



Connectivity for Refugees - Digital Access and Inclusion

Operational Checklist for Practitioners

Based on UNHCR's own experience in undertaking Connectivity for Refugees interventions, and those of partners and third parties, this checklist has been developed to support focal points in operations to identify actions and steps that support forcibly displaced persons' digital access and inclusion.

COORDINATION

1. Are inter-agency coordination mechanisms in place to support digital and inclusion efforts amongst humanitarian aid and development actors?
2. Are mobile network operators, and other relevant local stakeholders playing an active role in coordination structures around communicating with communities or related themes?
3. Is there a focal point in the operation for issues relating to digital access and inclusion?
4. Has a multi-functional team been established to address the issue? If so does this include:
 - a. Cash Based Intervention / Financial Inclusion / Livelihoods Colleagues
 - b. Registration and Identity Management Colleagues
 - c. Protection (specifically Community-based Protection)
 - d. ICT
5. Have key focal points been established for:
 - a. Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) and other internet service providers?
 - b. Telecommunication Regulators?
 - c. Inter-agency coordination amongst Humanitarian Aid and Development actors?

LEGAL AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

6. Has an analysis been undertaken to determine whether legal and regulatory environments facilitate or constrain access to SIM cards and/or mobile devices?

Further resources:

<http://www.unhcr.org/innovation/displaced-and-disconnected/>

7. Are there legal and regulatory barriers to financial inclusion through digital channels?
8. Has the operation started systematically engaging with the telecommunications regulator?
9. Has the regulatory environment been assessed to account for other barriers / opportunities to digital access for instance a 'social media' tax or provision of regulatory sandboxes?

COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY NEEDS & USE

10. Have you conducted an assessment of the communities' communication practices – ideally through an information and communications needs assessment – to determine preferred channels?

Further resources:

<http://www.unhcr.org/innovation/information-ecosystems/>

<http://www.unhcr.org/innovation/information-and-communication-needs-tool/>

11. Does the team have an understanding of refugees' phone ownership and access? Does this include:
- a. A breakdown based on age, gender and demographic including people with disabilities?
 - b. A breakdown between smartphone / feature phone / basic phone access / ownership?
 - c. Indications of mobile phone sharing practices among the community?

Inclusion in National Frameworks for Universal Access to Telecommunications

While interventions supporting connectivity for refugees can take many forms, priority should be given to those that seek to include refugees in national systems, in line with the Global Compact on Refugees, to support their self-reliance.

12. Has the team explored existing initiatives in-country supporting universal access to connectivity?
13. If the operation is pursuing cash-based assistance, has an assessment been undertaken regarding use of mobile / digital channels for delivery?

CONNECTIVITY TECHNOLOGY

14. Have MNOs been engaged and recovery plans / coverage maps requested for key locations?
15. Has any cellular connectivity mapping been undertaken to determine the levels of 2G/3G/4G network coverage in the refugee hosting locations, and which MNOs are providing such services? Does this include:
- a. Network Reliability
 - b. Power Infrastructure and Availability
 - c. Availability of backhaul services such as fibre
16. Has an evaluation been undertaken to determine the suitability of commercial providers as partners to support connectivity for refugees?

Further resources:

<http://www.unhcr.org/innovation/collaborating-for-connectivity/>

<https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/work-mobile-network-operators-lessons-tanzania/>

17. Has the telecommunications regulator been approached regarding these plans to support universal access in this location? Does this include:
- a. Provisions for 'Community Networks' including allocation of spectrum

Further resources:

<http://www.unhcr.org/innovation/community-led-connectivity/>

- b. Coverage obligations in licensing requirements
 - c. Initiatives supporting digital literacy or wider inclusion (inc. gender and disability)
18. Are wifi access points (APs) being provided? If so, do they:
- a. Have clear and defined terms of use in accessible language?
 - b. Have robust standard operating procedures regarding capture of data through the AP both solicited through questionnaires and through metadata?

LINKS WITH OFFICE CONNECTIVITY

19. Has planning been undertaken with ICT colleagues to understand the potential links between corporate connectivity services for UNHCR staff and connectivity services for refugees?
20. Has UNHCR (or partner / other) erected infrastructure that could support telecommunications services i.e. powered mast / tower for telecommunications purposes?

COMMUNITY LEVEL ACCESS

- 21. Have community level facilities that provide access to internet / computers i.e. connected centre, community facility, youth centre etc. been mapped?
- 22. Have terms of use policies and governance modalities been developed for these facilities?
- 23. Where facilities exist, is traffic prioritisation or content filtering in place at communal facilities i.e. blocking illicit content?
- 24. Has a training / capacity building strategy been developed to enhance community ownership?

PARTNERS

- 25. Are partners undertaking digital access inclusion projects for forcibly displaced persons?
- 26. Has UNHCR included any aspects relating to connectivity for refugees within its partnership agreements?
- 27. Are there other humanitarian aid and development programmes / projects in-country supporting digital access and inclusion that could be leveraged?
- 28. Has a scoping been undertaken to explore opportunities to tap into development activities / financing directed towards digital access and inclusion?

DIGITAL TOOLS

- 29. Has an analysis been done to explore the ways in which connectivity for refugees could support existing UNHCR operations utilising community-facing digital tools?
- 30. Did this analysis cover potential pilot projects from UNHCR or partners?
- 31. Has the impact of communities' levels of digital access been considered for digital engagement mechanisms such as call centres, two-way SMS or Whatsapp trees?
- 32. Has a plan been developed to ensure equitable access across Age, Gender and Diversity?

Further resources:

<http://www.unhcr.org/innovation/10-considerations-for-sms/>

DIGITAL LITERACY AND ONLINE SAFETY

- 33. Are there activities ongoing or planned to enhance communities' digital literacy or wider inclusion (inc. gender and disability)?
- 34. Have there been reports relating to refugee safety or of a protection nature relating to individual's online activity?
- 35. Is information being provided to communities regarding their conduct and safety online?

RESOURCES

- 36. Have resources been identified for Connectivity initiatives (this may include direct implementation budget, human resourcing, external expertise etc.)?
- 37. Has the operation considered a sustainability strategy for initiatives supporting digital access and inclusion?

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, please visit the Connectivity for Refugees website, containing how-to guides, tools and templates: <http://www.unhcr.org/innovation/connectivity-for-refugees/>

For additional support please contact UNHCR Innovation Service: hqconref@unhcr.org