

Through its Key Initiatives, UNHCR's Division of Programme Support and Management (DPSM) shares regular updates on interesting projects that produce key tools, practical guidance and new approaches aimed at moving UNHCR operations forward.



Kenya / Dadaab refugee camp / A SENS team is collecting nutritional data from a refugee family. Consisting of 4 people, as recommended by the SENS Guidelines, each member of the SENS team is responsible for some aspect of the data collection process, such as recording data, taking measurements, and testing for anaemia. / UNHCR / M. Lung'aho / 2011



Bangladesh / Women collecting water in Leda site. / UNHCR / M. Tondeur / 2012

SENS METHODOLOGY

UNHCR SENS is based on the internationally recognized SMART methodology for survey design and basic nutritional assessments but expands it to meet the specific requirements of refugee settings, which may vary significantly from "normal" settings in many ways. For instance, livelihood opportunities and access to food sources other than those provided in refugee camps, such as access to free primary health care services and clean water, can be limited.

The SENS *Guidelines* explain standardised techniques for collecting, analysing and presenting data on nutrition, but also health, food security and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). This information is collected at the household level. To measure trends over time, surveys must be replicable and use the same definitions and methodologies from year to year.

UNHCR Standardised Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) Guidelines and Technology

ESTABLISHING SOUND DATA AND RAPID RESPONSES

The new UNHCR Standardised Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) Guidelines provide UNHCR health and nutrition coordinators and partners with practical, step-by-step guidance on how to collect nutrition data to establish a standardised data collection procedure that also uses cutting-edge, streamlined mobile technologies. The data collected using SENS will then inform future programme direction and interventions.

Using UNHCR SENS Guidelines in field operations will promote improved monitoring of nutrition indexes, as nutrition continues to be a concern in most refugee contexts. UNHCR recommends the continuous measurement of refugees' nutrition levels, including anaemia, so as to react in a timely manner to problems and support assessment and programme planning in other sectors.

A SENS REPORT INCLUDES INFORMATION ON:

- Levels of malnutrition and key health indicators in children
- Levels of anaemia in children and women
- Infant and young child feeding practices
- Access to food at the household level
- Access to safe drinking water, toilets and hygiene practices at the household level
- Access to and use of mosquito nets at the household level

MOBILE DEVICES: ENSURING CONSISTENT, QUALITY DATA

To improve data quality and facilitate data sharing, UNHCR recommends the use of mobile data collection in the field. Experiences have shown that using smartphones improves the quality of the nutrition survey data collected. Advantages over conventional paper-based systems include:

- User-friendly and handy
- Collecting and digitising data at the source makes data entry more efficient and precise, leading to improved data quality
- Improved error control with pre-coded ranges and restrictions tailored to the survey's needs
- Easier and timely monitoring of teams' performance
- Seamless integration with Excel
- Results are obtained within days, rather than weeks
- Environmentally friendly
- No mobile internet connection required at the time of collection
- Standardised SENS questionnaires are readily programmed and available for mobile data collection and can be reused in any setting.

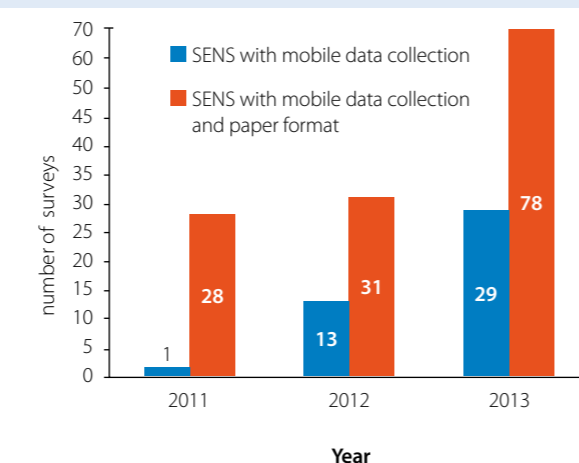
To use mobile technology for data collection in surveys, UNHCR has chosen smartphones with Android platform using the Open Data Kit (ODK) application for data collection. Technical support for the field is available from the Public Health Section at UNHCR Headquarters.



Bangladesh / Preparing fish at Kutupalong refugee camp. / UNHCR / M. Tondeur / 2012

The SENS methodology allows UNHCR and partners to describe the nutritional health of a refugee population at a given point in time and through the years, allowing for the monitoring of health and progress. The use of new technology in data collection improves data quality and reliability. This allows UNHCR and partners to react swiftly to urgent problems and strategise for medium and long-term nutrition responses.

Number of UNHCR SENS Conducted (2011-2013)



Updates from the field

REDUCING ANAEMIA AND MALNUTRITION IN BURKINA FASO

Nutritional data collected using SENS in February 2013 detected high levels of anaemia in all camps in Burkina Faso and the high incidence of acute malnutrition in Goudebou camp. As a result of these findings, UNHCR began blanket feeding with SUPER CEREAL plus, a nutritive, porridge-like corn soya blend, in Goudebou camp with a view to improve the nutrition situation for children aged 6 to 59 months. Another follow up action to the SENS data is the up-coming roll out of blanket feeding with the micronutrient powder Nutromix in all camps.



Kenya / Dadaab refugee camp / Somali refugee at Ifo Camp in Dadaab answers questions regarding mosquito nets for the malaria survey portion of the survey. / UNHCR / S. Hoibak / November 2010

WHAT COMES NEXT?

Building on the successful implementation of the SENS Guidelines, DPSM will:

- Disseminate Version 2 of the SENS Guidelines in French
- Translate SENS Guidelines, questionnaire and tools into other languages.
- Conduct SENS training in French
- Extend mobile data collection to more operations
- Evaluate mobile data collection impact on quality and cost-efficiency
- Adapt SENS Guidelines to urban settings

MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please visit: www.sens.unhcr.org

To contact the DPSM's Nutrition Unit directly: HQPHN@unhcr.org