visit to the hospital and can become frightened by the equipment around them. Head movements, grimacing and crying will result in unnatural or unclear photos. Parents should be asked to encourage their young children to look towards the camera by standing alongside the photographer.

A refugee **should not be released** from the front of the camera until the photo is **confirmed** to meet UNHCR standards and is **properly stored** in the database. When a photo is taken, it should be viewed by the photographer on the laptop and accepted or rejected. If rejected, another photo should be taken immediately. Digital photos cost nothing but time to record; there is no film wasted if the photo is not satisfactory. Photos should therefore be taken as many times as necessary to meet the standards illustrated in the sample shown earlier. A photographer's work should be reviewed periodically to ensure that it meets UNHCR's standards.

Some refugees may find the technology intimidating.

16.2 Variations

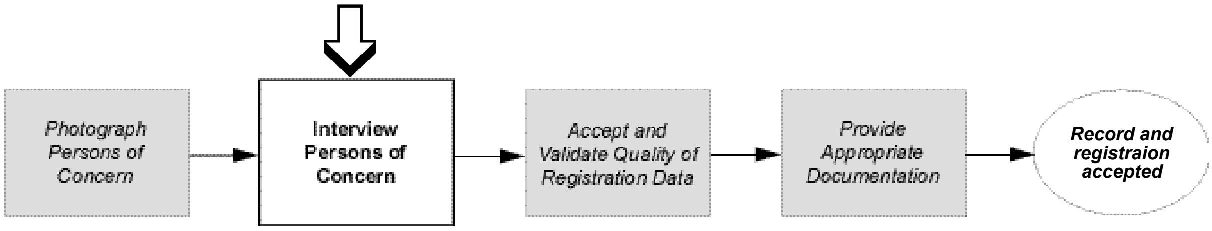
16.2.1 Emergencies/mass movements

During emergency influxes and mass movements, time pressures and the number of persons involved make it nearly impossible to take individual photographs for registration purposes. Normally, refugees will not be photographed in these circumstances.

➢ ***Always photograph unaccompanied and separated children as soon as they are identified, particularly in an emergency or mass movement situation.***

16.2.2 RSD and durable solutions

Refugees will sometimes believe that having a photo taken of them will result in recognition for refugee status or approval for resettlement to a third country. In information campaigns, be sure to "disconnect" the process of taking photos from any potential outcomes.



17. Interview Persons of Concern

UNHCR collects data about refugees through face-to-face interviews with individual refugees who are normally grouped in family or household units. All individuals who belong to the family/household unit who reside in the country of asylum should be present at interview time. However, to the extent possible, each person should be interviewed separately. In general, women asylum-seekers should be interviewed separately without the presence of male family members.

The data to be collected during the interview will have been agreed to as part of the registration strategy and methodology (see Chapter 10 – *Determine Registration Strategy).* The data gathered and the amount of time available for each interview will vary according to the situation and the registration strategy.

Select interviewing techniques to complete the registration information or test the veracity of existing information from the verification techniques described in Chapter 20 – *Apply Verification Techniques.*

The interviewing staff member should introduce himself or herself (and the interpreter, if applicable) and ask whether anyone wishes to be interviewed separately from the household group. In addition, people should be given the choice as to the sex of interviewers and interpreters. To the extent possible, people – and women in particular – should be automatically assigned an interpreter and interviewer of the same sex.

Since refugees may not have had access to information about registration prior to the interview, the interviewer should begin with a brief introduction about what is expected of the family. **The interviewer should emphasize the need to answer questions truthfully.** The interviewer should also confirm whether the individuals wish to be interviewed by a different staff member or if they would like to have another person act as interpreter during the interview.

Refugees should be informed that a similar set of questions will be asked of each individual family member and that the refugees should answer questions clearly and promptly. Refugees should then be asked to produce all accompanying documentation, which the interviewer will review.

17.1 Use standard registration forms

Interviewing refugees individually is the core of UNHCR's registration process. The goal of an interview is to collect and record accurate information about individuals of concern. Whether the information is collected from a large population that has stabilized after a mass influx or from a single family prior to a status-determination interview, the tool used to perform this function is *always* the UNHCR registration form.

➢ ***Issue clear instructions for filling in the form to the interviewers to ensure consistent data entry. This information should include code tables for all standardized data fields, such as special needs, geographical names, educational level and occupation/skills.***

The form has been designed to ensure that a standard set of information is collected from every individual and household/family. When the form is complete, each refugee will have a single, unique registration record that will provide the information needed to protect, assist and find solutions for the refugee.

The form is to be completed in the sequence and at the pace decided by managers when they developed the registration strategy. Core registration information is captured and then made available to staff for as long as the refugee remains a refugee. Authorized users can add data to the record, as needed, to aid in protection, assistance and the search for durable solutions.

UNHCR's registration form serves as a guide through the registration interview. Each question asked by a registration clerk is based on one of the fields (or boxes) of the registration form. Fields on the form correspond directly to fields (columns) in the database. Clerks should fill in the form clearly. In some situations there may be time to enter registration information directly into the computer using a screen-based form.

In case the spelling of names or other information is not obvious, registration clerks should solicit the help of literate refugees, interpreters and others. Misspelling important information may have serious consequences, such as when trying to trace family members or when issuing identity documents.

17.1.1 Using OMR forms

Optical Mark Readers (OMR) permit large amounts of manually recorded information to be rapidly scanned and converted into a database. They are appropriate when an initial registration exercise must be completed or where no database yet exists for the population of concern. Special forms are filled in by hand with information gathered from the refugees during the registration interviews, and then translated into a format that can be read by the special machine. This form is often used in election registration or in academic testing, and is increasingly familiar throughout Africa and the Americas. The special OMR forms and readers are sophisticated and their use should be discussed and planned as part of the registration methodology.

17.2 Determine family and household relationships

In the interest of protecting the unity of refugee families, whether nuclear (relations defined by blood) or extended (relations defined by custom, adoption and/or blood), it is crucial that the composition of every refugee's family be carefully assessed.

➢ ***All individuals residing in the country of asylum should be present at the interview and should present themselves as part of a household or family group.***

Grouping people can often be a difficult and time-consuming task. When refugees present themselves as a family, as many as 20 individuals may arrive at the registration desk, all claiming to be part of an "immediate family". A preliminary interview, conducted after a large group has been divided into more manageable sub-groups, should determine who belongs to which family. Interviewers should keep in mind that most groups are *temporary:* daughters marry, mothers die, spouses divorce and remarry, children are born. See Section 5.1 – *Families, households, and cases* – for more information.

Families entering during a mass influx may have been separated during their flight. Since the focus during early weeks of emergencies will be to register refugees efficiently to provide life-saving assistance and protection, UNHCR should generally accept the household groupings as they present themselves. Refugees also need to be aware that the group presented during registration will probably share living quarters and food ration cards.

When family members cannot come to the registration site/office together, the registration clerks should ascertain that separately registered family members are grouped together. Standard questions about the individual refugee's family and her or his relationship to other members of the household or family will enable the registration clerks to group individuals together as families or households. Make all efforts to see missing family and household members before completing registration. Table 8 describes how to respond when the families or households are incomplete.

Family unity is important when planning for repatriation. Registration needs to link the members of nuclear families; Voluntary Repatriation Forms and other departure documentation must truly represent family units, including extended family networks. For example, two children living with their grandparents should be repatriated with their parents and other siblings. Parents should not be allowed to leave children in the country of asylum. Minor children should repatriate while their parents remain in the country of asylum only after the parents are consulted and a responsible adult relative will receive them upon return.

Gathering and recording family relationships accurately is particularly important whenever resettlement may be an eventual solution. The misrepresentation of a family unit is one of the most reasons for rejection in the resettlement process. Even when the misrepresentation has not been intentional, the resettlement country may reject a resettlement case if the family relationships presented are untrue or lack credibility. This is particularly true in the case of non-nuclear families where the potential for abuse is higher.

The verification of registration details and of family composition should be accomplished outside of the resettlement context, such as at the time of registration or determination of refugee status, to ensure that details about family composition are not biased by resettlement considerations. It is the responsibility of UNHCR to assess the nature and credibility of family composition, and interviewing officers must be alert to fraudulent family compositions.

Some useful techniques for verifying family and household composition are described in Chapter 20 – *Apply Verification Techniques* as well as in the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, Section 5.6.5 – *Family Composition.*

17.2.1 Household representatives (heads of household)

In general, both a **female and a male representative** rather than a simple head of household should be identified. These are the persons in the household or family who are acknowledged as the representatives of the household or family by the other members. Relationships within the household or family are then designated in relation to one of these persons. The use of the term 'household representative' is a change from the practice in many locations. The role of women within the household or family has particular importance to UNHCR for protection and assistance reasons; hence UNHCR's insistence on designating joint representatives.

The term "head-of-household" assumes that most households are family households (i.e., that the persons within the household are related by blood), and that one person has primary authority and responsibility for household affairs and is its chief economic support. However, spouses are increasingly considered equal in household authority and responsibility and often share economic support of the household. Even in countries where the traditional head-of-household concept is still relevant, women who serve in this role are often not recognized as such and have difficulties accessing resources, protection and legal representation as a result. For these reasons, UNHCR has adopted the use of the term "household representative" when working with registration information.

Normally the two household representatives are the male head of household and his spouse. However, this is not always the case, and interviewing staff should be aware of other possibilities within the community. There may be only one household representative in some households, such as some single-parent families and female-headed households. If the wife had died or is no longer part of the family, an eldest daughter or sister may fulfill the role of the female household representative, and should be designated as such.

Be sure to refer child-headed households to proper care and attention. These households tend to be particularly vulnerable and should be treated accordingly. By definition, the children in such household are unaccompanied children and should be designated as such and referred to appropriate services.

When conducting registration for refugee status determination, collect as much information about family members as possible from each individual registering. The designation of family representatives is still needed, but must be done in a way that preserves and protects the right of each applicant to make an independent claim to refugee status. See the *Procedural Standards for RSD*, Section 3.2, as well as the form to be used in these cases, in Annex 6(e).

Table 8: Handling incomplete family or households

SCENARIO	ACTION
Complete family: All family members present at registration	Registration is complete. Issue all cards and forms to individual and family members as per the registration strategy.
Incomplete family: At least one family representative (head of family) present	Registration should be done for present family members. Individual identity documents should be issued to all members present. Family forms and cards should be withheld until the last family member is registered. A temporary certificate (appointment slip, photocopy of registration form, etc.) may be issued to the registered family.
Incomplete family: Neither family representative present	The family should be advised to report back to register with the appropriate representatives of the family. If this is not possible, registration may be done for present family members. Once one of the representatives is able to come to the registration office, relationships and other family information may have to be verified. Forms and cards should be withheld until the last family member presents himself or herself at registration. A temporary certificate (appointment slip, photocopy of registration form, etc.) may be issued to the registered family members.
Latecomer: Individual family member reports to register after the family has already been registered	Retrieve the family's registration record/form and include the latecomer. If in doubt about family composition, registration staff should insist that one or both household representatives be present again. The family card/ration card should be issued in the name of both of the household representatives.

17.2.2 Recording household and family relationships

UNHCR records the relationships between members of the same family or household according to the following table. Although it is possible to record relationships in more or less detail, use of the standard breakdowns is encouraged. The use of this list, combined with other personal and household data, permits the full understanding of the often complex family structures that is needed for protection and solutions purposes.

In Level 1 and Level 2 registration, relationships are normally recorded once for the whole group. All relationships are recorded according to the perspective of one of the group members, normally the 'head of household'or Household Representative 1, as per table 9. In some Level 2 registration contexts it may be necessary to record relationships from the perspective of one or more other family or household members. Care should be taken when filling in forms and coding data that it is clear which family members are connected by a particular relationship. Depending on the scenario, in Level 3 registration relationships may be recorded once for the whole group, or individually for each of its members.

In registration for refugee status determination and resettlement purposes, relationships should be recorded individually from the perspective of each person being registered, rather than for the group. This means that the standard form in Annex 6e must be completed for each person registering. This allows each person being registered to fully describe his or her personal circumstances – including the family structure – and thus permits a more thorough and accurate analysis to be made of the immediate protection and solutions needs. This includes an individual's relationship to each of the accompanying family or household members, as well as their relationship to family members still in the country of origin or in other locations.

UNHCR should try to define and record changes in relationships. Although establishing relationships may not seem particularly important to the interviewer when registering a case, it will become vitally important when seeking durable solutions.

Table 9: Relationships – Standard UNHCR categories

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Household Representative 1	This is usually the individual within the family or household who is considered by the members of the family or household as their primary representative. It is normally a man, but could be a woman as well.
Household Representative 2	This is normally the female in the household or family who has the primary responsibility within the family. It could be spouse, mother or daughter of the head of household. It could also be a man if the first household representative is a woman. The relationship between this person and the other head of household must also be recorded.
Spouse	Legal or common-law spouse.
Child (Son/Daughter)	Natural or legal offspring. Includes birth, adopted or step children. May or may not include foster children depending on situation in country.
Parent (Father/Mother)	Birth, adoptive, or step parents. Does not include parents-in-laws which have a separate category.
Sibling (Sister/Brother)	Legal or natural siblings. Includes adopted and step brothers and sisters. May include foster brother or sisters depending on the situation in the country. Does not include in-laws (i.e. bother or sister in-law).
Grandparent	Direct blood grandparent, either grandmother or grandfather. Includes great-grandparents. Does not include in-laws, which should be listed as parents-in-laws.
Grandchild	Birth, adopted, or step grandchildren. Includes great-grandchildren.
Uncle/Aunt	Birth, adoptive, or step brothers or sisters of parents of head of household or spouse.
Cousin	Natural, adoptive, or step children of uncle or aunt of head of household. Does not include in-laws, e.g. cousins of spouse.
Nephew/Niece	Natural, adoptive, or step children of brother or sister of one of the parents.
Child-in-law	Spouses (legal or common law) of children.
Parent-in-law	Parents of spouse.
Other in-law	Other relationship established through marriage, such as spouse of sibling.
Other blood/kin relation	Other birth relation of head of household not covered by one of the above categories.
No blood/kin relation	Household member not related by blood, adoption or marriage.
Unknown relationship	Relationship is unknown.

17.2.3 Other household or family information

Other information recorded for the family or the household may include:

- ✔ **Total family or household size,** broken down by age cohort[16] and sex.
- ✔ **Name and sex of any missing family members** who are present in the current location but not present at the time of registration.
- ✔ **Current location/ address** of the household (see Section 12.3 – *Standardize locations, names and other categories).*
- ✔ **Country of origin** of household or family.
- ✔ **Family property** (see Annex 7 for standard categories for recording this information).

17.3 Register unaccompanied and separated children

A separated child may present herself or himself to register alone, with members of her or his extended family, or as part of another family. Separated children should always be registered separately, but cross-referenced with the family with which they are staying. A list containing at least the names and locations of unaccompanied and separated children should be maintained.

All families should also be asked if they are caring for children other their own, have children from whom they are separated, know of families who have missing children, or know of children separated from their parents. The identification and registration of unaccompanied and separated children should not disrupt existing care arrangements.

A more thorough documentation of each unaccompanied girl and boy is required to establish their personal history and individual needs and to begin tracing for their family.

See *Working with Unaccompanied Children: A Community-based Approach,* Part 4 (UNHCR, Community Service Guidelines, 1996), for guidelines on interviewing refugee children and adolescents and recording their social histories.

Aim to photograph all children; but always photograph unaccompanied and separated children.

[16] The four standard UNHCR age cohorts (groupings) are 0-4 years of age; 5-17 years of age; 18-59 years of age; and 60 or more years of age.

The form to use when registering unaccompanied and separated children is shown in Annex 6(d). This form allows for the recording of supplementary information needed to adequately document the child's circumstances. Unaccompanied and separated children should be recorded on the operation's standard registration form to ensure that their registration records are also maintained with other registration records. Different forms should be linked by the individual's unique numerical identifier as well as any household, family, or case identifiers that are relevant to them.

The name and other details of the guardian or foster family should be included in the minor's registration records. The child should be included in the guardian's or foster family's records, making reference to the fact that the child is an unaccompanied or separated. It is especially important to register infants and young children before the people who know about them disperse, since these children themselves cannot give much of the information needed for tracing purposes.

A photograph should always be taken of the child regardless of the circumstances. Photographs are indispensable for tracing and family reunification. The photograph should be securely attached to the paper forms and linked to any electronic records.

Also, always refer the child and the family providing him or her with care to protection and/or community-services staff.

17.4 Interview each individual

Once the group has been established, the interview can begin. Those who do not belong to that particular group should be interviewed separately. All persons desiring to be interviewed separately must always be given the opportunity to do so.

➢ ***Registration interviews should be conducted in a non-intimidating, non-threatening, and impartial manner, with due respect for the safety and dignity of refugees.***

If the interviewer is validating an existing record, he or she should be aware of any changes to the data as it was originally recorded. In general, individuals should not be asked to provide information if it already exists. However, the interviewer should make note of any discrepancies as they occur.

Registration data should be collected and/or verified in the following order:

17.4.1 Verify unique identifying registration number

Each individual should be assigned a unique identification number. Once this number is assigned, the refugee will retain it for as long as she or he is a refugee. Individual numbers should be assigned before the actual registration interview, normally during the reception and fixing step. Interviewers should be sure that each person has a number, and that the number they have been assigned corresponds to their personal record. More information about the unique registration numbers is given in Section 14.4 – *Provide each person with a unique identifier.*

17.4.2 Record name(s)

Although collecting names may seem a straightforward process, different cultures can have different name structures. The concept of "name" and "surname" does not exist in all cultures. Titles, such as Mr./ Dr./ Ms./ Sheikh are not considered part of given names and should not be added into the record. UNHCR's registration form provides different fields in which to enter names. In general, these fields have proven sufficient to accommodate the permutations of naming structures found throughout the world. Generally, when only one filed is available for recording the name, names should be written in the same order they are spoken (Sally Anne Smith not Smith, Sally Anne). To ensure consistency, there must be regional agreement on how names are to be recorded during registration (see Section 12.3 – *Standardize locations, names, and other categories)*. Once a standard approach to name recording has been set, interviewers should adhere strictly to that standard.

The names of both parents – mother and father – should be recorded for each individual, regardless of the location of either parent or their current condition (living, deceased, present or absent). In many cultures, it is common practice to record the father's name only; for UNHCR it is necessary to record the mother's name as well. This will permit a full understanding of family structures and dependency relationships.

Whenever relevant, the name of the spouse should be also recorded.

17.4.3 Record sex

This is either female or male. This information is sometimes difficult to determine for young children; **never presume.** For adults, the sex as declared by the individual should be recorded.

17.4.4 Record date and place of birth

Date of birth

Determining event dates, particularly dates of birth, can be difficult. Certain cultures use calendars that do not match the widely used Gregorian calendar. In some refugee contexts, dates of birth are regarded as unimportant. While refugees may demonstrate a varying degree of knowledge about exact dates of birth, the interviewer should try to be as precise as possible when recording them. Dates of birth should be recorded according to the following standard and, in general, should be recorded from existing documentation presented at the interview (birth-registration certificates, vaccination records, school report cards, etc). The UNHCR standard for recording dates is **DD-MMM-YYYY.**

Example:
5 January 2000 should be recorded as 05-Jan-2000

If the exact date of birth is not known, then provide the closest estimate possible, and always use 01 for the "day" field.

Example:
If the refugee was born in March 1961, then record: 01-Mar-1961

If the month of birth is not known, but only the year, then always use 01 for the "day" and Jan for the month.

Example:
If it can only be confirmed that the refugee was born in 1961, type:01-Jan-1961

If the refugee can only state his or her age, the interviewer should convert the information into a year of birth. Conversion tables can be designed and used to quickly convert the age of an individual to the year of birth or to standardize dates between conflicting calendars.

It is often necessary to determine the age of a young boy or girl who has, or is claiming, refugee status. There may be different procedures or programmes for refugees or asylum-seekers who are below a certain age and laws that apply to the general population may also provide age limits. The Convention on the Rights of the Child only applies to persons under 18 years. However, there are practical problems in determining the age of young people. A child's birth may never have been registered or the relevant documentation never issued. Identity papers are sometimes lost, forged or destroyed. Authorities may doubt their validity when they exist.

When identity documents are not used to establish age, age estimates are based on physical appearance. Caution must be exercised with measures such as dental or wrist-bone x-rays, as these techniques only estimate age. Family vaccination cards also can provide estimates of age. If the child is living with his or her natural parents or a close relative, the adults may be able to relate the birth of the child to a local event, to the local calendar, or to a major event.

Whenever a child's exact age is uncertain, the child should be given the benefit of the doubt and accorded the treatment that reflects his or her best interests.

Place of birth

Where possible, information about the location where an individual was born should refer to the town or village of birth. The locations should be recorded according to the standard list of place names and codes and should be the name by which the location was known at the time of birth. If the country, city or town has a new name that is known to the refugee, this should be written in parentheses next to the original name.

Examples:
Leningrad (Saint Petersburg); Zaire (DRC); Indonesia (Timor Leste)

17.4.5 Note and photocopy existing individual identity documents

Record the type of document (family book, passport, national ID card) and number. The type of document should be recorded according to the agreed set of standards, determined earlier, see Section 12.3 – *Standardize location, names, and other categories.*

Copies should be made of existing documents when conducting Level 3 registration, and the originals returned to the individual concerned. Note if copies or original documents have been presented.

17.4.6 Marital status

Use the standard categories for recording marital status, shown in the table below. Registration should account for any changes in marital status as they are made known to the office. Marital status should be recorded as it is recognized in the country of origin unless there is an official change to the status within the country of asylum.

Table 10: Marital Status – Standard UNHCR categories

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Single	Only persons never married should be indicated as single.
Engaged	Refers to engagements that are legally or formally recognized within a community, implying that the couple may need to be considered as such for purposes of protection, assistance, and durable solutions.
Married	Includes common-law relationships, and life partnerships.
Separated	Refers to a legal separation or equivalent that implies that spouses should not be considered together for purposes of protection, assistance, and durable solutions.
Divorced	If divorced and still unmarried, individual should be indicated as divorced. If remarried, individual should be indicated as married.
Widowed	Widowed persons who remarry should be indicated as married.

17.4.7 Level of education

Determining the level of education is valuable; it is crucial for determining appropriate durable solutions, and for planning and setting up education programmes. The number of years of completed schooling should be recorded for years 0-12. After that, the highest level of education attained should be noted. University-level education is normally considered to be of a higher level than technical or vocational-level education. Use the standard categories in Table 11 below.

For refugee status determination, a full educational history is needed for each adult and principle applicant.

Table 11: Educational Level – Standard UNHCR categories

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
No Education	No structured education beyond pre-primary level.
1 year (or Grade 1)	Completed at least one year of structured education.
2 years (or Grade 2)	Completed at least two years of structured education.
3 years (or Grade 3)	Completed at least three years of structured education.
4 years (or Grade 4)	Completed at least four years of structured education.
5 years (or Grade 5)	Completed at least five years of structured education.
6 years (or Grade 6)	Completed at least six years of structured education.
7 years (or Grade 7)	Completed at least seven years of structured education.
8 years (or Grade 8)	Completed at least eight years of structured education.
9 years (or Grade 9)	Completed at least nine years of structured education.
10 years (or Grade 10)	Completed at least ten years of structured education.
11 years (or Grade 11)	Completed at least eleven years of structured education.
12 years (or Grade 12)	Completed at least twelve years of structured education.
Technical/Vocational	Any studies related to preparation for specific occupations to employment, self-employment or livelihood supplementation. May also include skills training and apprenticeships.
University Level	Refers to post-secondary university level education. Includes some or extensive university level education,Normally university level education is to be considered a higher level than vocational / technical education.
Post University Level	Refers to graduate university level education, such as graduate and post-graduate level work. Normally post university level education is to be considered a higher level than university level education.
Informal Education	Refers to non-formal schooling, such as at home schooling, self-teaching, and religious education without a structured secular curriculum.
Unknown	Education level unknown.

17.4.8 Record occupational skills

UNHCR standard categories for occupational skills have not been set. Occupational information is collected for different reasons depending on the registration strategy.

Occupations and skills data can refer to:

- ✔ occupation and skills held most recently in country of origin prior to flight;
- ✔ occupation and skills performed in county of asylum during the period of exile; or
- ✔ occupation and skills that a person expects or is qualified to perform as part of a durable solution.

Prior to registration, managers must decide what type of occupation and skills information they are interested in collecting, and train interviewers to solicit the correct information. In refugee status determination, a recent employment history is needed. Pay extra attention to recording skills and occupations of women; avoid categorizing them simply as 'housewives' or 'homemakers'.

Whenever feasible, it is recommended to categorize occupations according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations, (ISCO-88), developed by the International labor organization and used in a wide variety of circumstances and environments. This classification system allows ILO and other specialized institutions to make use of UNHCR registration data when designing targeted vocations and skills training programmes. This classification system has many levels of detail; for UNHCR's purposes "level 2" categories are sufficiently detailed. These are shown in Annex 7.

17.4.9 Record special protection and assistance needs

UNHCR does not expect the registration interviewer to be an expert in the fields of medicine or social sciences. However, individual registration interviews may represent the only occasion for UNHCR to evaluate and assist refugees in need of special protection or assistance interventions. The registration interviewer should therefore be trained to look out for special needs amongst the individuals he or she interviews. See Section 14.2 – *Identify and refer persons with special needs* – for more information.

Noticing and recording a special need on the registration form does not necessarily mean that appropriate action will be taken to protect or assist that individual. Suitable mechanisms must be established to refer individuals with special needs to the proper authorities. The UNHCR referral form (see Annex 12 for a sample form) will help ensure that refugees who appear to need special assistance do receive it.

When verifying existing registration data, interviewers should review any special needs distinctions that already form part of the individual's record. Any questions about existing special needs distinctions should be referred to community services staff.

Table 12: Special Protection and Assistance Needs – Standard UNHCR categories

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
Disabled	Physically or mentally disabled. May be either male or female.
Special Legal and Physical Protection Needs	Persons not falling into the other categories that are considered as vulnerable in the particular context. For example, survivors of violence or particular ethnic or religious groups.
Woman at Risk	Woman especially at risk. May include single women or women who are members of family or household, as well as women that are survivors of violence.
Single Parent	May be either a man or a woman. Also may be girl or a boy under the age of 18 years.
Unaccompanied or Separated Child	May be either a boy or girl under the age of 18 years.
Unaccompanied Elder	May be either male or female, normally over the age of 59 years. However, cultural norms should apply in designation of who is an elderly member of the community.
Malnourished	An infant, girl, boy, woman, or man whose nutritional status requires follow up or further monitoring.
Serious Medical Condition	Refers to a particular medical condition that requires follow up, or particular consideration such as in repatriation or resettlement. May include TB or other specific conditions that offices wish to monitor.
Pregnant	Pregnant woman or girl.

17.4.10 Other information

Depending on the registration strategy and level of registration desired, other types of information may be collected, recorded, or verified for persons of concern (see Chapter 5 – *Standard Data Set and Registration Levels*). Standard UNHCR categories exist for the following types of data:

- ✔ Religion
- ✔ Ethnic Group
- ✔ Country of Origin (location and address in country of origin)

See Annex 7 for the categories themselves and the codes to be used.

18. Accept and Validate the Quality of Registration Data

By this stage, the person has been seen by a registration staff member, a minimum of information about him or her has been collected, a photograph has been taken, and a record of his or her status of a person of concern has been created.

Registration is not considered to be complete, however, until UNHCR or a government partner has accepted the registration information. If UNHCR and/or a government agency is conducting the registration activities, steps taken to accept the information will be integrated into those activities. If NGOs or refugee volunteers are conducting registration, acceptance of the information by UNHCR and governments requires additional measures.

This process consists of three sub-steps. First, the registration form is completed and signed by the person of concern. The data collected is checked and validated against any data collected earlier. Any discrepancies should be noted. Registration staff assess the quality of the data, and make any comments on its quality and completeness as explained in Section 18.2 below. Finally, if considered valid, the registration data is accepted.

18.1 Complete registration form

By this time in the registration process, registration forms should be complete. All information gathered during the interview should be recorded on the form and copies of relevant documents should be attached.

Checklist to complete registration forms:

- ✔ The data collected should be reviewed to ensure that it has been accurately recorded. Data collected earlier should be compared and any discrepancies noted and investigated.
- ✔ If paper photographs are used, they should be attached to the form.
- ✔ Be sure form is signed or ‘thumb-printed’ by person concerned.
- ✔ If control sheets are being used, these should also be completed. This may involve transferring information from one form to another.

- ✔ The information should be legible to both the interviewer and the person of concern. Any registration or other number recorded on the form should be doubled-checked.
- ✔ In some situations, certain data elements may be have to be checked with other UNHCR offices or partners.
- ✔ Basic bio-data should not be changed other than to correct data-recording errors. Since the integrity of the initial data is essential, the data should be kept intact. Any attempt by refugees or others to change core data should be closely investigated by staff.

18.1.1 Permission to share information

All adults – that is, persons 18 years or older, unless the age of majority is attained earlier according to the applicable laws – must be asked for their permission for their personal data to be shared with outside parties.

➢ ***The agreement of the individual of concern must be sought and obtained before sharing personal data with outside parties.***

If feasible or if they ask to do so, refugees and others of concern should be able to review the information recorded on the form to ensure that it is accurate and that they agree with it. Adults should then be asked to sign or thumbprint the registration forms.

The wishes of men and women who do not want to have their personal information shared with outside parties must be respected. A box on the form should be checked and initialed to indicate that they do not want to have their information shared. They should also sign the form. Parents and guardians should sign forms on behalf of any of their minor children.

Nevertheless, as mentioned in the Confidentiality Guidelines, UNHCR may be obliged to ***share basic bio-data with host governments*** (see Section 5.2.1 – *Basic bio-data elements).* This should be made clear to refugees and asylum-seekers at the time of registration.

18.1.2 Agreement to the terms of voluntary repatriation

Before UNHCR undertakes to repatriate, resettle, or locally integrate refugees and others, all concerned women and men should express their individual willingness for the particular solution. All voluntary repatriation forms must contain a statement in the appropriate language testifying to the voluntary nature of the individual's request for repatriation. This declaration may also contain a statement referring to the individual's awareness and acceptance of the conditions of return.

➢ ***The application forms for refugee status determination and voluntary repatriation must be signed by persons of concern.***

The forms should be signed by all adult men and women listed on the form. Parents and guardians should sign on behalf of their minor children.

18.2 Assess quality of registration data

This step gives those who use registration data an idea of the reliability of the information recorded and indicates those areas requiring follow up. An assessment of quality can be done for individual records or for a group of records, depending on the registration strategy adopted. The assessment should be made available to others in the operation and should be linked with the registration records.

A system for recording the quality of the data, known as its 'validation status', is being developed. This system will allow offices to grade the quality of registration depending on the type of registration and the amount of verification applied to the data. This system will be useful for operations in which different levels of registration are achieved simultaneously and for different purposes. Different users of registration data will have an idea of how much confidence they can have in the existing data. Please contact DOS (PGDS/Project Profile) for more information.

In all cases, keep the record of the registration process together with the records. This will allow users to understand how the information was gathered and to what extent the standards have been met.

18.3 Accept or qualify registration data

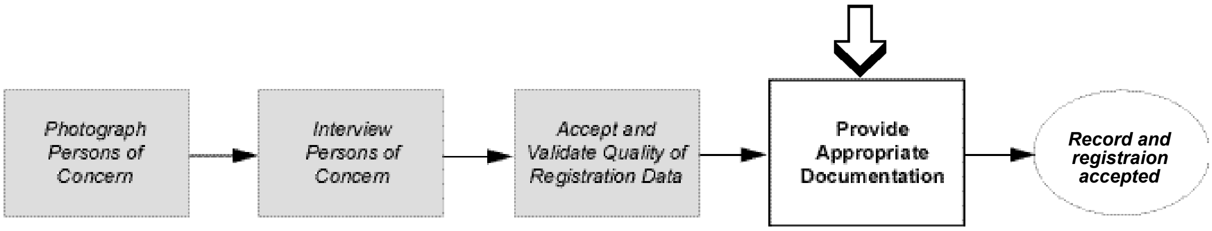
The registration of a person of concern is not considered to be complete until the registration data has been accepted by UNHCR or a government partner. Acceptance of registration data is crucial when registration is performed by NGOs or other implementing partners. Registration data collected and verified by an NGO may need to be verified, or at least subject to spot checks, before it is included with other registered records.

➢ ***Before it is used for any purpose, registration information must be validated and accepted.***

In large registration exercises, where inflation of population figures can be a problem, negotiate with partners, including the refugee community, before the registration or verification, to reach a consensus on what range of data is acceptable to all parties. Consensus should be based on a concrete and known factor, such as an actual shelter count combined with an estimate of average household size (see Section 11.1 – *Estimate population demographics).* If the results of the registration for a particular block or zone fall outside this range, then the registration records for that zone or block may have to be re-verified. Establishing a range prior to the activity will help to avoid conflict between the different parties while still reaching a figure that is acceptable to UNHCR.

Whenever the data does not fully meet standards, it should be qualified. The registration strategy should then be updated to schedule the work needed to achieve the desired standards.

Some degree of privacy is needed for quality registration interviews.



19. Provide Appropriate Documentation

Entitlement documents, such as ration cards, and identity documents fulfill very different roles for refugees and asylum-seekers. Identity documents permit persons of concern to show who they are and that they are under international protection. Entitlement documents give persons access to resources and services in accordance with their assessed needs.

Identity documents provide access to rights such as freedom of movement, education, and work, and protect refugees from harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention. They can also give refugees a sense of identity that is often lost during flight.

Entitlement documents fulfill a specific purpose: they identify beneficiaries, for assistance entitlements such as food aid, non-food items and services. In accordance with UNHCR's commodity distribution guidelines, food and non-food items are normally distributed to families rather than to individuals.

It is vital to be able to link assistance entitlements with individual identity as part of ensuring that assistance is being delivered to the intended recipients. Entitlement documents become more useful when refugees have an independent means of proving their identity, and when they are checked against actual physical presence of the individual to whom the card was originally issued. Individual registration records should record serial numbers of both the (family) ration and the identity card issued to an individual. These numbers should be periodically verified against the documents held by the persons concerned.

19.1 Identity documents

Identity documents are a fundamental tool of protection. They provide protection against refoulement, ensure access to basic rights and assistance, and facilitate freedom of movement. Modern technology, including digital photography, photo scanners, and card printers makes producing identity documents secure, rapid and affordable.

➢ ***UNHCR offices should make every effort to ensure that persons of concern are provided with identity documents that are recognized and respected by the local authorities.***

According to the international legal instruments that set out the principles of refugee protection, it is the responsibility of States to provide identity documents to refugees and asylum-seekers who do not have the means to identify themselves. As a result, the rights and obligations associated with an identity document are largely determined by the laws of the State issuing the document.

In some countries, identity documents provide access to the right to work, the right to long-term residency, and/or the right to greater freedom of movement within the territory. In other countries, identity documents accord refugees only the most basic protection against arbitrary arrest and detention, *refoulement*, and the right to remain within the country of asylum.

Documentation varies, though it generally corresponds to the kinds of documents issued to nationals or resident aliens. Traditionally documents issued have included refugee certificates, refugee cards, Convention Travel Documents, residence cards, or simply a letter informing a refugee that his or her request for asylum has been granted. However, not all of these documents are intended to serve as identity documents, and therefore some are less effective that others in fulfilling this role. Identity cards that have a similar format and content to national identity documents provide the best protection.

Often, documentation is provided through joint UNHCR-government efforts. UNHCR has provided technical and sometimes financial help to some States so they can implement registration and documentation activities for refugees. Some States have sought UNHCR's advice on how best to document refugees. Others have been able to issue identity cards to refugees within programmes designed to provide such documents to nationals and resident aliens.

➢ ***At a minimum, UNHCR should help to set standards for identity documents.***

As with many other activities designed to protect and assist refugees, the refugees should be involved in designing and issuing identity documents. Only by consulting the refugees, women as well as men, can UNHCR and its partners gain the community's co-operation during the data-collection phase and be sure that the documents are accepted once they are produced and issued.

➢ ***Identity documents should be given equally to all persons of concern, regardless of age or sex.***

For a detailed discussion of standards and procedures in issuing identity documents, consult *Identity Documents for Refugees and asylum-seekers: Guidance on issuing identity documents to persons of concern,* available through UNHCR's Department of International Protection and Division of Operational Support. The table on the following page summarizes the standard information that should appear on the cards or documents themselves.

Individual identity documents should be given to all persons of concern – even newborns.

An example of an identity card is shown in Annex 13.

Table 13: Standard Data for Identity Documentation

MINIMUM STATIC INFORMATION

- ✔ **Name of Card / Document**
- ✔ **Name / Logo of Issuing Authority or Authorities:** this should be the relevant Ministry of the Government with the appropriate authority to issue identity documentation to refugees, asylum-seekers and others of concern. This should conform to the national standards. When UNHCR has a significant role to play in issuing the ID documents, UNHCR's name and/or logo should appear as well.
- ✔ **General Statement of Rights** associated with the Card / Document. At a minimum, reference should be made to the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees if the issuing State is a signatory.

<u>Other static elements frequently included</u>

- ✓ Name and signature of Minister responsible for refugee-related affairs
- ✓ Status of individual to whom document/card is issued
- ✓ Government seals and stamps
- ✓ Embedded security features such as watermarks, ultraviolet printing, holograms, and particular markings

MINIMUM VARIABLE INFORMATION

- ✔ **Unique document number / Individual identification number**
- ✔ **Given Name (first, last and others as appropriate)**
- ✔ **Sex**
- ✔ **Date of Birth**
- ✔ **Photograph of Individual**
- ✔ **Date of Issue and Date of Expiration**

<u>Other variable information frequently included</u>

- ✓ Place of Birth (city/town/village and country)
- ✓ Nationality of Individual
- ✓ Date of Arrival (in host country)
- ✓ Port of Entry (in host country)
- ✓ Period of Validity
- ✓ Place of Issue
- ✓ Signature of Individual
- ✓ Distinguishing Features (height, weight, eye color, hair color)
- ✓ Alternative Names (such as 'nom d'usage')
- ✓ Address, current residential location

19.2 Entitlement cards and documents (ration cards)

In large populations and camp environments, entitlement documents are often issued on a family or household basis, while identity documents are issued on an individual basis. In some assistance systems, it may be possible to administer assistance without any entitlement cards. Nevertheless, holding the card can be an important means for beneficiaries to safeguard their rights to entitlements and to protect themselves against any errors in or manipulation of the registration system.

Issuing ID cards will not necessarily solve problems related to identification of beneficiaries. **Ration card issuance and food distribution lists have to be based on verified residence and continued presence at the site in question.** This is in addition to valid registration.

19.2.1 Individual entitlement documents

Where benefits, services, or assistance is provided on an individual basis, entitlement documents should be issued to all eligible individuals. In instances where only a certain part of the assistance is provided to individuals, for example to all elderly persons or all persons with special needs, these individuals should also be provided with individual entitlement documents. The cards should include only basic details of the card holder, such as name, unique card number, date of birth, and issuing authority. In most cases the card number should not be the same as their personal registration number. Record the card number in the individual's registration file and in the database if one is being used. Depending on the type of benefits associated with the cards, security features should be introduced to prevent fraud, tampering and forgery.

19.2.2 Family and household entitlement documents (including ration cards)

In most situations, refugees receive benefits, food and non-food items on a household basis. Consequently, entitlement cards are issued to a household. Use the standard family and ration cards, shown in Annex 14 and which can be ordered through Headquarters.

➢ ***Family and ration cards must bear the name of the main female and male beneficiary in the household.***

Information that should appear on the family card is:

- ✔ Card number
- ✔ Names of the main female and male members of the household
- ✔ Date issued
- ✔ Issuing clerk or officer
- ✔ Confirmed family size (punched and written into the card)

✔ Location and / or address
✔ Special needs

In operations where there is an important food component, WFP and UNHCR may agree that the WFP logo is printed on the card along with that of UNHCR.

Most ration cards have limited durability and will need to be replaced on a scheduled basis. Ration cards can only be issued after the size of the family is ascertained. If the family is not complete when registration takes place, then entitlement documents should be issued to cover only those persons who have presented themselves.

19.3 Manage expiration and renewal of documents

Renewal of documents and cards requires careful analysis of the protection and operational context. Careful planning and the selection of expiration dates determine the flux of renewals, and the extent to which the process of renewal can serve operational goals. In general, use the renewal of identity and entitlement documents as an opportunity to revalidate registration information and to assess the need for continued protection.

Expiration dates can be derived from the date of issuance; this will stagger renewal requests. This approach is useful when card re-validation can be done in a stable environment and avoids mass processing exercises. It permits a more individualized approach during which UNHCR and others can better assess the needs and condition of persons of concern.

In cases where the government promotes identity documents with unlimited validity, the expiry management could be done "outside" the card, through publicly announced card renewal exercises or through the introduction of new document design whenever the government or UNHCR insists that old cards are no longer valid.

Letter format documents can be extended by the addition of text at the bottom of the letter. For reasons of security and to avoid known fraud, renewal should always be done in person and by UNHCR when UNHCR has issued the documents. Renewals should be stamped, dated and signed.

Protection letters are less durable than laminated identity cards and may need to be renewed more often.

A way of avoiding complete re-issuance of cards in case of their expiration is to fix secure stickers onto the cards. Such stickers should be durable and secure from tampering and forgery. Re-validation stickers are a useful tool for the re-verification of beneficiary caseloads, especially in protracted refugee situations or in case of incomplete deregistration of departing refugees (repatriation, resettlement).

Ration cards need to be replaced when all of the 'holes' have been punched. This is normally between 24 and 36 months after the date of issue, depending on the frequency of distributions.

19.4 Variations

19.4.1 Emergencies/mass movements

Issuing personal identification documentation has been considered a low priority during past emergencies, and was rarely mentioned in emergency-planning discussions. Experience shows, on the contrary, that in some rapid-onset situations UNHCR's fundamental role may consist of providing identity documents to refugees and others of concern. Simple manageable steps for early registration and documentation must thus be a part of all contingency plans.

When determining the purposes for and kind of identity documents that may be issued during an emergency, consider:

- the need for individual identification documents;
- the possibility of a systematic destruction of identity documents in the country of origin prior to flight or during departure;
- potential return scenarios;
- access to and location of the persons of concern; and
- resources, partners, security and logistics.

In short-lived refugee situations, when issuing identity documents may not be practical or feasible, some sort of card (token, temporary card, ration card) is can be issued for camp-management purposes. See Annex 14 for the standard for family cards.

Family cards can provide a temporary substitute for personal identification documentation during an emergency. The cards contain the names of both a male and female household representatives, and indirectly show that the persons named on the card are of concern to UNHCR and have registered with UNHCR.

19.4.2 Refugee status determination

Normally, States provide recognized refugees with identity documentation in accordance with national laws and standards. This documentation is usually delivered in the form of a card once a decision concerning status has been made.
When determining the type and form of identity documentation to be issued to individual

recognized refugees consider:

- documentation provided by the host government;
- government practices and procedures for national identity documents;
- form of national identity documents;
- rights accorded to persons with refugee status;
- prospects for durable solutions;
- situations in which the individual will use such identification;
- age at which such identification is needed or is useful;
- issuance and renewal procedures; and
- risks of fraudulent use or forgery of refugee identity documents.

When UNHCR is conducting refugee status determination under its mandate, UNHCR must issue documents to registered Applicants for RSD and to refugees who are recognized in mandate RSD procedures. Procedures for issuing these documents are set out in the *Procedural Standards for Refugee Status Determination under UNHCR's Mandate.*

A "UNHCR Asylum-seeker Certificate" must be issued to every Applicant for RSD, including family members/dependants who are applying for derivative status upon registration. The uniform standard for this letter is attached in Annex 13(b).

The "UNHCR Refugee Certificate" should be issued by UNHCR offices to every refugee who is recognized under UNHCR's mandate. The uniform standard for this letter is shown in Annex 13(c).

The primary function of these two documents is to attest to the status of the recipient as a person of concern to UNHCR, either as a registered asylum-seeker or a refugee. Therefore, neither of these two documents is designed or intended to serve all of the purposes of an identity document. UNHCR should pursue additional measures to ensure that persons of concern receive recognized identity documents where this is necessary to promote their protection or access to available assistance in the host country.

19.4.3 Voluntary repatriation

In repatriation exercises, it is important to ensure that the government of the country of origin recognizes identity documents issued in countries of asylum. Increasingly, governments will issue appropriate and harmonized documentation to all citizens, but identity documents issued in countries of asylum may facilitate this process and ensure that returnees have some means of identification in the interim. This matter should be addressed during tripartite discussions on recognizing civil registry documents (such as birth, death, marriage and divorce certificates) and education certificates.

When determining appropriate documentation in a repatriation environment, consider:

- plans for assisted return movements (logistics, return grants/packages);
- country of origin intentions for issuing identity documentation to returnees;
- bio-data (personal information) requirements in the countries of origin and asylum;
- transferring and sharing registration data between UNHCR offices;
- deregistration in countries of asylum and cancellation of asylum identity and entitlement documents; and
- confidentiality concerns in sharing individual information.

Ideally, photo identification documentation should be provided to those repatriating. Voluntary Repatriation Forms (VRF) have partly served this role in some operations, allowing UNHCR and partners to identify returnees for assistance and logistical purposes. However, the VRF form is normally issued on a family basis and therefore does not meet the requirement of individualized identification. In addition, VRF forms are often collected from returnees once they have reached the areas of return in order to maintain records of movements and assistance provided and to avoid attempted fraud, such as “recycling”.

19.4.4 Resettlement

There is great concern over the incidence of fraud and abuse in resettlement programmes. Manipulation of identity is one way unscrupulous people try to abuse the system. Persons with no claim to refugee status falsely assume the name and identity of a recognized refugee or of someone who has been accepted for resettlement. Posing as the individual in need of protection and resettlement, an impostor benefits from the protection and assistance intended for those genuinely in need, compromising UNHCR and the international protection regime. One way to address this problem is to improve the means of verifying identity.

Issuing identity documents that have a minimum of security features but are linked to a secure record in either paper or electronic format is a good, relatively low-tech way of combating this type of fraud.

✔ **Timing:** The sooner that a person’s name and other bio-data can be linked to a photograph or other distinguishing feature, such as a fingerprint or signature, the less the opportunity for manipulation. This may necessitate taking photographs at the first registration contact with UNHCR, even if there is no immediate need for them.

✔ **Security of cards and records:** Internal audit procedures and security of physical and electronic records are needed to ensure that staff cannot manipulate refugee records by switching names, photographs, signatures, or other bio-data. The identity documents should be resistant to simple forms of fraud, such as forgery or alteration of the information they contain.

- ✔ **Possibility of verification:** Randomly and routinely the actual person and his or her distinguishing features should be compared to the record on file. Partners and/or States may have to assist in the verification process. For example, ensuring that Ms. X, who was approved for departure to a resettlement destination, is actually the individual who boarded the plane and arrived at the destination, requires sharing information with several partners, including those in the resettlement country.

In offices with significant resettlement activities, documentation issued to refugees should be assessed with the above factors in mind. UNHCR is under increased pressure to deliver reliable and credible resettlement programmes. Proper documentation is essential in ensuring that resettlement remains a tool of protection and is provided to those who need it.

Verification and Deregistration Process

This part of the Handbook contains information on:

- A ***'toolbox'*** of practical techniques for verifying registration data
- The ***reasons for deregistering*** persons of concern
- How to ***manage deregistration*** in each case
- How to manage registration ***when persons of concern move*** from one location to another

Overview

From the beginning of an operation and/or starting from the time an individual becomes of concern to UNHCR, the data known and verified about the individual should progress from level 1 through to level 3. This may be done all at once, when the information outlined in level 3 is collected in the first contact with an asylum-seeker. In other situations, the progression is more gradual as additional information is gathered according to management needs and capacities. Not all of the information defined in the third level will be necessary for every situation. Alternatively, additional information beyond the standard data set shown in Annex 7 may be required in other situations.

Registration data should always be current. In addition to providing important information for protection purposes and for assistance distribution, regular updating and data management reduces the need for costly and complex mass-registration exercises. Systems and procedures should be in place to:

- register new arrivals;
- register births, deaths, marriages and other events, and adjust registration records, refugee cards, etc.;
- deregister departed refugees and others of concern;
- cancel lost, stolen or damaged refugee cards and issue duplicate cards.

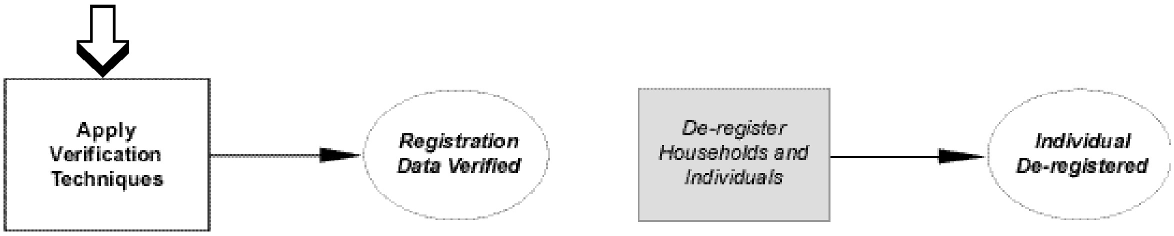
To keep data as current as possible:

✔ Update information as often as necessary and be sure that significant changes that affect protection and assistance are reflected in the refugee register.

- ✔ Use regular encounters with refugees, such as interviews, monitoring visits, house visits, food distributions, and counselling on voluntary repatriation, to verify and update existing information and to capture new data.

- ✔ Conduct spot checks and sample surveys to verify existing data.

Continuous registration activities are better than periodic registration exercises. Ongoing registration works best if there are permanent registration offices or regular registration hours in a permanent refugee office, or if mobile teams of registration personnel conduct weekly/bi-weekly or monthly/bi-monthly circuits. Only when continuous or regular registration cannot be arranged should it be necessary to begin with a large-scale registration.



20. Apply Verification Techniques

Verification is an important component of on-going registration. In any registration there must be some element of verification of the data. This is true in initial registration – the first time a person of concern in registered – or in any subsequent activities in which data is updated or added to. Verification involves checking everything from whether the registration record is correct, to whether it relates to the person it is supposed to relate to, to whether the person it relates to is in fact, or continues to be, a person of concern. A combination of techniques is used to verify registration data.

20.1 Choose verification techniques

The most common verification techniques are detailed below. Please provide PGDS or Project Profile (DOS) with feedback on their use and any refinements required in the description of the technique and how to use it. In addition, DOS would be grateful for any input on additional techniques that should be added to this practical list.

20.1.1 Check physical presence

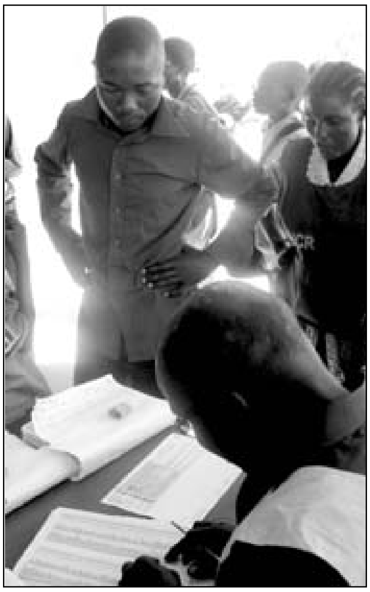
One of the best indications that a person resides in the host country is by confirming that they live at a known location where they can be readily found and from where they can make use of the protection and assistance services available to them. Accurate information on the location of households must be readily available to staff involved in verification. Households should be visited regularly in combination with calling families to present themselves at the registration office or center. The physical presence of each family member should be checked both at the household location and whenever the family comes to the registration center. It may be necessary to visit camps and settlements without warning or with only short notice in order to get an accurate idea of which individuals actually constitute a household.

Be aware, however, that refugees and displaced persons need freedom of movement in order to cope and develop self-reliance. Evidence of regular physical presence in a camp or at distribution or service sites helps confirm identity and continuing need of a refugee, but true absence should be based on a pattern of behavior over time. Families should be asked why an individual member is missing. Claims that the person will return should be followed up with further visits.

20.1.2 Check the use of standard personal and location names

When personal names or location names have not been properly standardized, the same person or family may inadvertently have been recorded more than once under different spellings. Data should be routinely checked for possible alternative spellings. Sort names alphabetically to group and locate duplicate words with spelling variations. Alternatively, filter different parts of the record set (age, sex, ethnicity, for example) and make a visual check for possible duplicate records resulting from non-standard spellings. Standard spellings should then be introduced in the registration system to prevent similar errors.

20.1.3 Check for multiple records



Lists of standard names and places of origin can help verify data.

Multiple records for the same person or family may result from deliberate "recycling" by members of the population with the aim of obtaining additional assistance, or may result from errors of procedure or errors in data-entry or management. Posing as a new arrival or "borrowing" another family's children are common recycling strategies. But multiple records also can be created when registration staff do not determine whether there is an existing registration record when they accept a new one. To check for duplicate or multiple records that may relate to a given individual or household, data can be filtered by address, family size and composition, place of origin and/or different parts of the name, for example. The resulting lists should then be examined visually. Any apparent duplicate entries should be marked, and the families concerned should be visited at home or asked to present themselves at the registration center in order to resolve the apparent duplication.

Photographs can be very useful for identifying multiple records for the same person, especially if groups of possible multiple records are first narrowed down through filtering. Where there is a persistent problem of multiple registration of children, registration and verification activities should be combined with health checks and/or vaccination campaigns for mothers and children. In this way, the accuracy of both the health records and the registration records can be verified while children and their parents benefit from improved health surveillance.

It is much easier to check for multiple records when biometrics are used. The biometrics database should be regularly queried for possible duplicates. Potential duplicates should be marked and the cases visited at home or called to the registration center for further verification. Duplicates can then be resolved, while persons with similar biometric records can be identified as such, or may be asked for additional biometric or other information to help distinguish between them.

No matter what technique is used, be careful not to delete genuine records on the grounds that they appear to be duplicates.

20.1.4 Check if the individual is a person of concern or a member of the local population

Members of the local population may sometimes try to register as persons of concern. In some situations, it may be difficult to distinguish them from the refugees. There are several ways to differentiate the one population from the other:

- ✔ **Visual clues** – Clothes and body language may provide initial indications, but should not be the sole determinant.
- ✔ **Language differences** – Registration and verification teams should include people who can identify country or area of origin through differences in language.
- ✔ **Knowledge of locations and conditions in country of origin** – Interviews should include questions to verify knowledge of the stated area of origin. Resource persons with knowledge of those areas should be consulted, and maps and lists of events should be gathered by the team to facilitate cross-checking.
- ✔ **Continued residence in assistance sites or in camps in the country of asylum** – ***See §20.1.1. – Check physical presence above.*** Residence in a camp or at an assistance site is usually a clear indication that persons or families belong to the population of concern. Residence should be regularly checked through visits to the household. Household visits also help to ensure that deaths and spontaneous departures are recorded. No-show data from food or commodity distributions can also be used to help focus and target house visits in blocks or sub-sections of a camp.
- ✔ **Interest in returning to the country of origin** – At an appropriate point in an operation, information on the future intentions of the population can be added to the registration data. While the data collected will primarily support solutions-oriented protection and assistance and planning for voluntary repatriation, the information may also help to identify individuals or families that are not members of the population of concern.
- ✔ **Assistance from the refugee population** – The population of concern will normally co-operate in identifying verification techniques, such as knowing specific geographic and linguistic details, and should be consulted.
- ✔ **Assistance from local authorities** – Local authorities should also be consulted. The national population of the country of asylum may have been registered and issued identity cards, making it possible for data from refugee registration to be compared with these records. The authorities may also wish to improve their records and introduce their own forms of verification in the area of operations.

✔ **Fixing of new arrivals** – New arrivals from the country of origin, those from the country of origin who may already be registered, and those who may have been in the country of asylum for longer but who arrived for reasons unrelated to the refugee situation must also be distinguished. New arrivals should be given a fixing token or wristband to distinguish themselves from these other groups.

20.1.5 Check household composition

Household composition may have been incorrectly recorded because of time pressure, incomplete inquiry or untruthful statements. The groupings in which displaced people choose to live is an important piece of information that has a direct bearing on their protection and potential solutions.

A household is defined as a group of persons of concern living at the same address. It is not, as is sometimes understood, "a group of persons of concern sharing one ration card". The best way to verify the composition of a household is to visit all households and see who is living at the same address. Without this physical, on-site check of the household, declared household units tend to become smaller over time in an effort to optimize the benefits of household-level assistance, such as non-food items. Verifying households should be done both on a house-to-house basis and at a stable registration, alternately and in combination.

20.1.6 Check family relationships

As with household composition, the accuracy of records of family relationships should be improved over time. One of the aims of registration and verification is to arrive at an "independently validated" set of family relationships, i.e., a set that is not unduly influenced by a particular set of benefits, such as non-food items or resettlement. This can best be achieved by checking the accuracy of family relationships at neutral periods and in a neutral context. People are more likely to give a full and accurate picture of their relationships if the process is seen as independent and distinct from the process of building a case for a particular decision or entitlement. Registration staff should explain that it is important for protection purposes to record which of the adults is/are the actual parent(s) of the child, for example. To be sure that the registration process, itself, doesn't impose uncomfortable or exploitative relationships within families, UNHCR's registration standards require that each family relationship be independently confirmed by both parties.

Additional tips for checking family composition are described in the UNHCR Resettlement Handbook, Section 5.6.5, page V/25 (IOM/67/1997-FOM/74/1997 of 24 September 1997 and IOM/41/2002-FOM/39/2002 of 15 March 2002).

20.1.7 Check identity

The link between a registration record and a specific individual must be verified. When the record does not yet include a photograph, any prior form of identification carried by the person should be checked against the name recorded. The way in which the name is recorded should be checked with the person. Ration cards, health cards and other recently issued documents should be examined to ensure that they all relate to the record and the person concerned.

When the record includes a photograph, the above steps should be supplemented with a visual check that the individual is the same as the person in the photograph. Current and prior identity documents should be checked to verify that any photographs included in them show the same person.

When a biometric has been captured for the individual, the identity check consists either of taking a new biometric and electronically comparing it to the one already linked to the record, or of making a visual comparison in the same way as is done for a photograph. While the visual check can be done frequently, the electronic check should be repeated at least once a year and at specific times when an individual is part of a case being submitted for an important decision.

20.1.8 Check use of services and assistance

Patterns of accessing services indicate physical presence (see above) and can show whether an individual or family resides in, or continues to reside in, a camp or assistance site. Data on attendance at distributions, schools and feeding centers, and use of health facilities, has to be obtained from the agencies responsible and compared with registration records. Low attendance at distributions or service facilities should trigger a verification activity, such as a household-level check, in the relevant section or block area of a camp.

20.1.9 Check special-needs status

Information on special protection and assistance needs may change from one period of time to another. This information should be regularly checked and updated for each individual. Trained and experienced staff should be responsible for this verification activity. The main sources of information are the responses or declarations of the individual or accompanying family members and visual observation; but referral slips and health records should also be consulted when available.

20.1.10 Check solutions status

Try to determine whether the prolonged or frequent absence of an individual or family may be because a durable solution, either spontaneous return to the country of origin or local integration, was found. Progress on voluntary repatriation, resettlement and self-reliance as a step toward local integration, should also be reflected in updated records.

20.1.11 Check whether the individual or family is still of concern

An individual or family may cease to be of concern for one of the five reasons described in Chapter 21 – *Deregister individuals and households.* Protection staff should periodically verify that members of the population of concern continue to be of concern, and to ensure that registration records are updated accordingly.

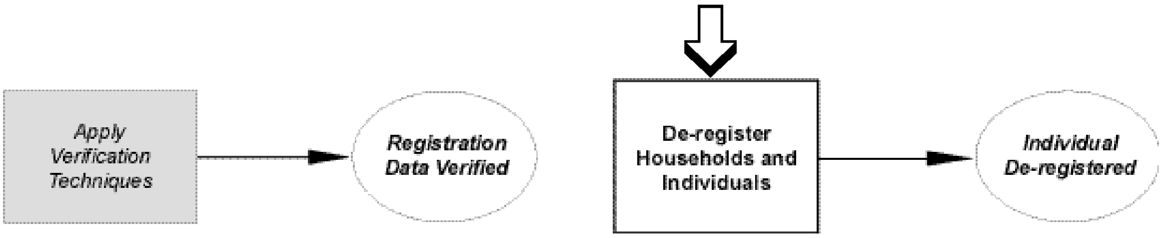
20.1.12 Set/update validation status

All registration records have a "validation status": a comment by the registration team concerning the accuracy and completeness of the record. When records have been comprehensively and recently updated, their validation status should be upgraded to reflect this.

20.2 Triangulate data

Triangulation is the systematic use and comparison of independent data and/or data collection methods. The degree of confidence in the validity of results can be greatly increased by comparing information and estimates obtained from different methods of data collection. This is a particularly effective use of other types of population data, such as health records or presence at food distributions, to corroborate and enhance the accuracy of registration data. Also, survey results, (see Section 11.2 – *Use of surveys to supplement registration),* can be combined with registration data to provide a more comprehensive picture of the population.

Data triangulation uses a variety of data sources, such as health records from medical NGOS, informal reports by community groups within the camps, and information from block leaders. Whenever possible use two or three measures or sources of data such as observations, interviews, surveys and data collected by other organizations. Data compiled from different sources is likely to be more robust. Compare information from the different sources to confirm names, or ages of persons of concern, or that a person of concern remains in the country, or that they are a not a local villager. The results of different verification techniques can also be compared by "triangulation" to increase the confidence in the results.



21. Deregister Households and Individuals

Once a person is no longer of concern to the organization, they should be deregistered and any documentation provided to them recalled and/or invalidated.

Procedures and criteria for deregistration should be developed by protection staff, and should be made known to the stakeholders in registration.

Deregistration is a protection issue, and any decision to deregister an individual should be made after confirmation by UNHCR protection staff and the Head of the office.

Deregistration is rarely simple. Criteria for determining that a person is no longer of concern are not always well defined and their application is not evident. It can be difficult to assess or to know who is no longer of concern within a large and diverse population. Refugees may repatriate or leave for another country without notifying the registration office, sometimes leaving their refugee documents (identity cards, ration cards/entitlements) with their fellow refugees or local citizens. Deaths are not reported or not brought to the attention of the registration office for fear of losing benefits. Criteria for determining if internally displaced persons and returnees are still of concern are rarely well established or uniformly applied. It may not be clear how to manage repeated absences at verification activities or distributions. The de-activation of a record, for example, in cases of prolonged absence, where a person of concern to UNHCR is no longer seeking active assistance from UNHCR and is removed from distribution lists, should not be confused with deregistration.

There are five conditions under which an asylum-seeker or refugee is no longer of concern and therefore could be deregistered. These are:

a) Final rejection of asylum claim;
b) Cessation of refugee status;
c) Cancellation of refugee status;
d) Revocation of refugee status; and
e) Death.

Each of these five reasons is discussed separately in the sections below.

➢ ***When moving from one country to another, refugees and asylum-seekers remain of concern to UNHCR until such time as their official status has been changed for one of the five reasons indicated above.***

For **internally displaced persons** there are no international instruments that define when their situation as an "internally displaced person" comes to an end. Unlike the status of a "refugee", where a particular set of rights of refugees and responsibilities of states are more clearly articulated, the predicament of becoming or ceasing to be an IDP is not attached to a "legal" status, per se. Instead, the legal situation of IDPs tends to be described in terms of human rights law and international humanitarian law, particularly in cases of armed conflict.

Deregistration is an important yet often overlooked component of internally displaced protection efforts. Failure to establish or agree upon criteria for registration and deregistration, or to effectively implement deregistration procedures for internally displaced persons can lead to confusion about their demographics and condition, difficulties in assessing and monitoring effectiveness of interventions, and can cause additional distress and diminished protection for the persons concerned.

National authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to ensure that the fundamental human rights of IDPs are protected and that durable solutions are found for them. They must restore the conditions under which their right to freedom of movement, including their safe and dignified return becomes possible. This may include addressing some of the systemic and underlying root causes of the displacement such as re-establishing the rule of law, creating mechanisms to promote and defend human rights, and restoring effective judicial processes that can resolve property and other disputes arising from the displacement.

The UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Principles 28-30[17] set out standards for return or resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced persons. Internally displaced persons have the right to return voluntarily, in safety and in dignity, to their homes, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country. Once the underlying causes of their displacement have ceased, internally displaced persons should be able to return home unless compelling reasons prevent such a return. Similarly, they should not be forced home against their will, and should be allowed to live in another part of the country in accordance with normal human rights principles if they so wish. They should not face discrimination as a result of having been displaced, they must have the right to participate fully and equally in public affairs at the local, regional, and national levels, and they must have the right to and equal access to public services. Internally displaced persons should also enjoy the right to regain their property and possessions, or be justly compensated by the State for any losses incurred.

[17] UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (UN document E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2), 1998.

In any given IDP situation it is important to identify, in advance, the precise purpose of the "registration" of the IDP in the first place. (i.e. what practical consequences flow from registration). At the time of deregistration by UNHCR, it will be important to identify the practical and legal consequences of any formal "deregistration" to ensure IDPs are not left in a vulnerable situation. As a result, any criteria for ending an individual's recognized identification as 'internally displaced' must be based on a **qualitative** assessment of their enjoyment of fundamental human rights and their continued need for protection and assistance.

Any decision by UNHCR to end support for IDPs should not be taken unilaterally. Rather it should be taken after adequate consultation with other actors that may also have assumed responsibility for the protection and assistance of IDPs - in the spirit of the "collaborative approach" – and with the full support and cooperation of the State concerned.

For **non-refugee stateless persons,** the acquisition of a nationality or citizenship would ultimately lead to deregistration as a person of concern to UNHCR. Only States determine who are their nationals and, conversely, which persons are not nationals. Consequently, UNHCR is not in a position to declare someone to be either stateless or a national of a given State. Both registration and deregistration of stateless persons should be based on available information from the relevant State(s) regarding the civil status of the individual or population concerned. While statelessness formally ends when someone has confirmed nationality in a given State, any instances in which protection concerns continue due to lack of an *effective* nationality should be reported to Headquarters for consultation prior to deregistration.

21.1 Generic deregistration procedures

The following list shows some of the generic procedural actions to take in cases of deregistration. More specific guidance for each of the circumstances leading to deregistration is provided in the following sections.

In all cases of deregistration:

- ✔ Establish regular links between the refugee register and other parties responsible for determining the end of an individual's status as person of concern so the registration records are routinely updated.
- ✔ Update but do not delete the relevant registration record(s) including any family and household records, indicating the reasons for deregistration.
- ✔ Archive the relevant registration records.
- ✔ Recall and cancel the relevant registration documents and cards.
- ✔ Notify appropriate agencies about the cancellation of the individuals' right to entitlements (assistance and services).

➢ ***Registration records should never be destroyed or deleted, including those of persons who are no longer of concern and have been deregistered.***

21.2 Deregister due to rejection of asylum claim

Asylum-seekers may have their claim rejected. As a general rule, asylum-seekers whose claim for refugee status has been properly rejected cease to be of concern to UNHCR. However, a person whose claim for independent refugee status has been rejected may also have applied for derivative status as a dependant of an asylum-seeker or refugee. Deregistration of the individual in question should not take place until after a final negative decision in any pending RSD pending application has been made.

Deregistration of rejected asylum-seekers should not take place until after the appeal period has expired, at which point the negative RSD decision can be considered to be final. In accordance with the UNHCR's policy that some flexibility be incorporated into appeal procedures, to permit the acceptance of appeal applications that are received after the deadline in appropriate cases, it is recommended that deregistration not take place until a reasonable period after the appeal deadline has expired.

Any documents that have been issued to them relating to their status as an asylum-seeker should be recalled and cancelled, including any identity documents or registration related documents issued by UNHCR (such as the UNHCR Asylum-Seeker Certificate; see Section 19.4.2 – *Refugee status determination).*

Family members/dependants that are part of the rejected claim should also be deregistered, and any documents issued to them relating to their status as part of the rejected asylum claim should be recalled and cancelled. However if they have an independent claim of their own, or are part of another claim as a family member/dependent, they remain of concern to UNHCR and should not be deregistered.

Asylum-seekers who are properly rejected in RSD Procedures may nonetheless be permitted by the host country authorities to remain in the host country for humanitarian reasons that are unrelated to UNHCR's mandate Such persons would, in most cases, no longer be of concern to UNHCR and should be deregistered.

Procedures to deregister rejected asylum-seekers should be undertaken with the advice of UNHCR Protection staff.

As with all persons of concern, registration records of rejected asylum-seekers should never be destroyed or deleted.

21.3 Deregister due to cessation of refugee status

As with all reasons for which refugee status is ended, cessation of refugee status is a protection issue, and any deregistration due cessation should be done in conjunction with protection staff.

Article 1C of the 1951 Convention on refugee status sets out the conditions under which a refugee ceases to be a refugee. These are:

- voluntary re-availment of national protection;
- voluntary re-acquisition of nationality;
- acquisition of new nationality;
- voluntary re-establishment in the country where persecution was feared;
- reason for becoming a refugees no longer justified due to changes of circumstances in country of nationality where persecution was feared; and
- reason for becoming a refugee no longer justified due to changes of circumstances in country of habitual residence where persecution was feared.

The first four clauses of Article 1C reflect a change in personal circumstances brought about by the voluntary act of the refugee. The other two clauses relate to changes in the objective circumstances that were the basis of the recognition of refugee status. The six cessation clauses are interpreted in the *Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status.* The Department of International Protection has recently issued updated guidelines concerning the interpretation and application of the last two clauses: the "ceased circumstances" clauses, Articles 1C(5) and 1C(6).[18] Procedures for cessation of refugee status under UNHCR's mandate are described in the *Procedural Standards for Refugee Status Determination under UNHCR's Mandate,* Chapter 11. Seek advice from and the participation of UNHCR protection staff when setting up procedures for deregistration related to cessation of refugee status.

It is important to note that a former refugee may remain of concern to UNHCR for some time after cessation of refugee status.

21.3.1 Deregistration due to re-availment of protection or re-acquisition of nationality

The application of these two clauses, Article 1C(1) and 1C(2), is relatively rare and they concern persons who remain outside their country of nationality. In both cases, the true intention of the individual to re-avail themselves of the protection of the country of nationality must be confirmed. There are three requirements in these clauses: the refugee must act voluntary; the refugee must intend by their actions to re-avail himself or herself to the protection of the country of their nationality, and the refugee must actually obtain such protection.

Normally, once refugee status has been terminated, the individual should be deregistered. All documents relating to their status as a refugee should be recalled and/or invalidated.

[18] *Guidelines on International Protection: Cessation of Refugee Status under Article 1C(5) and 1(C)6 of the 1951 Convention* (HCR/GIP/03/03 of 10 February 2003 issued under cover of IOM/12/2003- FOMR/12/2003 of 10 February 2003 refers). *The Cessation Clauses: Guidelines on the Application* of 1999 are still relevant in respect of Article 1C(1) to 1C(4).

In such cases, any family members/dependants who have been granted refugees status on the basis of family unity, and who do not benefit from any form of national protection, will continue to benefit from refugee status.[19] They remain of concern to UNHCR and should not be deregistered.

As with all persons of concern, registration records of those who have re-required the protection of the country of nationality but remain outside their country of nationality should never be destroyed or deleted.

21.3.2 Deregistration due to acquisition of new nationality and protection from that State

As with the first two clauses, this cessation clause, Article 1C(3), is based on the fact that a person who enjoys national protection is not in need of international protection. The nationality acquired through naturalization based on residence or marriage is normally the nationality of the country where the individual is residing, but could be the nationality of another country as well. In either case, if the individual enjoys national protection, then their status of as a refugee should cease, and the individuals deregistered according to established procedures. This is the clause that normally applies in cases of local integration or resettlement as a durable solution.

When an individual acquires a new nationality, their family members/dependants benefiting from derivative status remain refugees, and therefore of concern to UNHCR. An example would be when the mother remarries a national and acquires the nationality of her husband. While she ceases to be a refugee, her adult dependent children would remain refugees, and as such persons of concern to UNHCR.[20]

21.3.3 Deregistration due to voluntary re-establishment in country where persecution was previously feared

This clause, Article 1C(4) of the 1951 Convention, applies to both refugees who have a nationality and to stateless refugees. The clause refers to “voluntary re-establishment”. This is to be understood as return to the country of nationality or country of former habitual residence with a view to residing permanently there. A temporary visit to the former home country, such as a “go and see visit” or to visit a sick family member, does not constitute “re-establishment” and will not involve loss of refugee status. Re-establishment must be effective, in that the necessary conditions to permit re-establishment must exist within the country of origin, and the individual concerned must be able to do so.

[19] See paragraph 187 of The Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status, January 1992.

[20] Ibid.

This clause is applicable in voluntary repatriation situations. Deregistration is important in voluntary repatriation operations. When people move from one country to another, particularly in the case of organized repatriation, they need to be removed from the refugee registers of the country of asylum and their registration transferred to the registers of the country of return.

The transfer of the registration, and therefore removal from the register in the former country of asylum, should take place when a person has actually left the territory of exile. Application for voluntary repatriation should not result in automatic deregistration of the individual concerned; people may change their mind or their departure may be cancelled or delayed. In organized repatriation movements, the final and verified passenger manifests, particularly when confirmed by the receiving party, can serve as a record of movement. This list, combined with signed voluntary repatriation forms, can be considered adequate cause to transfer the registration of the individuals concerned to their new location, and remove them from the register of their former location.

In situations where return movements are spontaneous or are not assisted by UNHCR, it is harder to determine if a voluntary return has actually taken place. A person should only be deregistered in the country of asylum after it has been confirmed that their absence from the territory of asylum is persistent, and that their return to the country of origin has been voluntary and has taken place in safety and dignity.

The registration records of persons concerned should be "transferred" to the registers of returnees in locations of return. Individuals remain on the lists or databases of returnees for as long as needed to assess and confirm the effectiveness of their re-establishment in the country of origin. Returnee registers are also needed for protection and assistance monitoring and provision. Only core registration data should be transferred from the UNHCR office in the country of asylum to the relevant UNHCR office in the country of return (see Section 5.2 – *Basic bio-data and core registration data).* By contrast, any specifics on the nature of their claim, on the particulars of the decision to grant them refugee status, or other information that may have a protection or sensitive component should not be shared with the country of origin. Future responsibility for the maintenance of the registration record is also transferred to the new office and location. Any records or registration data retained in the country of asylum for protection reasons remain the responsibility of the office in the country of asylum.

As with all persons of concern, registration records of those who have voluntarily repatriated to their country of origin should never be destroyed or deleted.

21.3.4 Deregistration due to changed circumstances in the country where persecution was feared

Cessation under Article 1C(5) and 1C(6), refers to fundamental changes in the objective conditions in the country of origin removing the circumstances give rise to refugee status. In such cases, UNHCR or States may declare that it is no longer possible for an individual refugee to refuse to avail himself or herself to national protection, or for a stateless refugee to return to their territory of habitual residence. Cessation of refugee status does not involve the consent or a voluntary act by the refugee. It terminates the rights that accompany that status and may involve return to the country of origin. Although such declarations are infrequent, the application of the ceased circumstances clauses can have serious consequences.

For cessation to apply, changes in the country of origin need to be fundamental and enduring and should address the causes of displacement which led to the recognition of refugee status. Developments which appear to evidence significant and profound change should be given time to consolidate before any decision on general cessation is made. Another crucial question is whether the refugee can re-avail himself or herself to the protection of his or her own country. Such protection must be effective and available. This requires the existence of a functioning government and basic administrative structures such as a functioning system of law and justice, and the infrastructure to enable residents to exercise their rights, including the right to a livelihood. Another important indicator is the general human rights situation in the country. Although there is no requirement that the standards of human rights achieved be exemplary, significant improvements must have been made, such as respect for the right to life and liberty and the prohibition of torture. Specific indicators include declarations of amnesties, the repeal of oppressive laws, and the dismantling of former security services.

It is possible to have cessation declarations for distinct sub-groups of a general refugee population from a specific country. However, changes affecting only one part of the territory of origin should not lead to cessation of refugee status.

There may be circumstances where individual refugees may warrant continued international protection. Therefore, all refugees affected by such a declaration of cessation must have the possibility, upon request, to have their continued need for international protection assessed. Article 1C(5) and 1C(6) contain an exception to the cessation provision that allows refugees to continue to refuse to re-avail themselves of their country of origin for "compelling reasons arising out of previous persecution". In addition, the Executive Committee in Conclusion No. 69, encourages States to find alternative arrangements for persons "who cannot be expected to leave the country of asylum due to a long stay in that country resulting in strong family, social and economic links."

The general principles of cessation are applicable to both persons for whom refugee status was determined individually, as well as those for whom it was determined on a prime facie or group basis.

General procedural aspects for a declaration of general cessation are outlined in the *Guidelines on International Protection: Cessation of Refugee Status under Article 1C(5) and 1(C)6 of the 1951 Convention* (HCR/GIP/03/03 of 10 February 2003 issued under cover of IOM/12/2003-FOM/12/2003 of 10 February 2003).

UNHCR retains a role in assisting the return of persons affected by a declaration of cessation and in the integration of those allowed to stay, since they remain under UNHCR's mandate for a period of grace. Only when this period of grace has been completed should such persons be deregistered.

Under no circumstances should the registration records of individuals whose refugee status has been terminated due to the application of the general cessation clauses be destroyed, discarded, or deleted.

21.4 Deregister due to cancellation of refugee status

Cancellation of refugee status is carried out according to established procedures, which permit UNHCR and governments to invalidate the refugee status of persons who, at the time of recognition, were not entitled to refugee status, either because they did not fall within the inclusion criteria at that time, or the exclusion clauses and criteria applied to them (see Handbook on Procedures and Criteria for Determining Refugee Status, Chapter IV and the forthcoming *Guidelines on International Protection: Cancellation of Refugee Status* for a discussion of these criteria and clauses).

Detailed procedures for cancellation of refugee status by UNHCR, including the requirement for review and approval by the Department of International Protection for cancellation decisions made by UNHCR, are set out in the *Procedural Standards for Refugee Status Determination under UNHCR's Mandate,* Section 10. Individuals whose refugee status is cancelled by UNHCR must be notified in writing of the decision and reason, and should be requested to return documentation issued as a result of recognition as a refugee. A copy of the written notification of the cancellation decision must be maintained in the individual's registration record.

Cancellation of refugee status by UNHCR has the effect of ending entitlement to protection and assistance provided by UNHCR, including eligibility for resettlement or voluntary repatriation. Where cancellation is carried out by Governments, the individuals would also generally cease to be of concern to UNHCR. However, a final decision on whether individuals whose status is cancelled by a Government should, as a result, cease to be of concern to UNHCR, would have to be made by UNHCR protection staff with a final confirmation by the Head of Protection or the office.

While cancellation of refugee status is carried out on an individual basis, cancellation of the status of a refugee results in the termination of the derivative refuge status of family members/dependants of the individual concerned. However, family members/dependants whose derivative refugee status has been cancelled are eligible to make an independent claim for refugee status and, as asylum-seekers, would remain as persons of concern to UNHCR. Also, certain individuals whose independent refugee status has been cancelled may subsequently apply for refugee status and be recognized as a refugee, if they are eligible for refugee protection at that time.

A final cancellation decision should result in the deregistration of the individual concerned, unless they remain of concern because they are being considered for refugee status under a new claim. The registration records of persons whose status has been terminated pursuant to cancellation procedures should be revised and updated as appropriate to reflect their actual status. This includes family members and dependents whose derivative refugee status is cancelled.

All individuals whose refugee status has been cancelled and who are found to be no longer of concern to UNHCR should be deregistered by UNHCR. This would apply to individuals whose status has been cancelled but who are permitted by the host country to remain on the territory, for humanitarian or other reasons. Deregistration should be applicable as of the date when the cancellation decision has become final. Registration staff will receive a written communication from protection staff notifying them of the date that the cancellation decision has taken effect. The fact that deregistration has been due to cancellation should be noted in the individual's file and in the database records.

UNHCR Offices should take all feasible steps to withdraw UNHCR documentation relating to the refugee status of individuals whose status has been cancelled.

As in other deregistration scenarios, under no circumstances should the registration records of individuals whose refugee status has been cancelled be destroyed, discarded, or deleted.

21.5 Deregister due to revocation of refugee status

The revocation of refugee status occurs when a recognized refugee engages in conduct falling within Article 1F(a) or 1F(c) of the 1951 Convention, and all criteria for the application of these clauses is met. Although the considerations in the deregistration procedures due to revocation of refugee status are the same as those for cancellation described above, it should be noted that the decision to revoke refugee status is carried out by Protection staff with confirmation by the Head of Office according to established procedures. Notification of a final decision on revocation and the date on which it has taken effect will be communicated to registration staff with a written instruction to deregister the individual concerned.

Unlike cancellation of refugee status, revocation of the status of the main applicant would not, in principle, result in the termination of the derivative refugee status of family members/dependants.

See Guidelines on International Protection: Application of the Exclusion Clauses: Article 1F of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the accompanying Background Note (HCR/GIP/03/05 of 4 September 2003 issued under cover of memorandum IOM/53/2003-FOM/53/2003 of 8 September 2003) for more information.

21.6 Deregister due to death

Persons of concern who have died should be deregistered. Families can be reluctant to announce the death of a family member as this could result in reduced rations or other entitlements. Nevertheless, the accurate reporting of deaths and updating of registration records accordingly is crucial for accurate monitoring of the overall health of the population including mortality rates, for accurate population statistics, and for correct information on family composition and structures. Under no circumstances does the reporting to UNHCR and subsequent deregistration of an individual constitute the legal certification of the death. Official death certificates are often needed to ensure transfer of property and other rights to family members either in the territory of asylum or origin.

Operations should take the following additional actions in regard to deregistration due to death:

- ✔ Provide appropriate compensation, such as rations or non-food items or payment of burial fees, to encourage the accurate reporting of deaths.
- ✔ Follow national procedures for reporting and recording deaths and issuing death certificates.
- ✔ Establish regular links between the refugee register and the agencies responsible for registering deaths.
- ✔ Adjust family size to reflect changes.
- ✔ Be sensitive to the needs of grieving relatives; be flexible with the cancellation/ reduction of rations (for example, grant a grace period of 2-3 months) or consider paying funeral expenses in exchange for the cancellation of the deceased refugee's entitlement card.
- ✔ Report the number of deaths to the officer/agency monitoring mortality rates.
- ✔ If necessary, issue temporary death certificates to family members pending issuance of official death notices by civil registration authorities.

21.7 Transfer registration due to resettlement, evacuation or secondary movements

When persons of concern move to a new territory of asylum through resettlement, through humanitarian or medical evacuations, or through secondary movements, their registration should be transferred to their new location. This means that ownership of the registration information and the responsibility for the maintenance and accuracy of the registration information should be transferred to the registering party on the new territory. The transfer and sharing of UNHCR-gathered registration data with non-UNHCR parties must be done in a manner that fully respects the privacy of the individual concerned and confidential nature of their relationship with UNHCR. ***(See Section 1.8 – Confidentiality and sharing identity information*)**. In keeping with the principle of the unified approach, and respecting the principles of individual privacy and confidentiality, whenever feasible the existing registration record and information should be retained and build upon throughout an individual's time as a person of concern.

21.8 Recall entitlement documents

When persons are no longer of be concern or an individual no longer has the right to a certain entitlement, the respective ration and entitlement documents should be invalidated. This should be done in such a way so that there is no doubt within the country concerned and in other countries that the individual no longer has access to the entitlements. The card can be invalidated by punching through any remaining entitlement boxes, clipping two or more corners of the card, drawing across the face of the card in permanent red ink, or any other way of changing the physical appearance of the card in a distinctive and permanent way.

If the card can serve no further purpose to the person concerned, it can be withdrawn and collected by UNHCR or other issuing authorities. However, this may not be the case. All too often, ration and entitlement cards may be the only piece of identifying documentation that a refugee may possess. It may also be his or her only proof that he or she was once of concern to UNHCR and/or was entitled to and benefitted from certain kinds of services and assistance. Therefore, it may be better to leave the cancelled card or a photocopy of the card with the refugee or individual of concern.

21.9 Recall identity documents

When identity documents have been issued by the host government or jointly with UNHCR, the procedure concerning the recall and invalidation of identity documents issued to refugees and others of concern is the decision of the State concerned.

When the documents have been issued by UNHCR alone, then an assessment of the protection situation on ground and the potential for the acquisition of other personal identity documentation will determine the proper approach.

However, as with ration cards, it is recommended that cancelled or invalidated identity documents be left with the persons concerned as a supplementary form of proof of identity and proof that an individual was once of concern to UNHCR. Exceptions are the cases of those persons whose status is cancelled on the grounds that their initial recognition by UNHCR was erroneously accorded in the first place, as described in Section 21.4 – *Deregister due to cancellation of refugee status,* or revoked as described in Section 21.5 – *Deregister due revocation of refugee status.* In these cases, all documentation related to their status as a refugee should be returned to and retained by the issuing authority.

Population Data Management

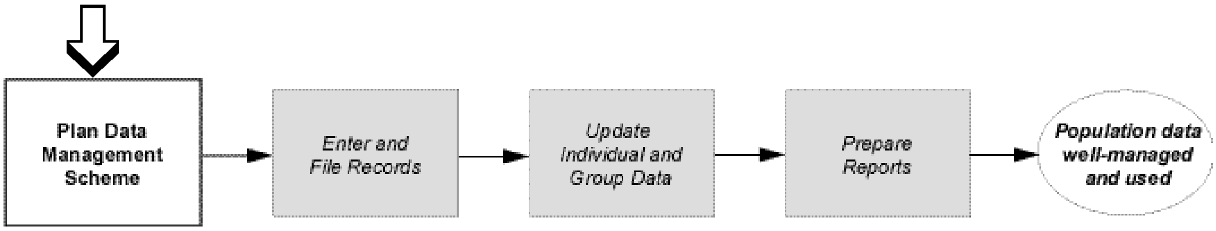
Principles

The information collected during a registration process may have come from a variety of sources and may have been compiled in haste and with varying degrees of consistency by many different persons, at different times and for different purposes. Individuals may have been registered twice or several times; individuals may be hard to find because their names are misspelled or entered in the database in the wrong order; important information about a person may be missing or incorrect; the information may be out-of-date or misleading.

Errors in the data are likely to translate into injustices for beneficiaries and inefficiencies in the operation. Humanitarian personnel must achieve a balance between reducing the risk that population data fall into the wrong hands and ensuring that those who are entrusted with the responsibility of protecting and assisting the refugees have full access to the information. Registration information must be securely stored and handled.

This part of the Handbook provides information on:

- Using **business process mapping** to understand how data management interacts with other processes in an office
- Tips for **entering** and updating data
- Backing up and **consolidating** data
- How to set up and maintain a **filing system**
- Producing the annual and quarterly **statistical reports**
- Using population data reports to **assist operations**



22. Plan Data Management Scheme

Data management staff should always be involved in planning the overall operation. The registration strategy can have a significant impact on how the data gathered is managed; and data management personnel can offer suggestions on how to help make the overall registration strategy more efficient.

When planning a data management system, consider:

- Registration and other paper forms (see Sections 10.5.2 and 17.1 on registration forms for more details)
- Database tools
- Entering and filing records
- Updating data
- Preparation of reports (standard and operational)
- Providing support to operations

A key challenge is that population data is a shared asset in an operation, and sources for initial data capture and subsequent updates are shared between different services. When data collection is linked to mandatory procedures such as filling in forms for access to entitlements, there is a better chance of maintaining accurate data. Also, electronic data entry and proper filing of records often take place at a later point in time. Rigorous discipline is necessary to avoid data processing and filling backlogs that will harm overall data quality.

22.1 Analyze data flows

Pictorial business process maps can help identify the interactions between the operation and the data management. A business process map is an intuitive and concise picture of the way registration and population data management is organized, and where the different stakeholders interact.

The map can be an objective description of how the process runs today ("as-is" map), which is used to identify areas for streamlining and improvement, or a description of how the process will be in the future ("to-be" map).

Business process maps serves as a communication tool. Teams can have a common view of the registration and data management processes, and be able to use the same language when discussing new processes or improvements to existing routines.

22.2 Select data management tools

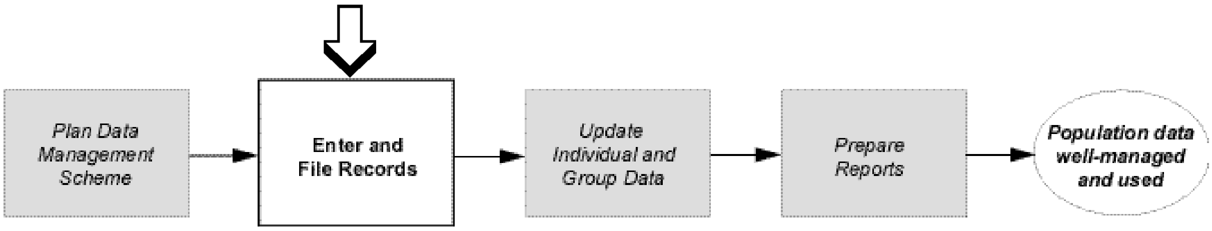
Data management does not have to be supported by an electronic database tool; it can remain completely paper-based. If the volume of data is small and a single individual is managing the data, a well-functioning paper-based system is sufficient. The paper-based system is not reliant on computers and, as such, can be used in any environment.

The use of electronic data management tools can, however, increase processing speed and improve data accuracy and consistency. In addition, databases can be easily shared amongst an almost unlimited number of people; and electronic data management tools can handle repetitive tasks, such as producing certificates and reporting statistics, quickly and effortlessly.

If data management is to be handled by more than one person, and if the volume of data is expected to exceed 300 records, then electronic data management should be considered. While data management staff do not have to be technical software engineers, in more complex data centers, a dedicated technical infrastructure support person may be required. That person would be in charge of maintaining the server, desktop PCs and peripherals, such as digital cameras and printers, and, on occasion, biometric devices.

UNHCR Headquarters can provide, and encourages the use of, standard database tools. Consult PGDS/DOS, ADSS/ITTS for advice on the best choice for the operation in question. Standard tools can also be configured to match specific needs. A standard database is being developed to replace current systems of RICS and FBARS. Headquarters-based services and/or field-based registration co-ordinators and IT staff can integrate the software and hardware required for photo capture, biometric-data capture and ID card printing with this or existing standard databases.

➢ ***Keep data management as simple as it can be.***



23. Enter and File Records

23.1 Plan data entry

Data entry is best when it is both fast and accurate. As part of the planning for the data management process, benchmark figures for each step in data entry should be timed. Determine how long it takes, on average, to complete the data entry of one registration form. Assess how long it takes to update the case status. This often requires the time to read through the interview notes or decisions if the action sheet is not properly filled in or if the action has not be entered by the responsible officer.

These benchmark figures will help to determine how many people will be needed for data entry.

To plan for data entry:

✔ Benchmark each of the key data-entry steps.

✔ Determine the number of persons needed to enter the data by looking at the benchmark figures. Do not underestimate the time needed for quality control, including spot checks, daily data-entry log reports, supervision. Add at least a 20 per cent margin to cover quality control and miscellaneous time loss.

✔ Prepare look-up tables when using a database tool or an EXCEL sheet. There may be additional codes for data entry, for example, the data on the paper form might be descriptive, which will then be translated into a code. Include detailed instructions for the coding as part of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

✔ Set validation rules (for example, the "sex" field can only take M or F or data fields reject an invalid date or a future date), and set default values for relevant fields for quick data entry when using a database tool or an EXCEL sheet. UNHCR standard tools have basic data-entry validations built in.

✔ Minimize room for interpretation. A well-documented SOP can provide guidance to a large extent, but data-entry operators should regularly discuss their work to maintain the consistency of the activity and adjust data-entry standards, when necessary, to reflect changes in the operation.

- ✔ Always try to substantiate the request for data entry with a signed paper form. This will ensure accountability for each record.

- ✔ Data access should be role-based (read/write access, read-only access, or sometimes limited access only to certain screens), and authentication by user ID and password should be rigorously enforced. Do not give data-administrator access to all persons using the system.

- ✔ Plan regularly repeated data-entry operator training sessions. Individual competency should be closely monitored. Use the SOP described below for the training.

- ✔ Consider sub-dividing data-entry tasks and assigning a different group of people to each task. The decision to work this way will be based on the capacity and competency of the data-entry staff, the volume of work, and any time pressure.

- ✔ Consider rotating data-entry staff to prevent mental and physical fatigue or burn-out that can result from long hours of repetitive data-entry tasks.

- ✔ Plan a mandatory 15-minute break every 2 hours and be attentive to the working environment (provide an air conditioner, fan, good lighting, ergonomic chairs and other amenities whenever possible).

Data-entry procedures must be documented as a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). Document the data-entry procedures as part of daily, weekly and monthly cycles, connected to data collection and to other data-processing steps, such as printing certificates and generating reports.

Include real working samples in the SOP, for example images of a computer screen showing which data fields are to be entered/updated and/or data-collection forms with data-processing elements highlighted in colour.

Review and revise the SOP as the process evolves. After revising, brief or re-train operators on site. The SOP should always be identified by a particular version name and number in order to avoid confusion.

23.2 Enter new records

Entering a new record begins with assigning a household/case number to a blank record. Depending on the operation, the unique number can come from the serial number pre-printed on the form or from a computer-generated unique number automatically assigned when a new record is created.

The specifics of which data will be recorded at this stage should be documented in the SOP. The SOP should detail which fields are to be filled in, what values are valid, what default value(s) will apply to some of the fields, and how to document footnotes in the comment field. By using the SOP as a guide, no matter who is entering the data, the result will be the same.

Before saving a new record and starting another, make sure that the entries are correct, matching what is written on the paper form, and that the record is not a duplicate of an existing record.

- ✔ Make sure that the household/family/case number is correct and unique. Record the number in the correct format as per the SOP.
- ✔ Use keyboard (tab, enter key and arrow keys) more often than the mouse. Although the use of mouse clicks is more intuitive at the beginning, keystrokes are faster.
- ✔ Maximize the use of any 'auto-fill' features in the data entry user-interface.
- ✔ Touch typing with all 10 fingers is mandatory when entering data for increased speed and to minimize fatigue.
- ✔ Visually double check data entered before saving against the paper form and against the instructions in the SOP.

23.3 File records

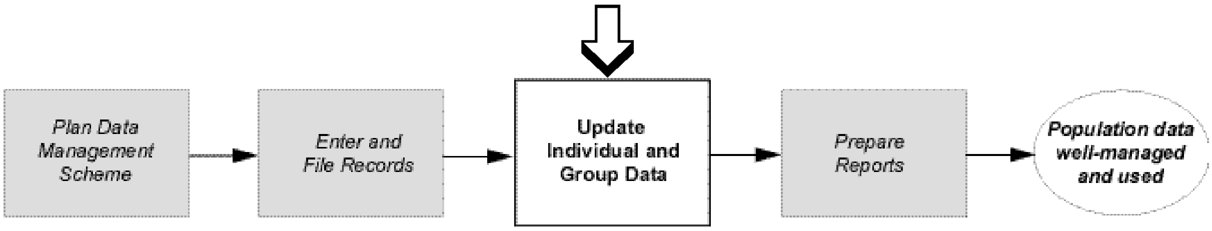
Data management is very closely linked to file management. It is a luxury to have dedicated filing center for case filing, file movement, and archiving of old case files. These tasks are combined with the data management tasks and are carried out by data management staff. Good filing requires discipline and well documented standard operating procedures. File management procedures are similar to library administration procedures.

When planning file management, consider:

- ✔ Action sheet and other summary information should be clearly visible in a physical file. If using a database tool to manage population data, print an updated, one-page fact sheet for each case that can be stapled to the front of the physical file.
- ✔ Is there enough storage space? Will the space available accommodate growth in the volume of files over time? Is there a sufficient number of filing cabinets or open shelves?
- ✔ Are lockable drawers/cabinets, or open shelves with a key to the room available?
- ✔ Is there sufficient staff to move files?
- ✔ When organizing physical filing, focus on accessibility and ease of file retrieval.

- ✔ Colour-code files by key categories for better visibility.
- ✔ Ensure there are enough stationery supplies (filing pockets, hard-shell holders, dividers, etc.).
- ✔ Track the location of physical files by creating a check-in/check-out system using a log book.

Remove archived files, such as closed cases, from the main access area of the file center/file-storage area, and keep them securely stored.



24. Update Individual and Group Data

Any doubts about the data to be entered should be checked prior to recording it in a database. Do not assume or guess what should be recorded, as this may not reflect the reality of what was discussed between the person of concern and the staff they met in the field.

24.1 Update existing registration data

Updates are usually required for recording:

- ✔ Bio-data changes, such as for skills, education, marital status.
- ✔ Current location/address.
- ✔ Death.
- ✔ Additional family members, such as newborns, and newly arrived additional dependants.
- ✔ Specific events that occur to the household/case.
- ✔ Changes in status.
- ✔ Updates to photograph or biometric.
- ✔ Changes in group composition.
- ✔ Footnotes from interviews and other contacts that should be shared.
- ✔ Corrections for data-entry errors.

All requests for updates must be documented and signed. Changes to basic data should be substantiated by filling in a new form or manually recording the changes on the original data-collection form in a different colour. These forms should be signed and filed so changes can be tracked.

Some changes in a person's situation can be difficult to record. When in doubt as how to record a particular change, consult with supervisors before completing the update. Classify and document update patterns and routines and develop a consistent method of updating records.

24.1.1 Changes in status

Depending on the specific protection situation and operational setting, registration information may have to be updated when the status of the refugee changes in such a way that it affects protection, assistance and/or durable solutions.

It is essential to determine what information needs to be updated and to establish a procedure to capture and update the information systematically.

Individual registration records are grouped together according to family bonds. Divorce or separation, marriage and the creation of new families will require changes made to the records of initial groupings.

24.2 Delete an existing record

Records should not be deleted from the database; they should be marked as deregistered, inactive, or archived.

If there is a duplicate entry, either the database administrator will delete the record and note the deletion in the audit log or the record will be noted as inactive because of "erroneous data entry".

24.3 Back up data

Save data as frequently as possible and store backed-up data onto a different storage site, such as another hard disk, another PC, CD-R, CD-RW, Zip Disk, or a floppy disk, if the volume is small enough. When data is lost, data entry must be repeated for the lost portion.

- ✔ Each backup should be either numbered or dated (or time -stamped if the backup happens more than once a day). Periodically test whether the storage medium selected is in good condition by restoring the backed up data onto the working database.

- ✔ Backed up data should be protected with a password or encrypted if there are significant security concerns. Data on removal storage media is more vulnerable to theft and tampering. Be sure those other storage media are kept in a secure location different from the location where the original data is stored.

24.4 Consolidate data

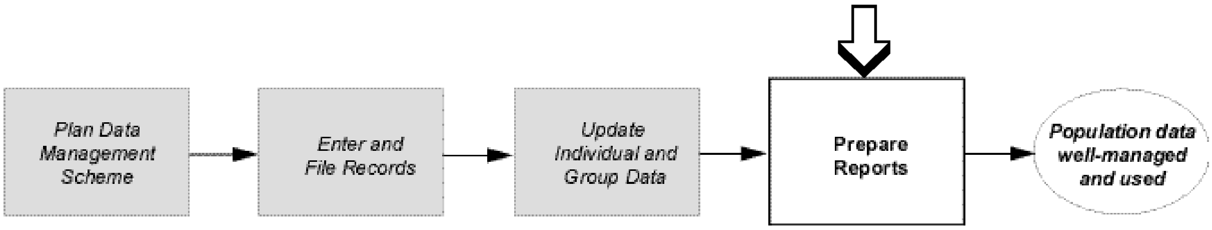
If data sets are kept at several locations (camps, NGO offices, field offices, etc.), or if a single office has more than one data set, the data may have to be consolidated periodically through a batch process. UNHCR standard database tools support data consolidation (import/export).

Plans for data consolidation should be designed early on in the operation, with carefully worked out data consolidation topology and business rules. A change in the middle of the operation can create confusion or result in inconsistent data.

It is essential to have a unified set of look-up tables (codes for the codified fields) for those data elements that are to be consolidated. Data can be moved by e-mail, FTP (Internet-based file transfer), or on a physical storage site, such as CD-R, CD-RW, Zip Disk, memory card, or a floppy diskette, if the data packet for each transfer is small enough. Data should be encrypted during transport to maintain confidentiality.

24.5 Keep records secure

While the data in an electronic database can be encrypted and password-protected, it can also be fairly easily copied, tampered with, and even posted on the Internet. Access to confidential registration data should therefore be carefully managed. Access to PCs in the data center should be restricted; and encryption, password protection, authenticated log-ons, and an audit trail for each record change should be used consistently.



25. Prepare Reports

Statistics on asylum-seekers, refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR are critical for planning, monitoring and evaluating refugee protection and field operations at the local, national and international level. UNHCR's mandate and responsibility to collect data are derived from the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees[21] as well as from the Statute of the Office[22].

Statistics cover both protection and assistance activities, and they have a significant external relations function. It is therefore imperative that the statistics are compiled in close consultation with the various sections of UNHCR, the host government and implementing partners. Statistics are an important tool for planning and monitoring, at both the field and Headquarters levels. When consistently collected and maintained over time, they provide an important and practical yardstick for tracking progress against objectives and indicators, for identifying trends and detecting anomalies.

Registration is a key source of statistical data. Population data may also be derived from sample surveys, estimates, counting (at the border, for instance), the national population census or various administrative sources (e.g., national population, foreigners' or asylum-seeker registers). Where possible, data from one source should be verified with information from other sources.

25.1 Prepare standard statistical reports

Population statistics cover issues such as population size, changes to the population (demographic, legal, administrative), population characteristics (type of population, origin, sex, age, current location, etc.) and critical events relating to the legal status of the population (asylum applications recognized, rejected, etc.). The minimum data collection standards for the purpose of international comparison and global reporting are set out in Section 6.8 of Chapter IV of the UNHCR Manual and in relevant internal UNHCR instructions[23].

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[21] "…(T)he Contracting States undertake to provide the Office of the High Commissioner in the appropriate form with information and statistical data requested concerning the condition of refugees, the implementation of this Convention …" (Article 35 on Cooperation of the national authorities with the United Nations).

[22] "…The High Commissioner shall provide for the protection of refugees falling under the competence of his Office by (…) obtaining from governments information concerning the number and conditions of refugees in their territories (…)." (Chapter II of the Statute of the Office of the UNHCR).

[23] See for instance IOM/73-FOM/69 dated 18 December 2002, which introduced a revised format for the reporting of resettlement statistics (RSR) and education statistics (ESR).

The Quarterly Statistical Report (QSR) and Annual Statistical Report (ASR)[24] are the official vehicles for reporting UNHCR's population statistics. These reports are used by the United Nations, other international organizations, national governments and NGOs, and provide the background for public information campaigns, press briefings, maps, etc. It is therefore essential that these reports are compiled as accurately as possible and submitted in a timely fashion.

Using **only** the ASR and QSR as the official sources for statistics will ensure consistency in reporting statistics and in concepts and terminology and obviate the need for duplicate reporting at the local level. The use of these standard statistical reports is also essential for monitoring global trends and for comparing information about countries who are hosting refugees from the same country of origin (the "situational approach").

In addition to the statistics required for international comparison and global reporting, UNHCR offices use a host of in-country statistics for national or local purposes. UNHCR's Population Data Unit can assist country operations in designing statistical formats for in-country use.

25.2 Prepare operational reports

Operational reports are the non-standard reports that are required for management purposes at the operational level. They generally provide information about the status of registration and/or information regarding the composition of the population.

Reports on the status of registration show, for example, the percentage of households photographed or issued with identity documents in each sub-section of a camp, or the percentage of households in different sub-sections whose records have been updated within the last six months, or who have expressed an intention to repatriate voluntarily.

Reports on the composition of the population show, for example, the number of households in each part of a camp headed by a single female with more than two children, or the number of male and female unaccompanied and separated children placed in foster homes in each sub-section of the camp. These reports are most frequently used to assess the needs of the population and the resources required to meet those needs.

[24] See Annex 16 for the Quarterly Statistical Report (QSR) and Annual Statistical Report (ASR).

Operational reports are key to ensuring active use of registration information within an operation. Wherever comprehensive and updated core registration data has been gathered and updated on the population, an initial answer can be found to a wide range of the information needs of the operation. The following is a sample list of operational reports which could be generated from registration data to support an active people-oriented and community-based approach by the operations team to the management of the refugee situation:

Where are persons with special protection and assistance needs living in the camp?

- List of persons with special protection and assistance needs, with name, sex, age and type of need, and sorted by type of need, or sorted by Section/Block/Group within the camp, or town and neighborhood.
- List of unaccompanied and separated children, with name, sex, age, name of foster family (where applicable) and address in camp or location.

How can we make the best use of this year's limited budget for replacement of shelter materials?

- List of households whose date of arrival was more than 5 years ago, with number of persons in family and shelter address, sorted by Section/Block/Group within the camp.
- Number of households living in the zones of the camp damaged by flooding earlier this year.

How many latrines should we have in each section of the camp?

- Statistical report: number of households and number of individuals, male and female, in each section and block of the camp.

What size of population do we need to plan for the next food distribution?

- List of households with names of male and female family representatives, indicating any no-shows at last distribution, and showing number of persons verified as physically present on last house check compared with total number registered in the household, sorted and sub-totalled by Section, Block and Group.

We know how many children are actually enrolled in school – but how many children <u>should</u> be enrolled?

- Statistical report: number of children, by sex, in age groups 5 to 7 years, 7 to 10 years and 11 to 18 years, by Section and Block.