



UNHCR DECENTRALISED LIVELIHOOD EVALUATIONS SYNTHESIS SUMMARY (2019)

Based on five country studies: Djibouti, Malaysia, Mauritania, Senegal and South Sudan

Key findings

1. Livelihood activities provide important protection and psychosocial benefits, but the activities were generally small in scale and had limited impact on persons of concern (PoC) livelihood outcomes and income.
2. UNHCR is, in some cases, missing opportunities to advocate for funding and for PoC access to services, which would have a bigger impact than small-scale livelihood programming.
3. In the transition to implement the 2019-2023 Concept Note and the forthcoming strategy on livelihoods and economic inclusion (LEI), key livelihood staff are still needed in strategic roles in operations, as is enhanced monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity.
4. UNHCR is highly knowledgeable and well-regarded in its understanding of PoC needs and capacities and well-suited to advocate and build capacity among partners around PoC rights and economic inclusion.

Evaluation Purpose

This document provides the recommendations from the 2019 livelihood programme evaluations conducted in five countries—**Djibouti, Malaysia, Mauritania, Senegal, South Sudan**—and builds on findings from the 2018 Evaluation of UNHCR's Livelihoods Strategies and Approaches.¹

UNHCR commissioned this multi-country livelihood evaluation to achieve two purposes:

(1) to contribute evidence to inform UNHCR's global strategy development and its implementation in the selected country operations (CO), and;

(2) to provide recommendations that will lead to enhanced economic inclusion of persons of concern (PoC) to UNHCR globally, by assisting the organisation to develop further guidance on the approach to refugee livelihoods, self-reliance, and economic inclusion.

The primary audiences are UNHCR CO, regional bureau and stakeholders in Geneva headquarters (HQ), including the Division of Resilience and Solutions (DRS), Division of International Protection (DIP), and Division of Strategic Planning and Results (DSPR).

Please refer to the fuller **Synthesis Report** for more description of the key findings.

Overall conclusion:

UNHCR should continue to shift away from the traditional small-scale and/or low-impact livelihood programming in many operations toward a facilitation and advocacy role, mainstreaming the new LEI strategy and removing administrative hindrances to its rollout; UNHCR should strategically reassess the global livelihood portfolio of UNHCR's programming and partnerships based on context and enabling environment.

Recommendations for Regional Bureaux

1. Analysing context and phasing out of traditional activities

- RB, with DRS, should use the context typology tool as a guide to strategically reassess the UNHCR livelihood and economic inclusion (LEI) portfolio, both regionally and globally, and make recommendations to CO for shifting and adapting activities, resources, and staffing accordingly.
 - In this process of assessing the CO in their respective regions, RB should also build CO capacity to assess whether their operational context (including PoC population profile) is ready for an activity and to what extent the activity will be scalable or sustainable in the long term.
- Where UNHCR should be phasing out of traditional activities, RB, with DRS support, should build CO capacity to develop transition and handover plans to ensure uninterrupted livelihood programming support.

2. Developing revised CO strategies and operational plans

- RB should encourage CO to align all units/functions under a cohesive advocacy strategy that contributes to the strategic coordination, advocacy, and M&E objectives of improving refugee LEI and self-reliance. RB, with DRS support, should provide change management (i.e., consultants) and technical support to senior management as needed.
 - RB should provide guidance to CO to use their revised strategic plans (see previous recommendation) to develop corresponding multi-year, multi-partner LEI operational plans with budgets, which should be developed in partnership with relevant national stakeholders, including Government, where possible.
 - RB should ensure that CO have the mid- to high-level LEI staffing expertise necessary to advocate on behalf of partners to secure livelihood policy and resources.
- RB support of CO is likely needed as the CO collaborate with key partners to develop joint communication and advocacy strategies that aim to raise public awareness of PoC rights. Support and coordination with protection colleagues at CO, RB, and DIP levels is also necessary to ensure coherent messaging.

Recommendations for HQ and relevant divisions

1. DRS: Mainstreaming key concepts of the new LEI strategy

- DRS should develop a plan to strengthen RB LEI capacity, where needed, and a dissemination plan to continue to mainstream the key concepts of the forthcoming LEI strategy. This ensures RB are equipped to provide technical support to CO during this strategy transition and the CO senior management and field level staff are aware of the vision of the new LEI strategy. Dissemination may include a series of webinars, communications, etc.
 - To foster cross-operation capacity building around the new strategy, DRS, with RB support, should identify and disseminate learnings from existing livelihood good practices and experiences to be used as guidance for others: e.g., create global/regional information sharing fora where champion CO can share their good practices with other CO.
- DRS should develop guidance for RB/CO on various topics, which may arise from the good-practice sharing noted in above, and may include:
 - LEI advocacy strategy options for CO operating in fragile environments and where government services and systems are very limited.
 - How to strengthen the enabling environment through strategic (operational) partnerships with development partners and the private sector.
 - How CO may use the UNHCR name and reputation to petition donors for funds for recommended partners known to operate in line with UNHCR's LEI strategies.
- DRS should develop a memo that outlines expectations around LEI outcome/impact indicator measurement in the transition period while the global strategy is rolled out.

2. DSPR: providing capacity and support

- DSPR, with DRS and RB support, should develop M&E systems and capacity at CO level that aligns with their strategic and advocacy objectives. CO need capacity and guidance to monitor individual and systems-level indicators related to PoC well-being, employment readiness, and inclusion. This work requires a realistic budget and training of CO staff. To develop CO capacity, DSPR should consider developing an online course for relevant staff. Additionally, an HQ-supported platform is needed that protects PoC personal data and allows CO to share data with partners as a technical service.
- DSPR should proceed with changing the annual planning and budget to a multi-year cycle, and consider eliminating sectoral funding caps. These changes are critical for UNHCR's new role as facilitator and strategic partner in LEI.

ⁱ TANGO International. 2018. Evaluation of UNHCR's Livelihoods Strategies and Approaches: Global Report December 2018. <https://www.unhcr.org/5c51a0774.pdf>. The 2018 livelihood case studies include India, Rwanda, Turkey, Ghana, and Costa Rica.