

UNHCR COUNTRY STRATEGY EVALUATION: ZAMBIA

FINAL REPORT
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UNHCR Evaluation Service

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Table of contents

Executive summary	8
1. Introduction to the evaluation purpose, scope and methodology	17
1.1 Evaluation purpose and timing	17
1.2 Evaluation scope	17
1.3 Audience and stakeholders	18
1.4 Evaluation team	18
1.5 Methodological approach	18
2. Context	27
2.1 The Zambian country context	27
2.2 The situation of persons of concern in Zambia	31
2.3 Operational context	34
3. Findings	35
3.1 Introduction	35
3.2 ToC outcome statements	35
3.3 KEQ 1: Achievement of results	36
3.4 KEQ 2: Relevance and sustainability of the UNHCR Country Strategy	56
3.5 KEQ 3: COVID-19 implications and responses	60
3.6 KEQ 4: Alignment of the Country Strategy	64
3.7 KEQ 5: Opportunities for leveraging further support	69
3.8 KEQ 6: Lessons learned	74
4. Conclusions	76
5. Recommendations	77
6. Annexes	81
6.1 Annex 1: Terms of Reference	81
6.2 Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix	96
6.3 Annex 3: Bibliography	96

List of figures

Figure 1	Zambia CSE Theory of Change	21
Figure 2	Population of persons of concern in Zambia 1996-2019	33
Figure 3	Zambia COVID-19 Statistics February 2020 - June 2021.....	61

List of tables

Table 1	Number of FGDs by cohort and location/settlement.....	24
Table 2	Attendance in FGDs conducted for the Zambia CSE	24
Table 3	Actual expenditure per programme area 2016- 2020.....	55
Table 4	Distribution of remote learning materials per settlement.....	63

List of acronyms

AAH	Africa Action Help
AGD	Age Gender and Diversity
CBI	Cash Based Intervention
CCR	Caritas Czech Republic
CDF	(UN) Capital Development Fund
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CoR	Office of the Commissioner for Refugees
CPG	Cooperation Partner Group
CRI	Core Relief Item
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CSE	Country Strategy Evaluation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DaO	Delivering as One
DMMU	Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit
DNRPC	Department of National Registration, Passports and Citizenship
ECW	Education Cannot Wait
EQA	Evaluation Quality Assurance
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GRZ	Government of the Republic of Zambia
HDN	Humanitarian Development Nexus
ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMSC	Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee
IOM	International Office of Migration
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
KEQ	Key Evaluation Question
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
MCDSS	Ministry of Community Services and Social Development
MYF	Multi-Year Funding
MYP	Multi-Year (strategic) Plans (UNHCR)
MYMPPSS	Multi-year Multi-partner Protection and Solutions Strategy
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
NDP	National Development Plan
ODK	Open Data Kit
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PWSN	Person/s With Specific Needs
PMT	Programme Management Team
RBM	Results Based Management
RBSA	Regional Bureau for Southern Africa
RC	Resident Coordinator
RO	Refugee Officer
SADC	Southern African Development Community

SDPF	(UN) Sustainable Development Partnership Framework
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
ToC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WVI-Z	World Vision International Zambia

Executive summary

Background

Zambia has a long, regionally and internationally respected history of providing refuge to people fleeing crisis and in need of a safe haven and protection. This fundamental position of welcome has been a consistent theme of Zambian policy for more than 50 years. It was in this spirit that Zambia became in 2017 one of the first countries to adopt the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), which preceded the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). Zambia's National Roadmap for the implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (2019–2021)¹ was framed on the CRRF. A major contributor to results is the foundational position of the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) regarding provision of land and the principle of non-refoulement; this principle is comprehensively adhered to by the GRZ and forms the basis for UNHCR's work in Zambia and its effective protection and assistance measures.

Zambia hosts the longest-standing refugee settlement in Africa, at Mayukwayukwa. It was established in 1966 and UNHCR has been actively engaged in the country since that time. As part of its 2020 workplan, UNHCR's Evaluation Service commissioned an independent evaluation team to conduct a Zambia country strategy evaluation for the period 2015 to 2020.

The purpose of this forward-looking evaluation is to generate evidence to inform UNHCR's future operational planning and strategy in Zambia; to leverage further effective inclusion and prioritization of refugees for the planning cycle of the next Sustainable Development Partnership Framework; and to support the articulation of the Eighth National Development Plan of the GRZ. The evaluation further aims to provide inputs into UNHCR Zambia's multi-year planning strategy beyond 2022.

The evaluation aimed to address three core areas of inquiry:

- results achieved in the areas of Protection and Solutions, and the factors informing or impeding those processes;
- the relevance and alignment of the UNHCR Country Strategy to the current and evolving needs of refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR in the light of evolving contextual factors; and
- the opportunities to leverage UNHCR's strategic influence.

The evaluation covered the period 2015 to 2020 during which fundamental global strategy changes occurred. These included the introduction of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015), the CRRF (2016), and the GCR (2018). The UNHCR Zambia Multi-year Multi-partner Protection and Solutions Strategy (MYMPPSS 2019–2021) was developed in response to the GCR and the CRRF, and represents an operational shift in identifying a clearly articulated strategic pathway for UNHCR compared with previous years.

¹ The National Roadmap outlines six areas of focus for government-led, multi-stakeholder responses in Zambia: i) admissions and rights, ii) emergency response, iii) inclusion, iv) self-reliance, v) solutions, and vi) root causes. Sectors of priority include education, health, energy and environment, livelihoods, water and sanitation, and security.

As the principal articulation of the Country Strategy, the MYMPPSS takes into consideration different policy frameworks and planning documents such as: the National Roadmap for the implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (2019–2021), the UN Sustainable Development Partnerships Framework (UNSDPF 2020),² the UNHCR (Global) Strategic Directions (2017–2021),³ and the UNHCR Country Operation Plans for Zambia (COPs), which are annual plans that support pillars of the overall strategy. There is considerable interconnection of the MYMPPSS with the CRRF and the GRZ's National Roadmap, and to a strong but lesser degree with the UNSDPF. This interconnectedness is both a strength and a challenge.

This evaluation is the first formal substantive review and opportunity to test various elements of the country strategy. The findings and recommendations are therefore put forward as suggestions for adaptation based on the first couple of years' roll-out of the MYMPPSS, with a view to strengthen UNHCR's operational planning and programmatic approach to achieving protection and durable solutions for persons of concern⁴ in Zambia.

Findings

Results achieved

Major assumptions underpinning the MYMPPSS have not held as intended. These relate to coordination and partnerships, national ownership, a conducive policy framework, and adequate funding. Because they have not held, these assumptions have in essence become risks which UNHCR should mitigate going forward. The advent of the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly constrained delivery of results. Despite these constraining factors, UNHCR has endeavoured to deliver on its refugee protection mandate with logistical and technical support from UNHCR Headquarters (HQ) and the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (RBSA).

Results achieved in the areas of protection and assistance, inclusion and durable solutions are mixed. While protection and assistance register positive results at the operational level within the limited means available, they do so less at the policy level because of significant legal restrictions on movement and employment. Inclusion and durable solutions struggle because of serious constraints in the feasibility of supporting voluntary repatriation, resettlement to third countries (only open for specific categories of refugees), and legal impediments to local integration. Progress is stronger on the operational side, but implementation is hindered by coordination challenges within the UN Country Team (UNCT) and with the GRZ, as well as by administrative complexities (inclusion into national planning processes) and funding constraints.

² UNSDPF Zambia, 2020, [United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework Annual Report 2020 | United Nations in Zambia](#)

³ UNHCR Strategic Directions (2017–2021), [5894558d4.pdf \(unhcr.org\)](#)

⁴ Persons (also referred to as "Population") of Concern (PoC) to UNHCR are refugees, returnees, stateless people, internally displaced persons, others of Concern and asylum seekers, see e.g.: <https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/4a01417d6/unhcr-statistical-online-population-database-general-notes.html>. The report applies this understanding in line with the PoC definition in the UNHCR Glossary from 2006: "A generic term used to describe all persons whose protection and assistance needs are of interest to UNHCR. These include refugees under the 1951 Convention, persons who have been forced to leave their countries as a result of conflict or events seriously disturbing public order, asylum seekers, returnees, stateless persons, and, in some situations, internally displaced persons. UNHCR's authority to act on behalf of persons of concern other than refugees is based on General Assembly and ECOSOC resolutions." <https://www.refworld.org/es/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain/opendocpdf.pdf?reldoc=y&docid=5d82b8fa4>.

The GRZ has ratified important human rights and refugee-related international conventions and treaties. Overall, the national legal framework presents a mixed picture, with some positive steps made during the past five years, most notably in the establishment of the 2017 Refugee Act, which lays the foundation for refugee status determination procedures and the right to self-employment. However, explicit GRZ reservations against key provisions of the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol concerning the right to employment (Article 17.2), education (Article 22.1), the freedom of movement (Article 26) and travel documents (Article 28), have had severe consequences for refugees' abilities to become more self-reliant. Notably, legal obstacles to the right to work and to freedom of movement have hampered refugees' opportunities to economic inclusion. The lack of coordination and of policy and legal harmonization between the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees and the Immigration Department, both under the Ministry of Home Affairs, regularly leads to avoidable arrests, detentions and/or relocation of refugees to settlements.

Protection against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) has had some success in terms of sensitization and awareness-raising, leading to increased reporting of cases but it is substantially impeded by structural and cultural factors. Such factors include: familial pressure to seek payment from perpetrators in SGBV cases, acceptance of SGBV as a regular occurrence, and lack of funding particularly to support livelihood activities, as well as aforementioned legal constraints on the right to work and movement.

UNHCR acknowledges that "the level of assistance being provided to refugees in Zambia remains rudimentary".⁵ It concedes that basic needs of refugees in protracted situations in Meheba and Mayukwayukwa are not adequately met and that their living conditions "are close to an emergency". Cash-based interventions (CBIs) in Zambia are in principle well designed and have won the cooperation of the GRZ and service providers. The digitalization of money transfers to refugees is a significant achievement for UNHCR. However, the CBI impact on the lives of refugees remained limited. Components for socioeconomic inclusion (livelihoods) are well conceptualized and implemented, but due to budget constraints only cater for a limited number of persons of concern,⁶ thus limiting the overall impact on the lives of refugees. Progress regarding the integration of refugee matters has been made at the programmatic level (GRZ National Roadmap, UNSDPF Addendum), and to a lesser degree in government planning at national and district levels.

Relevance and sustainability of the UNHCR Country Strategy

The existing strategy as represented by the MYMPPSS is acutely relevant to all persons of concern but is not necessarily sustainable in all its aspects; nor does it speak as strongly to longer-term development planning or changing context realities, including the increasingly long cycle of refugee movements (short term, to an average stay of 17 years and sometimes for life), as it does to meeting shorter-term immediate needs. The most challenging aspect of the strategy is the weighting between the areas of Protection and Solutions. It is the assessment of the evaluation consultants that the MYMPPSS delivers effectively on Protection within resource windows available but creates unrealistic expectations of Solutions, creating potential barriers to the achievement of Protection outcomes.

COVID-19 implications and response

The COVID-19 pandemic had an immediate and wide-ranging negative impact on the life of persons of concern. The government suspended several key services in the refugee settlements and transit centres as part of the COVID-19 mitigation measures (including status determination processes,

⁵ UNHCR Zambia, 2020, Operational Plan, p. 16

issuance of birth certificates and alien cards upon which access to key government services depends). Livelihood activities were also fundamentally hampered as movements outside the camps were restricted, leading together with other impacts to worsening food conditions within the settlements. UNHCR, partly in conjunction with the GRZ, the UNCT and other partners, reacted quickly to mitigate the most severe impacts by providing immediate assistance for livelihoods, education, SGBV prevention and health. In a positive step the UNHCR Country Office reopened its Mayukwayukwa office to be closer to persons of concern.

Alignment of the Country Strategy

All key strategy documents (global: UN/UNHCR; national: GRZ, UNHCR Zambia and the UNCT) were produced in an intense period of reform between 2016 and 2020. The MYMPPSS and the GRZ National Roadmap, published in the same period, are both succinctly worded and clearly crafted strategies that are well aligned to the CRRF. The other key GRZ strategy document, the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP),⁷ acknowledges many of the concerns around refugee response matters, and implies inclusion of refugees as marginalized persons, despite only mentioning refugees superficially. This gap, and the intention of inclusivity, is acknowledged in the later Roadmap. The UNHCR Annual Operational Plans are extremely detailed documents that describe how the MYMPPSS is to be operationalized in more concrete, practical intervention terms. The Operational Plans embed mid-year progress reports on implementational challenges, and target outputs at the local level, as well as on resource and staffing needs. They are, however, very specialized, working documents and are not written or formatted for an external audience. The UNSDPF (2016–2021), amended in 2020 to reflect the 7NDP, is not aligned with the CRRF in the same comprehensive, explicit and concise way as the MYMPPSS, the Roadmap or Operational Plans. The UNSDPF embeds refugees specifically in four of its five Results Groups and empowers UNHCR as Chair of the Humanitarian–Development Nexus (HDN) Thematic Working Group. However, refugees as a cohort are not mentioned in the UNSDPF Results Matrix. Like the 7NDP, it is assumed that refugees are included in the language of vulnerable persons but it is not possible to disaggregate achievements. The overall number of objectives in the collective documents is daunting, and systematic integrated reporting is currently not viable. Despite the MYMPPSS being the key UNHCR country strategy document, the level of mutual dependency between stakeholders for success, and the overlapping of implementation strategies and plans means it is challenging to establish accountability for UNHCR-specific results areas.

Opportunities for leveraging further support

As the focal point on refugee policy and response, UNHCR's strategic approach should ideally be leveraging support for protection, effective inclusion and solutions across a range of institutional relationships including the RBSA, the GRZ, UN family agencies, the international community (donors) and the private sector. While this has been happening informally and in an ad hoc manner, it has not been systematic or measurable, and where opportunities have been available, they have not all been leveraged effectively. Concerning strategic partnerships and advocacy for refugee rights, protection, inclusion and assistance, there is a lack of direction and coherence that is inhibiting the momentum to deliver this support.

⁷ Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ), 2017, Seventh National Development Plan 2017–2021, <https://www.mndp.gov.zm/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/7NDP.pdf>

Key lessons learned

A key lesson is to create coherence between budget/resourcing realities and viable expectations as articulated in the MYMPPSS approach, and to consolidate a well-articulated approach with a clear theory of change and results matrix that can embed multi-year planning targets and milestones into a systematic reporting system. Supporting this change with an advocacy strategy to engage stakeholders will create an enabling environment in which vision, operations, resources, regional and political realities, and agency collaboration can work together to advance the refugee response in Zambia.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: The MYMPPSS (and the complementary GRZ National Roadmap), driven by the GCR and the CRRF and aligned to global commitments, represent a dramatic and very positive shift in the Country Strategy. The strategy is acutely relevant to all persons of concern. The strategy and its application though do not speak as strongly to longer-term development planning or changing context realities as its potential might allow. The main inhibiting factors to the achievement of results in Protection and Solutions are: i) the increasingly long cycle of refugee movements and concomitant resourcing pressure to attend to basic needs of refugees for longer durations; ii) donor reluctance to support direct government funding; iii) limitations in establishing a functional legal framework and reforms that encourage refugee inclusion and self-reliance.

Conclusion 2: The ambition of the strategy is repeatedly thwarted by unmet resourcing needs exacerbated by the lack of alignment between operational and strategic ambition. Refugee basic needs and services consume most of the operational budget. Durable solutions are poorly funded comparatively, while the delivery of the strategy is highly dependent for its success on the inputs and response from other stakeholders. Advocacy efforts are not based on a clear strategy or approach and the opportunities to advocate for refugee rights/needs are not utilized to their full potential.

Conclusion 3: There is an imbalance in the weighting between Protection, which is driven by UNHCR, and Solutions, which is dependent upon third-party cooperation. The MYMPPSS delivers effectively on protection within resource windows available. Protection assistance achievements are noted with the provision of basic needs including food, shelter, access to health, education, skills training, SGBV protection, COVID-19 pandemic response and support to the especially vulnerable with, however, limitations in scope in most areas due to funding constraints. These constraints apply also to livelihoods activities and economic inclusion, and are here aggravated by as yet unresolved severe legal constraints (on movement and employment). Unrealistic expectations among refugees regarding resettlement as the prime avenue for solutions further inhibit the potential impact of protection and economic inclusion programmes as refugees do not feel sufficiently incentivized to fully embrace economic opportunities.

Conclusion 4: The overall UNHCR country strategy is underpinned by the commitment of the GRZ to the principles of refugee protection as evidenced by the assumption of the CRRF and the acknowledgement by the GRZ of the CRRF as being a driver of government strategy, objectives and engagement. However, there is no high-level institutional platform for engagement among UNHCR, GRZ and other key stakeholders on refugee response issues through which policy, legal reform and other bottlenecks can be addressed. UNHCR is hobbled in its ambition to leverage strategic influence because platforms for high-level engagement with government do not exist; opportunities like the chairing of the HDN Thematic Working Group under the UNSDPF are under-exploited; and because advocacy, while recognized as a critical tool to progress reforms, policy and support is currently ad hoc with no clearly defined strategy. The understanding of the HDN is still emerging and subject to wide and often contradictory interpretations. The UNSDPF does not provide for disaggregated results with

regards to refugees. The HDN platform is an opportunity to bring cohesion to the HDN concept and vision for Zambia as explained in the recommendations.

Conclusion 5: Where Delivering as One/OneUN works well, as demonstrated with the Mantapala Settlement response, it can deliver results of significance. A challenge is in maintaining that trajectory of collaboration and in sustaining the financial commitment and interest of partners over the longer term.

Conclusion 6: The MYMPPSS is not complemented by a theory of change or by a logframe or results matrix that provides for the systematic tracking of inputs against outcomes or progress against milestones. (The GRZ's Roadmap is similarly challenged.) Tracking of results and impact must be supported by appropriate tools and skills.

Conclusion 7: COVID-19 challenges have been met head-on with proactive, inclusive interventions including an early, rapid multi-stakeholder assessment, community information and behaviour modification campaigns, and practical support including masks, sanitizers and soap, and amended implementation practices. No cases or deaths have been reported in any of the settlements. COVID-19 has however exacerbated the already restricted movements of individuals, impacting on income and employment, and increasing dependency.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Align strategy and contextual and operational realities, and ensure multi-year strategic plans prioritize financially achievable interventions

Key audience: UNHCR Representative, DSPR, and the RBSA

Suggested action:

It is recommended that operational planning be scaled back to reflect realistically available resourcing and that planning prioritizes core needs and investments on the one hand, and desired objectives as a supplemental priority on the other. Actual gaps will be then seen in terms of core needs rather than unmet objectives. With multi-year planning, it is intended that forward planning will be simplified, and more flexible and annual operational reporting can then more accurately reflect achievements. Logistical updates that will support more efficient operations include:

- update of the BIMS database to help verify provision of assistance and other matters;
- prioritization of infrastructure upgrades;
- continued utilization of rapid multi-stakeholder assessments for short-term response and to inform the advocacy strategy.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen UNHCRs monitoring capacity in Zambia and develop a complementary results matrix that embeds measurable targets and systematic reporting for the upcoming multi-year strategic plans

Key audience: UNHCR Representative, DSPR and the RBSA

Suggested actions:

1. The UNHCR Zambia Country Team should conduct a review of the MYMPPSS (in the context of the GRZ RoadMap, 8NDP, UNSDPF and the recommendations in this report) to ensure the complementarity of the proposed theory of change as reflected in its seven results pillars and six high-level outcomes - properly reflect the strategic intents and operational capacity of UNHCR Zambia. A logical framework or results matrix inclusive of identified incremental, measurable output targets and milestones should be developed as a tool for tracking progress in the context of multi-year plans.

2. Capacity to undertake regular and systematic monitoring of progress and evaluation of results should be established, ideally through the establishment of a Monitoring Unit within the CO or – if budget or other constraints foreclose this option - through either the recruitment of a dedicated Monitoring and Reporting Officer, or through training/reskilling of programme staff.

Rationale: The Country Office should be in a position to adequately measure results, identify challenges, opportunities and emerging risks, and manage UNHCR Zambia inputs to the new results-based management (RBM) system. This would also facilitate accurate reporting under the GCR Indicator Framework, the UNSDPF Results Matrix, and the GRZ Roadmap – all of which would be key entry points to facilitate dialogue between UNHCR, the GRZ, and the UNCT on strategies for supporting refugee programmes in Zambia.

Recommendation 3: Establish a high-level platform of engagement as a key entry point with the government for deliberation on policy regulations, partnership and related matters on refugee response and durable solutions

Key audience: UNHCR Representative and the GRZ

Suggested actions:

1. A Strategic Policy Advisory Group (SPAG) - based on the model of the existing SPAG (on Resettlement) – should be established as the key entry point for engagement with the GRZ on refugee policy issues that require legislative, policy or other more formal consideration.

Rationale: UNHCR has well established lines and forms of cooperation with the GRZ at the mainly operational level through the COR and established committees. There is need for a high-level platform to become systematically engaged with the GRZ at the policy level making in order to better support the GRZ in its policy decision making process with regard to all matters related to refugees. This new SPAG should be pursued as this proposal is generally agreed among key stakeholders to be an important next step in driving the whole-of-government approach and in reconciling operational and policy issues. The proposal for the SPAG on Refugees is also reflective of the GRZ position that an active inter-ministerial committee remains critical to operationalizing the whole-of-government approach and to ensuring that there is widespread ownership of government commitment on response to persons of concern to UNHCR.

2. A key priority for UNHCRs engagement with the government should be the consolidation and conclusion of the legal framework reform process utilizing the HDN Thematic Working Group and proposed SPAG as key advocacy platforms.

Rationale: The conclusion of the legal framework reform is essential for both, UNHCR and GRZ, for UNHCR to be able to pursue its Strategic Objectives (SO) of the MYMPSS, particularly SO 4 (strengthening of livelihood opportunities) and SO 5 (durable solutions, including local integration), for the GRZ to be able to implement its 2016 UN Leaders' Summit on Refugees pledges (concluding local integration of Angolans & Rwandans and expanding this integration option to protracted Congolese refugees ; relaxing the encampment policy, and promote self-reliance). Options for progressing legal reform include the drafting of regulations pertinent to the 2017 Refugee Act (currently a work in progress) prior to its harmonization with the Immigration Act, or to pursue harmonization followed by the drafting of regulations applicable to the revised, harmonized legislation. The former government preferred the former approach. UNHCR has been engaged in advocacy through the provision of technical legal assistance and other measures to resolve the contradictions posed by the Refugee Act and the Immigration Act, both of which fall under the Ministry of Home Affairs, and both of which apply to refugees but provide for very different treatment. Such advocacy should continue but will be assisted

greatly by the implementation of complementary recommendations including those related to the SPAG, and the HDN Thematic Working Group.

Recommendation 4: Develop a clear, multi-tiered advocacy strategy and establish complementary communications capacity within the Country Office

Key audiences: UNHCR Zambia and the RBSA

Suggested actions:

1. It is recommended that, in partnership with the RBSA, the Country Office develops an advocacy strategy that articulates specific goals, audiences (including non-traditional partners), engagement modalities and means of assessing progress against results. This strategy should be reflective of the MYMPSS and be reviewed on a biannual basis, continually adapted to be responsive to emerging situations.
2. To effectively execute the advocacy strategy the communication and advocacy capacity within the Country Office should be strengthened, ideally through setting up an advocacy and communications unit – or if this is not feasible due to budget and other constraints - through either the recruitment of a dedicated Advocacy/Communications Officer, or through training/reskilling of programme staff. Together with a SPAG on refugees this up-scaling of the office's advocacy capacity would seriously strengthen the office's advocacy capacity and its leverage with GRZ and the UNCT.
3. Further, the RBSA should be tasked with leading on advocacy, regional dialogue and response to GCR Objectives (i), (iii) and (iv) in addition to supporting the reporting obligations under the GCR Indicator Framework.

Rationale: Advocacy is one of the key tools for UNHCR to leverage support of the GRZ and within the UN CT and therefore to being able to deliver on its Strategic Objectives. The lack of a clear and explicit advocacy strategy by the CO and the lack of respective dedicated office staff has been hampering the scope of the CO's advocacy efforts. Strategic, targeted advocacy through a dedicated plan for progress at the level of government policy and uptake will drive the intent to devolve more responsibility to the GRZ as reflected in the ToC outcome areas one, two and three. It can also drive policy reform momentum in a more specific way at the level of the National Development Planning processes and in particular at the input on human development concerns.

Recommendation 5: Leverage UNHCR's strategic advantage through effective leadership of the Humanitarian–Development Nexus Thematic Working Group in all aspects pertaining to refugees.

Key audience: UNHCR Representative as the Co-Chair of the HDN Thematic Working Group and the Resident Coordinator as the Head of the UNCT in Zambia.

Suggested actions:

1. UN Zambia's Humanitarian–Development Nexus (HDN) Thematic Working Group, a technical working group, chaired by UNHCR, should be empowered to lead on collaboration, cooperation, consultation and response on refugee policy determination. It should provide a centralized platform for proactive refugee inclusion in the UNSDPF and with the GRZ and other partners, beginning with an agreed working understanding of the humanitarian–development nexus approach and responsibility delineations.
2. The HDN Working Group shall also advise and support financial needs assessments and operational coordination involving multiple partners, and drive transparent discussions on issues of delineation or allocation of responsibilities and funding.
3. Actions to be taken by the HDN Working Group might include:

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- referral of matters to a high-level SPAG;
 - reflection on a common understanding of what the humanitarian–development nexus means for discrete agency responsibilities in the context of a more harmonized, collaborative approach to refugee issues in Zambia;
 - establish clarity on definitional baselines (for example: if children and descendants of refugees inherit that refugee status);
 - review the UNSDPF Results Matrix to reflect and disaggregate more effectively refugee response achievements.

Recommendation 6: Deepen and extend the engagement with the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) to help drive IT-led interventions

Key audiences are UNHCR Representative, UN Resident Coordinator, and the UNCDF

Suggested action:

It is recommended that the UNCDF be included in the HDN Thematic Working Group to mainstream work with refugees in areas of financial inclusion, digital finance, cash transfers and innovative solutions in the areas of livelihoods/agriculture, health, education, solar grids and digital health.

Recommendation 7: Consider redefining solutions (durable and interim/transitional) in the context of what is achievable in Zambia to bridge the gap with protection modalities, and to embrace these more fully

Key audience: UNHCR Representative and the RBSA

Suggested action:

It is recommended that UNHCR Zambia, with the help of the RBSA, reflect on the respective language and focus around Protection and Solutions in the MYMPPSS, mindful of inhibiting factors that apply to Solutions. A refreshed interpretation of Solutions in the next iteration of the MYMPPSS and/or the Multi-Year strategic Plans may reduce the expectation by refugees regarding resettlement to a third country while being realistic about the limitations regarding local integration and voluntary repatriation. The prioritization of budgetary allocations to livelihoods training and economic self-sufficiency, and the enhanced collaboration anticipated through the HDN forum will underpin these reorientation efforts.

Recommendation 8: Enable locally mobilized funds to be utilized locally in consultation with donors

Key audience is UNHCR Representative in consultation with the RBSA and UNHCR HQ (DER)

Suggested action:

It is recommended that, within agreed parameters, when locally based advocacy results in additional funding support for specific purposes, the mobilizer should ensure that investment is seen to have a locally driven outcome and is targeted back to the purpose for which funds have been contributed. This will build confidence in the commitment of UNHCR locally to deliver on plans and promises, and locally mobilized supporters will be able to relate to and see the dividends of their support directly. Where there is a mobilization split between local initiatives and support to the central budget, then that arrangement must be transparent.

1. Introduction to the evaluation purpose, scope and methodology

1.1 Evaluation purpose and timing

The purpose of this forward-looking evaluation is to generate timely evidence to inform UNHCR's future operational planning and strategy in Zambia; to leverage further effective inclusion and prioritization of refugees for the planning cycle of the next Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (SDPF), and to support the articulation of the Eighth National Development Plan (NDP). The evaluation further aims to provide inputs into UNHCR Zambia's multi-year planning strategy beyond 2022 and to inform the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (RBSA) and the Country Office on recommendations concerning strategic planning, capacity-building and expertise, as well as external engagement/advocacy and partnerships.

The evaluation was conducted between February and July 2021, soon after the completion of a decentralization process of UNHCR's seven regional bureaux that started in 2019, and just over a year after COVID-19 struck. The impact of COVID-19 on refugee and host communities and the subsequent impact on preparedness planning and strategic response was an important aspect of the evaluation, particularly with regards to the deliverability of protection services and how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected UNHCR's ability to deliver services to persons of concern to UNHCR in Zambia.

The evaluation was informed by a comprehensive literature review, interviews with key interlocutors (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). The evaluation was also provided with key data-driven results spreadsheets prepared by the Country Office and field offices, though no MYMPPSS scorecard or similar was available.

1.2 Evaluation scope

The scope of the evaluation is defined by the terms of reference (TOR).⁸ The evaluation covered the 2015–2020 period during which fundamental global strategy changes occurred through the introduction of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015), the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) (2016), and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) (2018). The Multi-year Multi-partner Protection and Solutions Strategy (MYMPPSS) and the complementary strategies emerged relatively recently – in the latter half of the period under review – in response to the GCR and the CRRF. The MYMPPSS therefore represents a dramatic shift in identifying a clearly articulated strategic pathway for UNHCR compared with previous years.

The evaluation therefore focused on the UNHCR MYMPPSS 2019–2021 as the principal articulation of the country strategy, recognizing the context of the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) Roadmap (2019–2021), the UN Sustainable Development Partnerships Framework (UNSDPF 2020), the UNHCR Global Directions and the UNHCR Zambia Annual Operational Plans as supporting pillars

⁸ See Annex 1.

of the overall strategy. These more recent strategy documents are the clearest and most coherent articulation of refugee strategy available for the period under review. The UNHCR Country Strategy reflects the UNHCR Global Directions, and as such, clearly derives strength from the alignment of the MYMPPSS with the CRRF and the GRZ National Roadmap; it is also to a strong though smaller degree aligned with the UNSDPF. This evaluation is the first formal substantive review and opportunity to test various elements of the country strategy.

1.3 Audience and stakeholders

The primary audiences and parties responsible for considering the recommendations of this report are both internal to UNHCR and the programme's primary partner, the Government of Zambia, especially the Office of the Vice-President and the Commissioner of Refugees (COR). Internal audiences include the Country Office and team; and the Regional Bureau of Southern Africa (RBSA). In the spirit of the MYMPPSS itself, the UN Country Team is an audience with a direct interest. Partner agencies including other UN agencies, cooperation partners and donors have an interest in strategic and directional recommendations and changes. Beneficiary audiences include traditional authorities and refugee communities.

Evaluation stakeholders were assessed and a detailed breakdown of constituent audiences, their respective interest in the evaluation and prospective uses of it were identified. With the exception of private sector partners, all stakeholder cohorts were extensively canvassed during the inception and data collection phases. Advice on private sector partnering potential and approaches was gained through interviews with UN family agencies and UNHCR regional and HQ staff.

The mapping differentiated between internal and external stakeholders and focused on their respective interests and hopes for how the outcomes of the evaluation may support their future endeavours and partnerships. The evaluation consultants conducted a comprehensive first round of interviews with most stakeholder categories (excluding beneficiaries) in the early stage, followed up by extensive beneficiary interviews and FGDs at field level, with many follow-up interviews with the initial cohort.

1.4 Evaluation team

A team of five was engaged for this country strategy evaluation (CSE). The Team Leader Margie Cook and Dr Ralph-Michael Peters were the principal interlocutors with UNHCR; they conducted all the KILs and were the authors of the report, supported by Denis Mutabazi whose specialist input focused on the development of the methodological approach, evaluation matrix and sub-questions, FGDs and the theory of change. All team members participated in field visits. Alick Mwale and Patricia Maritim provided experience-based insights and facilitation at local level.

1.5 Methodological approach

1.5.1. Theory of change

The MYMPPSS did not include a theory of change (ToC) or a complementary results matrix. At the request of UNHCR's Evaluation Service, the evaluation team drafted an initial ToC in the inception period, which was then revised to retrospectively attempt to address this gap. It is included principally as a framework that embeds recommended strategies moving forward. The ToC places refugees at the centre, reflecting the overall MYMPPSS vision, namely that: "Refugees are enabled to live dignified

lives and contribute to Zambian society and economy, as well as their own self-reliance, and have effective access to rights not less than those accorded to aliens.”⁹

A ToC is the agreed articulation of the progressive linkages between the inputs, stakeholders, outputs and the achievement of the ultimate programming objective. To illustrate its utility in the future, the Findings (Chapter 3) sample the extent to which the six high-level outcomes have been achieved, drawing on sampled aspects of the results anticipated in the seven pillars to support this assessment or highlight gaps in performance impacting on overall achievement. It was a useful benchmark for contribution analysis, evaluation methodology and analytical framework and for testing the extent to which core fundamentals and foundational principles underpinning MYMPPSS change pathways are valid and holding. However, in itself, the ToC was not a framework for evaluation under the TORs.

Six interconnected and overarching outcomes from the MYMPPSS are reflected in the ToC:

1. PoCs and other of concern have effective access to protection provided by the GRZ.
2. Immediate humanitarian needs of refugees are responded to, while progressively transitioning towards government-led responses.
3. Refugee settlements are transformed into integrated settlements and included in national development programmes.
4. Refugees and host communities benefit from livelihoods opportunities, which strengthen self-reliance and promote socioeconomic inclusion.
5. Opportunities for durable solutions for individuals and groups are explored.
6. Coordination and partnerships are strengthened.

The delivery of these outcomes is through the collective engagement of multiple actors (UNHCR, GRZ, other UN agencies, civil society organizations and so on) that coalesced around or focused on refugee-centred interventions, services and products through annualized and, more recently (since 2019), multi-year strategies and budgets. The suite of outputs from these refugee-centred multi-year multi-partner interventions and services is shown in the ToC model (Figure 1).

The ToC has the following functions:

- It reflects the interconnectedness and alignment of multi-actor strategies, as well as the focus on the ownership of refugee policy, protection, practice and implementation resting with the GRZ and the transition to integrated settlements included in national development programmes.
- It reflects UNHCR’s Global Directions but also prioritizes partnership and transition to GRZ leadership and responsibility.
- It embeds key assumptions and risks, identifies key inputs across seven focus areas that reflect the Country Strategy.
- It proposes six high-level outcomes (see Figure 1 below) that encapsulate the overall strategic intent to which the inputs contribute, and which ultimately feed into the overall objective of the Country Strategy.

Key drivers and assumptions underpin the successful delivery of these interlaced results:

- There is national ownership and the GRZ remains committed to meeting its pledges for refugee protection.
- Coordination and partnerships arrangements function effectively.
- UNHCR and its partners are able to mobilize adequate resources to meet the demands and requirements of the Annual Operational Plans and results-based budgets.
- COVID-19 does not escalate to a level which paralyses operations and budgets. Global and national response to COVID-19 is effective in mitigating the effects of the pandemic.

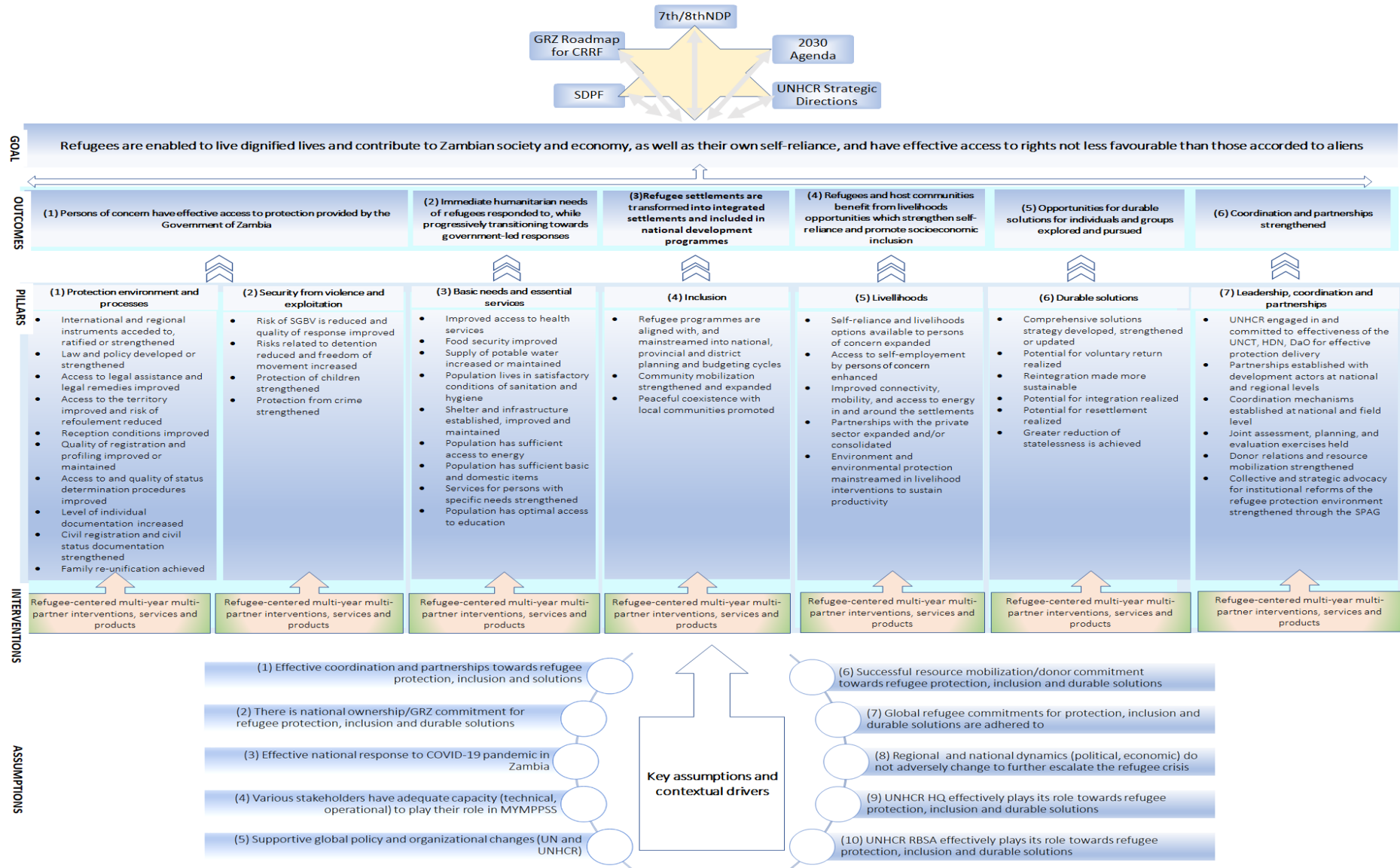
⁹ UNHCR Zambia, 2018, Multi-year Multi-partner Protection and Solutions Strategy (MYMPPSS) 2019–2021, p. 8

It is also assumed that other debilitating pandemics will not break out and paralyse refugee response and protection interventions.

- UNHCR, GRZ, UN agencies, and other partners have capacity (technical, logistical and HR) to implement their respective refugee-related mandates.
- Global policy and organizational changes within UNHCR and other UN agencies are rolled out effectively, in a manner that does not severely disrupt partnerships, institutional mandates, roles and capacities.
- UNHCR HQ and the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (RBSA) execute their roles and functions in an effective manner.
- Contextual dynamics in the region, which often catalyse refugee influx into Zambia, do not escalate to the extent that there are insurmountable surges in refugee populations.
- International refugee commitments in support of both host countries and countries of origin are adhered to by relevant bodies, agencies and states.
-

The ToC is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Zambia CSE Theory of Change



1.5.2. Evaluation criteria

The CSE used evaluation criteria suggested by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). These are: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Given the particular vulnerability of the target populations and the fundamental criticality of partnerships to the effectiveness of the overall strategy, the evaluation matrix included two cross-cutting criteria namely: a) equity; and b) coordination and partnerships. Taken together, these expanded evaluation criteria provided a basis for comprehensively assessing the attributes of the Zambia UNHCR Country Office and Country Strategy.

1.5.3. Evaluation questions and sub-questions

The CSE sought to explore six key evaluation questions (KEQs) as guided by the ToR:

1. What key results in the areas of assistance, protection, inclusion and solutions have been achieved by the country operation since 2015?
 - a. What were the most important factors contributing to or impeding the achievement of these results?
 - b. What role did the CRRF play in the achievement of these results?
 - c. What practices and lessons could help to inform the operations decisions towards strengthening these results in the future?
2. How relevant and sustainable are the existing operational plan and strategy to the current and evolving needs of refugees, other persons of concern, and host communities in Zambia – and what major contextual and emerging factors need to be considered in the immediate, intermediate and longer-term planning for the operation?
3. What were the major implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for persons of concern, and what are the enabling and limiting factors in how the organization has responded?
4. To what extent is the annual operational plan and strategy aligned to the GCR, the Sustainable Development Partnership Framework, and the work of other humanitarian/development actors including the government and private sector?
5. How can UNHCR leverage further support for protection, effective inclusion and solutions for refugees within the context of ongoing organizational reforms (decentralization), UN reforms (DaO), and National Development Plans and frameworks, as well as the GCR?
6. What lessons can we draw from the evidence gathered through this evaluation to inform UNHCR's next multi-year-multi-partner planning in Zambia and its contribution to the next UNSDPF?

In addition to the six KEQs, the team considered a suite of complementary and cross-cutting issues including: programme delivery and enabling and constraining factors; advocacy; local integration; the status and impact of the legal framework; issues relating to documentation and the sustainable handover of programmes to development partners.

An evaluation matrix (see Annex 2) was used to map the KEQs on to the evaluation criteria, and to map judgement criteria, sources of information and data collection methods for each KEQ. To avoid data and analytical gaps, additional questions and sub-questions were identified, bringing the number of questions and sub-questions informing the process to 45 and 157 respectively.

The elaboration of additional evaluation questions and sub-questions considered three thematic and operational areas of interest and priority for the CSE, namely:

- a) coordination and partnerships, advocacy and capacity-building;
- b) programme delivery and the enabling and constraining factors to achieving results under the CRRF, the GCR and the MYMPPSS;

-
- c) formative assessment and recommendations which take into consideration decentralization and strategic planning opportunities around the humanitarian–development nexus; integrating regional dynamics into multi-year strategic planning; external engagement and partnerships; capacity-building and expertise requirements (UNHCR and partners); and implications for COVID-19.

The questions informed the analysis of findings (see Chapter 3. Reflections on the evaluation criteria are also specifically addressed in the same chapter. The evaluation matrix is appended in Annex 2.

1.5.4. Judgment criteria and data sources

The multiplicity of the questions and sub-questions implies that there is a corresponding diversity of sources from which evidence to answer the questions can be obtained. Judgment criteria were assigned to each question specifying the measurement indicator or data sought. The array of possible data sources identified included a range of reports, publications and documents from UNHCR, other UN agencies, the GRZ, independent analysts, and others. The data sources also span different categories of people such as:

- UNHCR staff (different cadres at country, regional and global levels);
- Zambia UNCT;
- GRZ staff (different cadres at national, regional and district levels);
- persons of concern (including asylum-seekers and different categories of refugees or former refugees in different locations);
- host community members (in different locations).

Data sources were triangulated to confirm and collaborate evidence from different sources; to explain and understand findings obtained from one source; or to interrogate diverging evidence either to reconcile or clarify any apparent differences.

1.5.5. Data collection

Key Informant Interviews

All KIIs were conducted by the evaluation consultants – both virtually and face-to-face during the in-country evaluation mission which occurred in April and May 2021. Key informants included different categories of people such as UNHCR staff at country, regional and global levels; GRZ staff of different cadres at national, provincial and district levels; Zambia UNCT members; donor representatives; implementing partner staff and service providers. Overall, 77 KIIs were conducted.

Focus group discussions

An independent Lusaka-based research/consultancy firm¹⁰ sub-contracted by the UNHCR Country Office¹¹ conducted 29 FGDs through which 284 persons of concern and host community members provided direct beneficiary insights about the outcomes and impact of the UNHCR Country Strategy and operation. Focus groups comprised of distinct cohorts were conducted in each major refugee settlement including Lusaka. The agreed cohorts were made up predominantly of refugees but also included specific host community members in each of the three remote settlements.

¹⁰ PRIME Consult Ltd, a Lusaka based research company.

¹¹ The evaluation team prepared the terms of reference for the consultant and participated in the evaluation of technical and financial proposals of prospective bidders. The evaluation team also participated in the training of enumerators for the selected consultant firm and observed some of the FGDs in the settlements.

The cohorts were:

- refugee community leaders
- men
- young men
- women
- young women
- persons with disabilities (PWDs) or vulnerabilities
- former refugees
- host community members
- livelihood intervention beneficiaries.

The following tables show the distribution and attendance (disaggregated by gender) of FGDs conducted.

Table 1 Number of FGDs by cohort and location/settlement

Cohort	Number of FGDs by location				Total FGDs
	Mayukwayukwa	Meheba	Lusaka TC	Mantapala	
Refugee community leaders	1	1	0	1	3
Men	1	1	1	1	4
Young men	1	1	1	1	4
Women	1	1	1	1	4
Young women	1	0	1	1	3
PWDs/vulnerabilities	1	1	0	1	3
Former refugees	1	1	0	0	2
Host community members	1	1	0	0	2
Livelihoods groups	1	1	0	2	4
TOTAL	9	8	4	8	29

Table 2 Attendance in FGDs conducted for the Zambia CSE

Settlement	FGD dates	No. FGDs	Attendance (number)		
			Male	Female	Total
Mayukwayukwa	4–7 May 2021	9	47	35	82
Meheba	4–7 May 2021	8	49	33	82
Lusaka TC	12–14 May 2021	4	14	14	28
Mantapala	18–21 May 2021	8	52	40	92
	TOTAL	29	162	122	284

All the FGDs were conducted in English and simultaneously translated into Swahili (a language spoken by refugees) and local languages spoken by host communities (Luvale, Lunda, Nyanja and Bemba). These were then audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim into English. After close reading of transcripts and field notes, a code book was developed and programmed in NVivo 12, capturing deductive and inductive themes (i.e., deductive from topics probed in the semi-structured guides; and inductive emerging from participant narratives). Themes emerging were classified as sub-codes nested within code families. The coding output was reviewed using software-facilitated code queries. A report identifying salient themes and patterns from coded text segments was compiled and shared with the evaluation team to support further triangulation and validation of evidence.

1.5.6. Data analysis and sense-making

Using a mixed-methods approach comprising of an extensive desk review of secondary data, KIIs, and FGDs with persons of concern and local host community representatives, the team gathered data to determine the following: whether and to what extent interventions, services and products intended to drive the change process had been implemented as required; the extent to which change pathways postulated in the ToC for UNHCR Zambia had occurred or were occurring; whether or not assumptions had held or were holding; and the levels of contribution by UNHCR and other actors or factors in actualizing or preparing for the postulated changes.

Contribution analysis is one of the theory-based evaluation methodologies that help to trace the contribution of an intervention or programme to particular outcomes through a cause–effect assessment.¹² The cause–effect issues to be addressed by contribution analysis were encapsulated in the six KEQs for the Zambia CSE. To adequately assess the KEQs, a ToC for the UNHCR Zambia CSE was developed (see 1.5.1), drawing extensively on programmatic documents reviewed and KIIs conducted during the CSE inception phase. The ToC outlines multiple pathways towards the expressed goal of the UNHCR MYMPPSS,¹³ and the assumptions (or risks) that could influence the identified change pathways.

Whereas contribution analysis is forward-looking – seeking to understand whether deployed resources, interventions, products and services have created the desired change – **outcome harvesting** works backwards by identifying any significant changes that may have occurred around particular outcome domains, and how those changes occurred. In the context of the Zambia CSE, the starting point for outcome harvesting was identifying the broad refugee outcome domains, namely: refugee protection, inclusion and durable solutions. The evaluation team used these domains as filters of investigation, identifying evidence of significant positive or negative changes (from a review of secondary data, KIIs and FGDs) that may have occurred over the past five years (2015–2020). Drawing from KIIs and FGDs, we interrogated how UNHCR Zambia may have contributed to the changes (through resources, interventions, services and products); but also accounting for how other actors – including the GRZ, other UN agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs), private actors and contextual dynamics may have contributed as well.

1.5.7. Compliance with evaluation standards

The evaluation process followed the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards as well as the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation. The evaluation also complies with the Code of Conduct for Evaluations in the UN system and with UNHCR's Data Protection Policy, Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) Policy and with the UNHCR Disability Inclusion Strategy. FGD cohorts were designed to ensure inclusivity of vulnerable groups and the FGD training modules included content on gender awareness, language and behaviour. Data collection tools were reviewed for language appropriateness and participation limited to adults aged 18 years and over. The evaluation team respects the principles of safeguarding and took appropriate measures to protect, identify and provide anonymity of respondents. Guidance and appropriate approvals of the Office of the COR were sought about the roll-out of survey tools and contact with government personnel.

¹² Mayne, J., 2001, "Assessing Attribution through Contribution Analysis: Using Performance Measures Sensibly", *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 16: 1.

¹³ The ToC sets the goal of the Country Strategy as: "Refugees are enabled to live dignified lives and contribute to Zambian society and economy, as well as their own self-reliance, and have effective access to rights not less favorable than those accorded to aliens".

The CSE also observed the principles of informed consent to participation in KIIs and FGDs based on the principles of anonymity and the non-identification and non-attribution of remarks. No names have been used in the report. FGDs do attribute the location and cohort of respondents to quoted remarks but do not use the names of any individual.

1.5.8. Limitations

The most significant limitation impacting on the evaluation was the absence of a workplan, logical framework, theory of change, or results matrix directly linked to the MYMPPSS that would have established systematic, reportable milestones and measurable targets. Because the activities were not developed with a view to being measured precisely, the evaluation encountered challenges in measuring or accounting for them. No evidence was available to demonstrate systematic Country Office reporting against the MYMPPSS or the UNSDPF Results Matrix. It is acknowledged that there are numerous factsheet type reports, journalistic stories and dense reporting in the Annual Operational Plan. The evaluation consultants therefore requested the Country Office and field offices to provide spreadsheet-based accounting of results achieved against objectives. Field offices reported in detail. On the national scale, the Country Office provided information to the evaluation team on implementation progress against the GRZ Roadmap but not against the MYMPPSS. At settlement level, information in Country Office reporting formats was provided. These spreadsheets have been annexed (annexes 10b,c & d) and are referenced in section 1.1 as high-level sources in the absence of an MYMPPSS scorecard.

The UNHCR Annual Operational Plans which preceded the MYMPPSS have indicators, baselines and targets embedded. However, these were mostly focused on quantitative output metrics and less so on qualitative and more tangible outcomes. For this reason, these indicators did not lend themselves to cogent impact assessment during the CSE.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought numerous limitations. The most critical was the inability of the evaluation team to engage with most stakeholders on a face-to-face basis, which had an impact on the degree of trust and relationships that could be leveraged. This limitation was compensated to some extent by the opportunity to meet personally with many key stakeholders during the field visit of the evaluation team to Zambia in April and May 2021. Unfortunately, only one UN agency head was available to meet personally and was interviewed remotely. The team regrets this inability to engage at a personal level with other UN agency heads as this impinged on the depth of inquiry with agencies on their refugee response activities.

The methodological approach originally included an extensive phone-based survey as well as in-person FGDs at nominated settlements. However, due to logistical challenges, a decision was made to remove the first component. This removal of data-driven specificity from the methodology placed greater reliance on qualitative insights both from focus groups and interviews. Nonetheless, triangulated data streams (through FGDs, KIIs and reports from the Country Office and field offices) helped to collaborate evidence from different sources.

The availability of planning documents that shaped and drove the Country Strategy from 2015 until the national CRRF adaptation process started remained elusive throughout the process. The evaluators sought but were unable to find or were not provided with source documents that reflected specific UNHCR country strategy preceding the MYMPPSS or the CRRF.

The evaluation consultants found that group or team-level virtual conversations, necessitated by the pandemic conditions, seriously hindered dialogue and the ability to speak freely. It is noted that country strategy documents were continuing to be developed during the evaluation process – falling outside the time frame of the evaluation.

2. Context

2.1 The Zambian country context

2.1.1. The political and economic context

Zambia has a population of 17.86 million.¹⁴ Its growth rate has been continuously declining for the past seven years (from 3.14 per cent in 2013 to 2.892 per cent in 2019). Despite being a lower middle-income country since 2011, Zambia remains one of the least developed countries in sub-Saharan Africa with approximately 58 per cent of its population living in extreme poverty (that is, on less than \$1.90 a day), which compares extremely unfavourably on the global scale (10 per cent of the world population is living in extreme poverty) and even unfavourably within sub-Saharan Africa where this applies to about 40 per cent of the total population. The World Bank concludes that the pre-pandemic deterioration in extreme poverty (from 54.4 per cent in 2015 to 55.8 per cent in 2019) was entirely driven by rural areas.¹⁵ Human development indicators for Zambia are generally not positive: 50 per cent of children are underweight, and 40 per cent of the population do not have access to clean drinking water.¹⁶ Its Human Development Index in 2019 was slightly better than that of the continent as a whole – 0.584 for Zambia compared to 0.55 for Africa overall. However, 2019 was the first year since 2016 that the index for Zambia was declining, from a peak of 0.591 in 2018.

A recent World Bank study estimates that the COVID-19 pandemic will push an additional 700,000 Zambians into extreme poverty.¹⁷ The Global Hunger Index 2019 ranks Zambia 113 out of the 117 countries it covers.¹⁸ Furthermore, the pandemic and continuous power shortages are driving the Zambian economy into recession for the first time in 22 years, with a contraction of about 4.2 per cent in 2021. The situation is aggravated by the fact that due to the fiscal crisis (Zambia defaulted on its debt obligations in November 2020), the government has no actual fiscal space to counteract these developments. Instead, it is expected to cut spending to stem inflation (this was 22.7 per cent annually as of April 2021¹⁹), and to trim down costs, which in an election year is difficult. Previous budgets demonstrated shifts in favour of defence, public order and safety at the expense of social services.²⁰ These factors are important to note as they aggravate the levels of poverty, particularly in rural areas, and limit or even eliminate for the time being the government's capacity to improve on already extremely low infrastructure standards in the areas hosting refugees. Poor infrastructure includes lack of electricity, remoteness of locations, access to water, relatively low local standards of health provision and education, poor telecommunications, inadequate roads and transport.

¹⁴ Zambia Statistics Agency, ZamStats - Home, www.zamstats.gov.zm

¹⁵ World Bank, 2021, "COVID-19, poverty, and social safety net response in Zambia", Policy Research Working Paper 9571

¹⁶ Aishwarya Bansal, The top five of the largest causes of poverty in Zambia, in: Borgen Magazine; 3 August 2017; <https://www.borgenmagazine.com/causes-of-poverty-in-zambia/>

¹⁷ World Bank, 2021, "COVID-19, poverty, and social safety net response in Zambia", Policy Research Working Paper 9571

¹⁸ Global Hunger Index, 2019

¹⁹ Zambia Statistics Agency, 2021, The Monthly Bulletin, p. 2, April, Volume 216.

²⁰ Bertelsmann Transformation Index, 2020, Zambia Country Report, p. 4, <https://www.bti-project.org/en/reports/country-dashboard-ZMB.html>

Zambia has a presidential system: Since its return to multi-party politics in 1991 the country has held 7 general elections plus 2 Presidential by-elections: In August 2021 the country experienced a third change of government through the ballot box after 1991 and 2011. Despite an uneven playing field and restrictions on civic space under President Edgar Lungu of the Patriotic Front (2015–2021), Hakainde Hichilema of the United Party for National Development (UPND) succeeded in his fifth bid for the presidency. Hichilema campaigned on an anti-corruption agenda, raising hopes and expectations among Zambians and the international community about tackling the level of corruption under the outgoing President Lungu. A wide-ranging overhaul of senior positions within the public administration was expected. At the point of writing it was unclear whether that may affect the current Commissioner of Refugees, Abdon Mawere. Furthermore, there may be increased chances to improve infrastructure and government services in Meheba and Mayukwayukwa, which are based within UPND strongholds. Some interlocutors noted that the relative neglect of these places under past presidents could be a result of their location within areas favourable to the opposition. On a very positive note, anti-refugee sentiments and xenophobic utterances have reportedly never featured in election campaigns in Zambia.

Any personnel changes resulting from the change in government could lead to a transition period during which no major movements at policy and operational level may happen. This could – among other things – further delay the finalization and approval of the refugee policy and the envisaged drafting of a policy on statelessness.

Regarding the delivery of services to persons of concern, it is important to note the decentralized administrative structure of the country. Zambia is divided into 10 provinces, each headed by a Minister appointed by the President, and further sub-divided into 117 districts and 1,624 wards. The districts are headed by District Commissioners, also appointed by the President and who are part of the Office of the President. Local government consists of 103 councils (4 city councils, 15 municipal councils and 84 district councils), the members of which are elected every five years as part of the general elections. Thus, councillors were in campaign mode from mid-May 2021 onwards and possibly less available to the evaluation consultants. The legislative wing of the councils is complemented by the administrative wing, the staff of which is hired by the Local Government Service Commission. The mayor or council chairperson is not directly elected by the voters but from among and by the councillors. The Ministry of Local Government and Housing has the supervisory function for the councils. Those have wide-ranging responsibilities that are also of relevance for UNHCR and persons of concern as they include the establishment and maintenance of roads and bridges, public transport, fire-fighting and prevention services, environmental health services, provision and maintenance of water supply and sewage waste management. The level of local government service delivery in the three districts that host refugee settlements plus Lusaka is therefore of interest to the evaluation team as government service delivery can decisively impact on all protection-related activities as well as on all solution-oriented interventions and services.

2.1.2. Zambia's history as a safe haven

Zambia's traditionally positive and progressive approach towards refugees combined with a first conceptual attempt to integrate refugees locally through the Zambia Initiative (2002) create highly conducive pre-conditions for the national application of the CRRF and the GCR.

Zambia has a long and proud history of providing safe havens for refugees and asylum-seekers dating back to the 1940s. As the only politically stable country in a region characterized by armed struggles for independence and self-determination for more than two decades (1986 to 2007), Zambia has continuously hosted more than 100,000 refugees from neighbouring countries. This reached a peak of almost 300,000 at the turn of the millennium, despite its own scarce resource base and high incidence rates of poverty among its own population.

A comprehensive repatriation programme started in 2003 after the end of the Angolan civil war, and the number of refugees in Zambia dropped to below 100,000 in 2008. Yet by then, it had become apparent that many refugees from Angola and Rwanda who had been living in Zambia for decades were likely to prefer to stay in the country. Against this background, the GRZ together with UNHCR began the Zambia Initiative in 2002.²¹ It built on a successful local initiative where traditional chiefs in Western Zambia had allocated land to Angolan refugees for crop farming. Taking a multisectoral approach, the Initiative aimed at local integration, bolstering self-reliance and addressing refugee and host communities' needs at the same time.²² However, the Initiative was discontinued as a specific policy more from lack of attention than any policy decision; its innovative key ideas remained relevant. These actually foreshadowed significant elements of what became in 2016 the United Nations' globally adopted new Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).

2.1.3. UNHCR Country Strategy for Zambia and its global context

The evaluation has been framed around the MYMPPSS as the definitive UNHCR Zambia Country Strategy with the Zambian government's Roadmap and the UNSDPF of the UN Country Team being key aligned and supportive documents as agreed by the Evaluation Reference Group.

With the 2016 launch of the CRRF and the GCR two years later, the global response approach to refugee situations was fundamentally revised to reflect changed refugee dynamics. The CRRF and the GCR in turn are aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). With these approaches the United Nations in general and UNHCR in particular moved away from a more paternalistic care-and-maintenance-oriented approach to one that positions the interests, rights and capabilities of refugees and host communities at the centre of a multisectoral and a multi-institutional response to refugee situations. The response aims at economic and social inclusion of refugees, their local integration and a fostering of their self-reliance by transcending the more "traditional" humanitarian aid approach through conceptualizing the refugee response from the start with a development lens. The OneUN approach and the decentralization of the Regional Bureau in 2019 from Switzerland to South Africa added levels of engagement and participation in terms of planning and operations for the UNHCR Country Team.

These concepts and instruments are reflected and are intended to be operationalized for the Zambian national level through:

1. the Multi-year Multi-partner Protection and Solutions Strategy (MYMPPSS 2019–2021) representing UNHCR's scope of vision and responsibility;
2. the Roadmap for the Implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework in Zambia (2019–2021) representing the Government of the Republic of Zambia's (GRZ) intended strategic response plan; and
3. the Zambia–United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF 2016–2019) and Addendum of 2020 representing the United Nations Delivering as One approach.

These three major documents guide Zambia's overall response to the refugee situation in the country with the MYMPPSS functioning as UNHCR's expression of its country strategy. The MYMPPSS organizes five strategic objectives around UNHCR's vision for Zambia, which is "Refugees are enabled

²¹ UNHCR/GRZ, 2019, *Implementing a Comprehensive Refugee Response: The Zambia Experience*, p. 5.

²² US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2005, *The Zambia Initiative*; <https://reliefweb.int/report/zambia/zambia-initiative>; Watabe, Masaki (no date), *The Zambia Initiative*, ; GRZ/UNHCR, 2004, *The Zambia Initiative – in Pursuit of Sustainable Solutions for Refugees in Zambia*, May 2004 Update

to live dignified lives and contribute to Zambian society and economy, as well as their own self-reliance, and have effective access to rights not less favourable than those accorded to aliens”.²³ The five strategic objectives are:

1. Refugees, asylum-seekers and others of concern have effective access to international protection provided by the GRZ.
2. The immediate humanitarian needs of refugees continue to be responded to, while progressively transitioning towards government-led responses (on education, health, water, sanitation, social services).
3. Refugee settlements are transformed into integrated settlements and are included in national development programmes, as well as being included in government-led services benefiting both refugees and host communities.
4. Refugees and host communities benefit from livelihoods opportunities, which strengthen self-reliance and promote socioeconomic inclusion.
5. Opportunities for durable solutions such as local integration, voluntary repatriation/return and resettlement will be explored for individuals and groups.²⁴

The MYMPPSS emphasizes its close alignment to the GRZ’s Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP), the Zambian Government’s commitment to the CRRF and the UNSDPF.²⁵

At the country level, the MYMPPSS is further delineated by the Annual Operational Plan, Area Development Action Plans, and is informed by other country-based intervention planning documents including the 7NDP and the Result Groups 2, 3, 4 and 5 of the UNSDPF, revised to reflect the five pillars of the 7NDP.²⁶ UNHCR is a member of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) committees for these respective results areas and chairs the Humanitarian–Development Nexus (HDN) Thematic Group – a theme intended to be “systematically mainstreamed in the delivery of the development programme for the United Nations in Zambia”.²⁷ As a thematic group, the HDN group is expected to develop a workplan to guide its work and regularly to report to the Programme Management Team (PMT). UNHCR as an institution also provides guidance to country teams through practice notes such as the UNHCR Refugee Coordination Model.

The MYMPPSS and Annual Operational plans²⁸ trend towards advocacy/coordination-based efforts and represent activities or interventions conducted by UNHCR field staff or sub-contracted through identified implementation partners. The evaluation has explored the extent to which the MYMPPSS and the organization’s own actions and interventions contribute to intended results and the achievement of its vision, and the efficacy of the modalities employed in delivering on this vision.

The review period of the Zambia UNHCR Country Strategy Evaluation has seen comparatively small numbers of refugees and former refugees living in Zambia. Nonetheless, there are significant factors

²³ UNHCR, 2019, MYMPPSS 2019–2021, p. 8.

²⁴ *Ibid.* pp 9–17.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1

²⁶ The relevant Results Groups are Results Group 2: Poverty and Vulnerability Reduction; Results Group 3: Reduced Development Inequalities; Results Group 4: Enhanced Human Development; and Results Group 5: A Conducive Governance Environment.

²⁷ UNSDPF p. 23.

²⁸ At every level – global, regional and local – there exists a hierarchy of variously named objectives, directions, strategies and implementing actions to address the needs of refugee and host communities. A matrix of objectives of the aggregated vision from the various documents, using 2020 as the example year prepared as a planning illustrated the overall ambition and aligned the various commitments and action points of key stakeholders including UNHCR Zambia and GRZ to overarching policy commitments and obligations. The relationship of the respective objectives to the overall vision of the Country Strategy is referenced in the theory of change.

attaching to this evaluation including Zambia's long tradition as a welcoming host for refugees and asylum-seekers; the generally favourable preconditions within Zambia for aligning the CRRF approach to its factual (though not yet laid out) national refugee policy marked by its participation as a pilot country for the CRRF roll-out; and the presence in-country of all UN agencies relevant in the humanitarian and development sectors and the pursuance of the United Nations Delivering as One approach in Zambia.

The Roadmap and the UNSDPF

The GRZ Roadmap spells out similar objectives. In 2017 Zambia became one of the 15 CRRF pilot countries. At the 2016 New York United Nations Refugee summit, Zambian President Edgar Lungu affirmed his country's support to the objectives of the New York Declaration and the CRRF. He pledged several steps along the CRRF line (to integrate Angolans and Rwandans locally, and to expand the programme to Congolese refugees; to consider relaxing the encampment policy to allow more freedom of movement; to promote self-reliance for refugees and ease access to work permits; to improve the education infrastructure for refugee children; to ensure refugee access to legal documents). The refugee response framework and the corresponding actions by the Zambian government build on the experience of the Zambian Initiative and aim at integrating the programme into the government's national development plan, the district and ministerial plans, the involvement of host and refugee communities from the start of any planning and implementation process, and the clarification of the roles of all stakeholders from the outset.

The Roadmap of March 2019 lays out six focus areas, which are: (1) Admission and Rights; (2) Emergency Response; (3) Inclusion; (4) Self-reliance; (5) Solutions; and (6) Root Causes. These are meant to be in line with the MYMPPSS and the other global strategies and instruments (CRRF, GCR, SDGs). The third key document is the UNSDPF, a partnership framework between the UNCT and the GRZ. With the UN reform and the Delivering as One approach, the Resident Coordinator became the highest-ranking representative of the UN within the country and coordinates all UN agencies within a country. These efforts find their strategic and programmatic expression in the UNSDPF. The CRRF was launched after the UNSDPF 2016–2021 was drafted. Refugee matters had not been taken into account in the initial document (two mentions in a 60-page document). This was then corrected in the Addendum 2020 which:

1. aligned the UNSDPF to the 7NDP 2017–2021, echoing the SDGs;
2. mainstreamed refugees as a thematic issue into the eight Result Groups and Thematic Areas.

From a UNHCR point of view, the amended UNSDPF integrates refugees' issues in a systematic way and assigns UNHCR the relevant role of leveraging the adequate inclusion of refugees in the national planning process.

2.2 The situation of persons of concern in Zambia

UNHCR has been the Zambian government's key partner in providing an adequate response to persons of concern for decades. Currently the country hosts approximately 94,500 persons of concern, of which 24,200 are former refugees from Angola and Rwanda and are considered as "others of concern"²⁹ Globally and within sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the past decade saw a dramatic rise in refugee numbers (from 2.2 million to 6.4 million in SSA).³⁰ During the evaluation period (2015–2020), Zambia experienced

²⁹ UNHCR Refugee Data, App (available in Google Play Store); Country Statistics Zambia; the App differentiates between "forcibly displaced people" and "Others of Concern"; the forcibly displaced include refugees and asylum seekers (there were no stateless people in Zambia throughout the review period).

³⁰ UNHCR, 2020, *Global Trends – Forced Displacement in 2019*, p. 19; <https://www.unhcr.org/5ee200e37.pdf>

an increase of refugees entering the country, although from a more modest level of around 26,500 in 2015.³¹ The repatriation programme for Angolan refugees resulted in a sharp decrease of persons of concern after 2001, when Zambia had hosted a population close to 300,000.³² Also in line with global trends is the prolongation of refugees staying within Zambia; around 26,000 Angolans and Rwandans are staying permanently in Zambia having decided against participating in the comprehensive repatriation programme. Currently, Zambia hosts about 1.3 per cent of all PoC in SSA,³³ a considerably lower number than in 2001 when 7.3 per cent of all sub-Saharan African PoC stayed in Zambia. This situation must be taken into account when assessing UNHCR's success in fostering cooperation with other UN agencies and soliciting support from donors and cooperation partners. Funding dynamics often favour crises and emergencies. Without a pressing emergency (such as in 2017/2018 with the influx of Congolese refugees – see below), there could be little or at least reduced inclination by some or all of them to grant higher importance in their usual portfolio to refugees and by donors in terms of funding.

By the end of 2020 there were three distinct groups of concern and a further one cross-cutting through these three:³⁴

- Around 23,000 Congolese refugees who arrived in Zambia after the wave of conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 2017 onwards and who are in need of emergency humanitarian support.
- Around 24,000 former refugees from Angola (19,030) and Rwanda (5,173), who are in a protracted situation and need development support. They are eligible for local integration.
- Around 23,500 refugees and asylum seekers who arrived from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (18,638), from Burundi (2,506) and Somalia (2,392) who arrived prior to 2014 and who are in a protracted situation in need of humanitarian support. They are in a particularly difficult situation as the volatility in their home countries precludes any return prospects in the foreseeable future, but unlike Rwandans and Angolans they are not eligible for local integration schemes.
- Part of these three groups is a fourth category, the so-called self-settled refugees and former refugees who – according to the 2020 Operational Plan – were estimated to be around 12,404 and among whom neither UNHCR nor the COR have any contacts.³⁵

³¹ UNHCR Refugee Data, App; Country Statistics Zambia

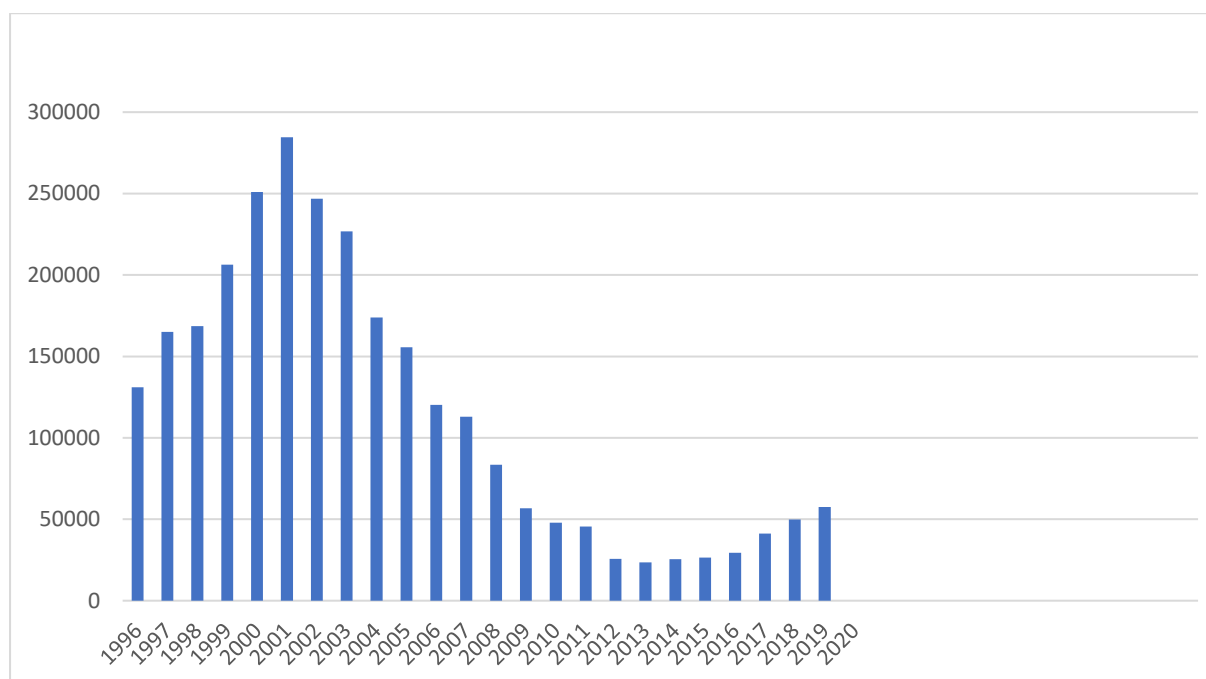
³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.; calculations by evaluation consultants.

³⁴ UNHCR Refugee Data; UNHCR 2020, Terms of Reference – Country Strategy Evaluation Zambia, p. 4

³⁵ UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia, p. 2

Figure 2 Population of persons of concern in Zambia 1996-2019



There are three refugee settlements in Zambia:

- Mayukwayukwa refugee settlement (Western Province) is the oldest refugee settlement in Zambia. It was established in 1966, with about 19,000 refugees and former refugees from Rwanda, Angola, Burundi, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). It was about to be closed down in 2016 but was kept open in anticipation of an influx of refugees and asylum-seekers from the DRC, where more than 100,000 persons of concern were expected to cross the border in 2017; this was because of a lack of space in Meheba and Mantapala to accommodate the anticipated number of arrivals.
- Meheba refugee settlement (North-Western Province), established in 1971, was by the end of 2020 hosting about 31,450 refugees and former refugees. The majority were from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, followed by Angola, Rwanda and Burundi, and a few from Somalia. By the end of 2020 newly arrived refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, having entered through Nsumbu, were relocated to Meheba.
- Mantapala is the newest refugee settlement. It was established in 2017 in a response to the DRC presidential general elections, which drove close to 100,000 Congolese to seek refuge in neighbouring countries (in addition to the 600,000 people who had been fleeing the country since the early 2000s). By September 2020, 15,231 refugees were hosted in the Mantapala settlement.³⁶
- Lusaka is not a settlement but there are around 5,000 refugees living in and around the capital city.

All three locations are conceived as settlements in which refugees are free to undertake agricultural and other income-generating activities and live in an open, at least partly integrated way with the host communities.

³⁶ UNHCR, 2020, Mantapala Settlement Briefing Note, September 2020, p. 1

Five key issues emerged from the contextual assessment including: refugees in protracted situations; concerns that livelihood programmes may not be appropriately targeted; the possible relocation of residents from Mayukwayukwa to Meheba; policy reform especially related to encampment and freedom of movement; and the continuing impact of COVID-19. These issues have been addressed in the context of the KEQs.

2.3 Operational context

The evaluation was conducted at a time of significant change, at the end of an intense period of activity in terms of global policy evolution on how to best respond to changing refugee and migration dynamics worldwide and in the context of intense pressures on the Country Office with regards to contemporaneous audits and ongoing and adaptive responsiveness to COVID-19. Contextual changes included:

- a profound organizational policy and structural reform within the UN family in general and UNHCR in particular;
- the articulation of a globally driven national response to the GCR and the CRRF which informs a dramatically revised country strategy;
- the pivoting of the United Nations in Zambia towards a OneUN and Delivery as One approach with fundamental shifts in approach to collaboration and cooperation at a UN country level, represented in the significantly successful and collaborative roll-out of the Mantapala response;
- the restructuring and decentralization of UNHCR's seven bureaux, as well as the introduction of a new results-based management system (COMPASS) and associated planning (budgeting), reporting and programming approach within UNHCR;
- the COVID-19 pandemic which has had a profound impact on the development sector generally and on the need to rapidly pivot on priorities and responsive programming;
- the conceptual repositioning of the humanitarian–development relationship among all key stakeholders;
- a diminished willingness on the part of GRZ representatives to engage in policy reform discussions in the pre-election period 2021 was coupled with an assumption on the part of UNHCR leadership that the election would not produce a change in government and therefore policy change was not anticipated.

At the time of the evaluation, all processes were at different stages of introduction and at varying levels of becoming understood and embedded within systems and approaches, ranging from conceptual to being partially adopted and being implemented. This evaluation looked more towards the trajectory of change rather than the impact, and it asked where the evidence points to a clear change management pathway and where adaptation and repositioning might be advantageous. Where necessary for full appreciation and understanding of developments and dynamics or relevance that started or even ended before the beginning of the evaluation period, were also taken into consideration.

3. Findings

3.1 Introduction

It is important to note that while this report was intended to be a country strategy evaluation, at the request of the Evaluation Service it segued in many aspects to a performance evaluation. Nonetheless, the focus of the recommendations remains on the higher level strategy issues. UNHCR tracks its inputs through a comprehensive reporting process including Operational Plans, field office tracking, country reports, global reporting. This report does not attempt to replicate or replace the detail in that comprehensive reporting. Instead, the evaluation composed its own theory of change to test higher-level outcomes retrospectively against strategic inputs and to assess the extent to which efforts have in fact been directed appropriately, where lessons might be learned and where some changes in direction might be usefully advised. The purpose of the country strategy is to devise means, instruments, pathways and approaches to first secure and protect, and then to transform the lives of refugees in a way that they “are enabled to live dignified lives and contribute to...their own self-reliance”³⁷ as pointed out in UNHCR Zambia’s vision of its work. That work is also guided by one of the key principles of the SDGs – “leave no one behind” – i.e. giving support to and integrating the most vulnerable into UNHCR assistance and eventually into GRZ policies and programmes. When addressing the key evaluation questions, the evaluation consultants therefore focus primarily on issues and thematic areas that aim to ensure the protection of refugees, asylum-seekers and former refugees; on issues that have the potential to initiate and facilitate transformatory change in their lives; and on issues that impact the most vulnerable.

When assessing the key results of UNHCR’s engagement in Zambia, it is essential to look at the six outcomes of the ToC in a holistic way and to discuss their individual results in view of their interconnectedness. The first four outcomes are essentially catering for and supporting persons of concern in preparation for the fifth outcome – the durable solutions; the sixth outcome (coordination and partnership strengthening) is to facilitate the other five through coordination, cooperation and partnerships with other organizations within and outside the UNCT as well as with the GRZ.

3.2 ToC outcome statements

Findings from the CSE are organized and mapped around the main six KEQs (see section 1.5.3). As highlighted in section 1.5.1, a theory of change formulated as part of this evaluation has been used as a benchmark for assessing UNHCR pillars and higher-level outcomes retrospectively against strategic inputs and to determine the extent to which efforts have been directed appropriately, where lessons might be learned and where some changes in direction might be usefully advised. To recap the six ToC outcomes are:

1. Persons of concern have effective access to protection provided by the GRZ.
2. Immediate humanitarian needs of refugees are responded to, while progressively transitioning towards government-led responses.
3. Refugee settlements are transformed into integrated settlements and included in national development programmes.

³⁷ UNHCR, 2019, MYMPPSS, p. 9.

4. Refugees and host communities benefit from livelihoods opportunities, which strengthen self-reliance and promote socioeconomic inclusion.
5. Opportunities for durable solutions for individuals and groups are explored and pursued.
6. Coordination and partnerships are strengthened.

3.3 KEQ 1: Achievement of results

What key results in the areas of assistance, protection, inclusion and solutions have been achieved by the country operation since 2015?

Key takeaway: *Results achieved in the areas of protection and assistance, inclusion and durable solutions are mixed. While Protection and Assistance (ToC Outcomes 1 and 2, partly 3) overall register positive results at the operational level, this is less apparent at the policy level. Inclusion and Solutions struggle to achieve ToC Outcomes 4 and 5, and partly 3. Here in some areas progress is stronger on the operational side but is impeded by limited funds and continuing legal restrictions (livelihoods, tertiary education), while in others the policy planning is advanced, but implementation is hindered by coordination challenges within the UNCT and with the GRZ, as well as by administrative complexities (inclusion in national planning processes) and pending legal and policy progress (local integration, national refugee policy and statelessness).*

What stands out in the period under review is the application of the CRRF during the Congolese refugee crisis in 2017/18 with the setting up of the Mantapala refugee settlement with UNHCR with its partners effectively delivering on ToC outcomes 1-4 and 6, as depicted in the box below.

The response to the DRC Refugee crisis 2017/18 – the “Mantapala Experience”

In December 2017 about 15,000 refugees came from DRC and settled at Kenani Transit Centre. The resettling of these 15,000 refugees in the newly opened Mantapala Refugee Settlement started in December 2017 and continued until May, 2018. The refugee settlement integrated 12 host community villages and the emergency response allowed both host communities and refugees to benefit from the services that were set up with funding from the Central Emergency Refugee Fund (CERF) during 2018. A total of 15,425 refugees and 4,204 host population were reached with various services and interventions supported through the CERF. What worked was the availability of funds through CERF and additional funds raised and that all stakeholders effectively and efficiently worked together, including the UN agencies, everyone brought in the organisation’s special expertise, World Food Program, UNICEF, Oxfam, Save the Children, Care International, MSF Spain, all contributed within their scope, while UNHCR and the Zambian government coordinated the efforts. What was important was that:

- a) planning and implementation had the self-reliance of the new refugees as a goal in view; and
- b) the intertwining of government services and emergency support by all actors worked. E.g., refugees were allocated land for farming and 500 refugees benefited immediately from the Farmer Input Support Program by the government, often a lengthy process until refugees become integrated into a government service program.

3.3.1. Protection environment and processes

Overall, there have been significant achievements and progress on Zambia’s assenting to, and ratification of international instruments even though gaps in the national institutional framework remain to be strengthened. There have not been any major impediments to accessing territory, and the risks of refoulement have generally remained low. Whereas refugees were able to access Zambian territory,

reception conditions have generally remained below standards because of significant delays in refugee status determination and the resolution of associated legal appeals.³⁸ Refugee access to individual and civil registration documents remains the weakest aspect of refugee protection.

International instruments

The GRZ has ratified key human rights and refugee-related international conventions and treaties, namely, the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, plus the 1969 OAU Convention Governing Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. It has also ratified the 1954 Convention relating to the status of stateless persons, but not the 1961 Convention relating to reduction of statelessness.³⁹

However, the explicit reservations against key provisions of the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol concerning the right to employment (Article 17.2), education (Article 22.1), the freedom of movement (Article 26) and travel documents (Article 28) have been preserved in the 2017 Refugee Act, with severe negative consequences on refugees' abilities to become more self-reliant.

National refugee policy and law

Key takeaway: Overall, the national legal framework is a mixed picture with some positive steps during the past five years (the 2017 Refugee Act establishing refugee status determination procedures and the right to self-employment). The remaining legal obstacles to the right to work and to the freedom of movement hamper the economic inclusion of refugees and therefore their path to self-reliance. The lack of coordination and of policy and legal harmonization between the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees and the Immigration Department, both under the Ministry of Home Affairs, regularly leads to avoidable arrests, detentions and/or the relocation of refugees to settlements.

The GRZ enacted the 2017 Refugee Act (which replaced the 1970 Refugee Control Act). The Act has provisions on refugees' right to self-employment, wage employment, as well as improved approaches to facilitating for self-settlement. The Act enhances conditions for better and more effective coordination between UNHCR and the GRZ, as it gives the long-established Office of the Commissioner of Refugees (COR) a legal status. Also, all refugee-related issues are now channelled through the COR who now coordinates the GRZ line ministries as well as all other government entities horizontally and vertically.

³⁸ For example: "The operation needs to urgently improve reception conditions at 9 designated borders and drop-points in North-Western and Copperbelt provinces", UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia 2020, p. 16.

³⁹ This was pledged by the GRZ several times, including at a high-level event at UNHCR in 2011 and by the Minister of Home Affairs at the sixty-ninth session of UNHCR's Executive Committee in 2018 (UNHCR, 2019, Operational Plan Zambia 2019, p. 85). See article: <https://citizenshiprightsafrika.org/zambia-joins-campaign-to-end-statelessness/>; in 2018 Zambia joined UNHCR's Global Action Plan to end statelessness by 2024. A study on the extent of statelessness in Zambia was commissioned by the GRZ with the support of UNHCR in 2015, finalized in 2016, but not published and presented before 2020. In the absence of official data, the study found that Zambia did not have stateless people and the COR, whose remit has included statelessness since 2018, affirmed that Zambia has not declared anyone stateless but also that people who enter the country without documents and without registration could become stateless. A task force was formed in 2019 to prepare a national action plan. With its Global Action Plan the fight against statelessness is a UNHCR priority but it is less so for the GRZ, particularly given that the national action plan is still a concept, not a reality. Therefore, despite the delays it can be considered a success for the UNHCR Country Office to have solicited the cooperation of the GRZ thus far; however, as it is an immaterial issue in Zambia and thus has no bearing on the success of the Country Strategy, the evaluation does not focus on it further.

However, the Act retains restrictive requirements for refugee mobility passes outside settlements, and for permits for secondary and tertiary education outside settlements (these are however lifted for primary education).⁴⁰ Furthermore, the GRZ has not yet issued any regulations to operationalize the Refugee Act, although it is already four years old, thus leaving room for non-standardized and non-uniformed implementation. This all leads to regular detentions of those caught without or with expired mobility passes, but even refugees with valid mobility passes are often either sent back to their settlement location⁴¹ or are even arrested⁴² by the Zambian police. The UNHCR sees a lack of training in refugee protection⁴³ as a major reason for those relocations and arrests. Interviews with key informants and even the UNHCR Operational Plans suggest that the lack of harmonization of the respective laws (the 2017 Refugee Act and the 2010 Immigration and Deportation Act) and a lack of coordination of how to apply the respective laws are the actual reasons for the contradictory handling of the mobility passes.⁴⁴ This implies two points: first, that the initial level of engagement for UNHCR should be with the Director of Immigration rather than the field offices; and second, that a discontinuation of the harmful practices of the police and immigration officers may primarily be an issue for UNHCR advocacy efforts and only later a subject covered by training of police and immigration officers in the field.

These shortcomings have long been identified by the UNHCR Country Office⁴⁵ and are also well understood by the GRZ. They are currently being addressed by a team of consultants who – on behalf of the COR – are drafting the overdue GRZ Refugee Policy and are reviewing the legal framework with a view to harmonizing it. This is in line with the pledges of the Roadmap,⁴⁶ to ease restrictions on

⁴⁰ For primary education and secondary education inside settlements, no permits were necessary before the 2017 Act, and as most primary and basic schools are within the settlements, the lifting of the permit requirement for primary schools was not as important as the ones for tertiary education institutions which are mostly located outside settlements. Though the law states the necessity to acquire permits for secondary schools outside the settlements, this provision has – according to UNHCR Country Office staff – fortunately never been enforced.

⁴¹ From FGD Mantapala: “We have problems with gates passes. Gates passes are given to us by the Refugee Officer. At Mununshi checkpoint, we are sent back by immigration that we have no right to go to Lusaka or Nakonde for business despite showing them a valid pass with the RO’s signature, the gate pass is still not disregarded or confiscated”.

⁴² “Restrictions on freedom of movement limit refugees to access essential goods, sources of income and education opportunities. Many immigration and police officers have not received training in refugee protection and are not familiar with refugee documentation and refugee law; as a result, refugees who have been duly authorised to reside in urban centres by the Commissioner for Refugees are arrested”, UNHCR, 2019, Operational Plan Zambia 2019, p. 91; see also examples on p. 171; UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia 2020, p. 88; UNHCR/WFP, 2021, Joined Needs Assessment, p. 16.

⁴³ UNHCR, 2019, Operational Plan Zambia 2019, pp. 92–93

⁴⁴ The Immigration and Deportation Act of 2010 does not contain the principle of non-refoulement which is – although not explicitly called non-refoulement – incorporated into the 2017 Refugee Act (see Sections 11–21). The Immigration and Deportation Act does not provide for legal remedy against expulsion (Section 10), which in turn is granted in the 2017 Refugee Act, (see Sections 15 and 18). Most importantly, it allows for the arrest and detention of refugees for illegal entry and for unauthorized presence in urban areas, (see Sections 9.2, 18, 35.3; see also UNHCR, 2019, Operational Plan Zambia 2019, p. 7). The Immigration and Deportation Act also regulates the various permits (resident, work, business, investor and study permits). Furthermore, with regard to refugees, the Act still refers to the Refugee Control Act of 1970 and its more restrictive provisions. It has not been brought into line with the Refugee Act of 2017.

⁴⁵ This came across in many of the KIIs with UNHCR office and field staff and is also pointed out in the GRZ Roadmap Status of Achievements, p. 1, Focus Area 1.6.

⁴⁶ Under Focus Area 1 “Admission and Rights”, the GRZ states its intention to review the legal framework and to develop a Refugee Policy; see GRZ, 2019, Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in Zambia, p. 3.

freedom of movement and access to employment.⁴⁷ However, the previous government had pledged, prior to the August 2021 elections, to undertake a harmonizing reform of the legal framework only *after* the Refugee Policy has been published.⁴⁸ This piecemeal approach missed the opportunity to approach the deficiencies of the legal framework in a comprehensive holistic way and thereby also contravened the GRZ's own commitment to a whole-of-government approach.

The conclusions of the review process and the GRZ's decision thereupon will determine whether and/or to what extent the legal bottlenecks on freedom of movement and access to work will be overcome; and will bring the GRZ's CRRF application more fully into line with the 1951 Convention and the 1967 Protocol. Therefore, the outcome of this review process will be far-reaching and decisive for UNHCR's ability to facilitate better and more meaningful economic inclusion of refugees and to move closer to its vision of refugees leading a dignified life. The fact that the process was not completed under the old government has caused further delays. But the new government since the elections may offer an opportunity for fresh momentum to lift the restrictions on movement and employment.

Refugee status determination

The GRZ has maintained its open-door policy for the entire period under review and assigns refugee status based on the technically well-established refugee status determination (RSD) process.⁴⁹ RSD is an essential precondition for a refugee to get a legal status within Zambia upon which access to the wide array of services depend. RSD is done through the Refugee Status Determination Committee (RSDC) and involves several steps including possibilities for legal appeal.⁵⁰ Asylum-seekers arriving in the country and presenting themselves in border areas or at provincial or district level are first screened by Provincial and District Joint Operations Committees (PJOC and DJOC – P/DJOC) in accordance with the 1969 OAU Convention criteria as incorporated in the 2017 Refugee Act; they pass on their recommendations to the RSDC. Asylum application cases that may fall outside the 1969 OAU Convention criteria, as well as appeals, are handled by the RSDC. All refugees are issued with refugee certificates and refugee ID cards by the Commissioner for Refugees; this step effectively concludes the RSD process. Subsequently it is only after further separate application to the Department of National Registration Passports and Citizenship that a refugee may be issued with a National Registration Card (otherwise known as "Alien Card", see 3.3.1.5).

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ UNHCR Country Office Zambia, 2021, GRZ Roadmap Focus Areas, p. 2

⁴⁹ Until the enactment of the 2017 Refugee Act, the process was based on an administrative practice that had been agreed upon at the operational level. Through the Act the process was adjusted and became codified within the law. Since 2019 the process has been entirely run by the GRZ with UNHCR providing technical and legal advice, capacity-building training and logistical support. Applying the 1969 OAU Convention, which acknowledges the general nature of a threat as a legitimate ground for seeking asylum in another country (in contrast to the 1951 UN Convention which focuses on the threat to an individual person). Fully 95 per cent of registered refugees are recognized as *prima facie* refugees through the P/DJOC, which consist of police, immigration, intelligence and army officers. They focus on the identity of a refugee and the reason for leaving with a view to separating combatants from civilians. Those who are not recognized under the OAU Convention are referred as first-level appeal asylum-seekers to the COR in Lusaka for individual status determination through the National Eligibility Committee (NEC) (until the enactment of the 2017 Refugee Act) and the RSDC (under the 2017 Refugee Act) with UNHCR in an observatory role. In cases where the RSDC also denies refugee status, a second-level appeal can be lodged with the Ministry of Home Affairs.

⁵⁰ Specifically, COR legal officers conduct RSD first instance interviews to determine refugee status. First-level appeals for denials of refugee status by legal officers are heard by the RSDC. Second-level appeals against denial by the RSDC are considered by the Minister for Home Affairs.

However, there are significant deficiencies in the RSD process which have created substantial case backlogs. For example, by the end of 2018, there were 3,300 pending asylum applications; by June 2020 this number had grown to 4,500.⁵¹ Delays are caused by multiple factors such as insufficient lawyers assigned to the COR, high turnover rates of security personnel at border control areas and from the P/DJOCs, with a loss of institutional knowledge.⁵² There are also delays in the disposal of asylum appeal cases well beyond timelines stipulated by the 2017 Refugee Act due to the irregularity of visits made by the RSDC to independently review negative decisions rendered at first instance. Asylum-seekers are not entitled to full assistance packages and may therefore resort to negative coping mechanisms. Moreover, the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020 prompted the government to suspend RSD processes in Lusaka, in Meheba refugee settlement and at all entry points.⁵³

Since 2019, all aspects of RSD are fully run by the GRZ with UNHCR playing a supportive role. UNHCR's support for RSD has been through continuous on-the-job training/coaching to staff involved in COR registration, RSD, local integration and joint border monitoring missions.⁵⁴ UNHCR has also supported the update and expansion of the proGress database system to provide data for all other sectors.

Reception conditions

In 2018, the GRZ and UNHCR agreed that the COR would assume its mandated role under the 2017 Refugee Act, not only for the recognition of refugees but also to deliver adequate facilities and services for reception. As such, the COR has since taken over the full running of all the border area reception centres as well as numerous transit centres in all field and urban locations. Persons of concern hosted at reception or transit centres receive basic core relief items (CRIs) and also have access to basic amenities such as clean water, toilets and medical care.

However, there were instances of overcrowding and inadequate bed space in several reception and transit centres. For example, the Meheba facility, which was intended to accommodate 200 people, was reported to be holding more than 300 persons of concern in 2018. Family tents had to be installed as a remedial intervention. Delays to dispose of appeal cases by the RSDC have contributed to overstaying at transit centres. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Makeni transit centre in Lusaka became overcrowded as no transfers to refugee settlements were happening. In Meheba, transit centre 36 was forced to host more refugees than foreseen as the RSD process could not take place and refugees had to remain at that centre.⁵⁵

With support from UNICEF, there has been a progressive improvement in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services (such as bore holes, latrines) at reception centres and border entry assembly points to benefit both persons of concern and host communities. However, key stakeholders, including UNHCR staff, agree that both border and settlement reception centres barely meet the minimum reception conditions and standards for addressing basic and psychosocial needs of new arrivals in a

⁵¹ UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia, p. 2, 12

⁵² UNHCR, 2019, Operational Plan Zambia

⁵³ The restrictions have been progressively relaxed.

⁵⁴ By UNHCR, COR and WFP.

⁵⁵ UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia, p. 11

dignified manner.⁵⁶ Existing gaps and areas of improvement with regards to reception are temporary structures, WASH facilities and the identification and referral of persons with specific needs PWSNs.

Civil registration and access to documentation

Access to alien cards and other civil registration documents remains a key issue affecting the majority of the refugee population. For refugees, a lack of access to documentation has inhibited the potential for local integration to be more effective. Access to documentation is a government responsibility but one that the GRZ and other governments in the region have overlooked as a priority for far too long and it is only recently starting to be addressed. For most of the review period, challenges included a lack of regionalized registration centres, the centralization in Lusaka of other services such as the provision of alien cards or residence permits. In Meheba, of the 3,000 alien cards targeted as needed in 2018, only about 1,500 were issued, while in Mantapala about 4,000 out of a target number of 4,500 were issued by the Department of National Registration Passport and Citizenship (NRPC).⁵⁷ Among Lusaka's 15,405 registered refugees, only 1,503 alien cards were issued in 2018.⁵⁸ In a positive step, services by the NRPC (alien cards and civil registration documents) have now been decentralized to the district level although the implementation has been hampered by pandemic mitigation measures. The high cost of permits has remained a bone of contention throughout the covered time period, largely compensated by UNHCR's coverage of costs for various permits.

It should be noted that in May 2015, the Minister of Home Affairs confirmed the GRZ's decision to offer local integration to former Angolan and Rwandese refugees residing in Zambia. This was to further the Strategic Framework for the Local Integration of Former Refugees in Zambia – an integration programme which the GRZ launched in January 2014 aimed at integrating up to 10,000 former Angolan refugees and 4,000 former Rwandan refugees into Zambian society.⁵⁹ The Strategic Framework had three main pillars, among which was ensuring access to legal documentation (a resident permit providing legal status). While former Angolan refugees were issued with permanent residence permits, former Rwandan refugees received temporary (three-year) residence permits that have since expired.

Security from violence and exploitation

Key takeaway: *Protection against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) has had some significant success in terms of sensitization, awareness-raising and the establishment of community-based protection structures, leading to increased reporting of cases. But it remains substantially impeded by structural and cultural factors (general acceptance of gender violence as a way of life), a lack of funding particularly to support livelihood activities and continuing legal constraints on the right to work and movement.*

⁵⁶ Transit centres are often hosting asylum-seekers, who on many occasions have to wait for much longer time for RSD decisions than envisaged, while WASH and basic needs facilities have been established applying minimum emergency criteria, which reduces the life span of services (i.e. emergency latrines lasting three to five months).

⁵⁷ UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia, p. 44

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 8

⁵⁹ The majority of the targeted beneficiaries were residing in the two refugee settlements of Mayukwayukwa and Meheba.

Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)⁶⁰ is the greatest protection risk in all locations according to two joint studies, which UNHCR conducted with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in 2017 and with the World Food Programme (WFP) in 2019.⁶¹ Over the entire period under review, UNHCR in conjunction with the GRZ and partners have been running various counter-SGBV programmes in all locations, focusing on awareness-raising, sensitization, facilitating and training of community leaders and members as well as SGBV monitors. Interventions have included counselling, medical and legal support for SGBV victims.⁶² This support is provided against a background of harmful traditional practices (acceptance of violence as part of life), a culture of silence, and gender norms that exacerbate inequalities which are further entrenched by restrictions on movement and the right to work and by a lack of livelihood opportunities.⁶³

The number of reported SGBV cases grew from 18 in 2016 to 315 in 2019,⁶⁴ which should, however, not be seen as primarily the result of an increase in occurrence, but as a consequence of successful sensitization and awareness-raising, leading to an increased inclination to report by victims.⁶⁵ UNHCR's understanding of the nature, forms and causes of SGBV has also been enhanced and deepened through the introduction of the participatory assessment (PA) method under the CRRF application. In terms of prevention and immediate support to victims, the introduction of SGBV monitors (in 2018) is considered a success by refugee participants in the FGDs. Selecting the monitors from among the different communities, providing some basic equipment (such as bicycles) and small fees for the monitors are key improvement factors.

Sensitization and advocacy within the communities has helped to mitigate negative coping mechanisms that facilitate sexual exploitation, particularly of single mothers and young girls. The Ministry of Community Development also acknowledges this success through its collaboration with UNHCR on community sensitization:

“This has improved – the SGBV monitors who were introduced, and sensitizing people on these issues. People are now able to solve their problems using the knowledge given.”⁶⁶

SGBV cases are often not reported. Sometimes, families of victims prefer community-based solutions, such as seeking compensation (for example, receiving a goat) or similar remedies. The minimum presence of law enforcement personnel or even the lack thereof also diminishes reporting opportunities for SGBV victims.⁶⁷ However, participants of FGDs perceived that the number of SGBV violations was declining – although the risk factors for young girls and women remain.⁶⁸ Structural challenges persist: these include fear of reporting due to fear of reprisal by the community or the perpetrator and fear of

⁶⁰ It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to analyse all UNHCR support regarding all categories of persons at particular risk (unaccompanied children, persons with specific needs or those of extreme vulnerability). The evaluation consultants therefore focus here purely on SGBV survivors.

⁶¹ UNHCR, 2019, Operational Plan Zambia, p. 22

⁶² UNHCR, 2016, Operational Plan Zambia, p. 194

⁶³ UNHCR, 2019, Operational Plan Zambia, p. 20.

⁶⁴ UNHCR, 2016, Operational Plan Zambia, p. 23; UNHCR Zambia Country Office, 2019, p. 211

⁶⁵ UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia, p. 55

⁶⁶ FGD Meheba

⁶⁷ Information UNHCR Country Office Zambia, November 2021

⁶⁸ “Due to poverty, girls go begging for food and when they beg they are given two options, either sex or they starve, so children are sexually abused. The women that are raped fail to open up for fear of being accused of seeking resettlement.” FGD Mayukwayukwa

being accused of seeking settlement through a compensation mechanism, a lack of male involvement in awareness and prevention activities, dismissal of SGBV cases reported to police, and poverty.⁶⁹

UNHCR has called for a strategy change aimed at achieving a “mentality change” with no tolerance for violence and an understanding of the long-term consequences of SGBV for survivors.⁷⁰ The programme can aspire and move gradually towards these long-term changes. But it is livelihood activities and support for SGBV survivors that can have immediate effects on reducing economic dependency. Unfortunately, funding gaps led to the discontinuation of the urban livelihood programme in 2018, despite the fact that the 2017 UNHCR/IOM survey described a lack of livelihood opportunities as a major driver of SGBV.⁷¹ Subsequent livelihood projects in Meheba, Lusaka and Mayukwayukwa remain small with uncertain broader impact. Restrictions on freedom of movement and the right to work that were still kept in the 2017 Refugee Act remain structural obstacles to reducing the risk of SGBV and preventing negative coping mechanisms.⁷²

3.3.1. Basic needs and essential services

Key takeaway: UNHCR acknowledges that, “the level of assistance being provided to refugees in Zambia remains rudimentary”.⁷³ It concedes that basic needs of refugees in protracted situations Meheba and Mayukwayukwa are not adequately met and that their living conditions “are close to an emergency”. The situation in Mantapala with its food security (through WFP food distribution) is better, but since the humanitarian aid momentum of the 2017/18 emergency faded infrastructure (permanent shelter provisions) and services (WASH and Health) deteriorated.⁷⁴ The general view among persons of concern and host communities was that: 1) access to health care has deteriorated or remained the same over the past five years; 2) both the food rations and cash-based assistance are inadequate, spiking the risk of chronic malnutrition among refugee children; 3) sanitation and hygiene are of very low standard across all settlements, with water the only WASH service that has progressively improved over the past five years; 4) both access to and quality of education have progressively declined over the past three to five years; 5) housing in refugee camps is often overcrowded and of poor quality.

Access to health care

UNHCR has supported the establishment and/or operation of numerous health facilities within the settlements. All health facilities that are constructed by UNHCR are handed over to and run by the Ministry of Health for the benefit of both persons of concern and host communities. Persons of concern can freely access primary health services in all the three settlements such as antenatal and post-natal services, birth control services, HIV prevention awareness including voluntary counselling and testing, as well as antiretroviral treatment among others.

While there are multiple challenges for every potential patient, persons of concern and host communities encounter unique barriers when attempting to access primary health care. FGD participants described numerous barriers to accessing health services, specifically long distances to

⁶⁹ UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia 2020, p. 8

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ UNHCR, 2019, Operational Plan Zambia 2019, p. 8; UNHCR, 2020 Operational Plan Zambia 2020, p. 93

⁷² UNHCR, 2019, Operational Plan Zambia 2019, p. 22, 25; KII

⁷³ UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia 2020, p. 16

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 17

health facilities, lack of transportation, and drug stockouts.⁷⁵ The accessibility to and quality of these services simultaneously decreased as households struggled to find income to pay for basic expenses. In addition, both persons of concern and host communities indicated that severe manpower shortage was not only creating long delays in accessing some urgent medical attention but appeared to be catalysing harsh, unkind treatment from health workers – possibly due to fatigue. For instance, Meheba Clinic D only had one clinician and one laboratory technician as the only staff members. Patients usually would volunteer to clean up the clinic as there are no employed support staff.

It should be noted that health facilities in refugee settlements provide primary health care, implying that those in need of specialized services must seek care outside the settlement but this attracts payments that most persons of concern cannot afford. Some persons of concern who needed referral health care were supported by UNHCR to access specialist treatment at either the University Teaching Hospital (UTH) or the Levy Mwanawasa Hospital.

Achieving sustainability involves reaching broad parity and integration of refugee and national health services. Parity requires that the services provided for refugees should be at a level equivalent to that which is appropriate to host-country nationals or vice versa. Persons of concern viewed this situation differently. They felt that the first privilege was given to local people or the host community. However, the host community also felt the need to be provided with services similar to those given to refugees, as noted by this FGD host community participant:

“Volunteers who work at the health centres do not care much about us, but they care more about Congolese. They are usually reluctant to refer serious cases involving Zambians but when it is the Congolese, they refer them quickly.” FGD, Mayukwayukwa

This statement points to a difficult balance that UNHCR has to strike. While in line with the CRRF application in Zambia host communities are generally included in interventions the agency has also to ensure that it delivers on its core mandate which is to protect refugees. This in consequence can imply that where resources are limited UNHCR has first to cater for its immediate clients, i.e. refugees. What for UNHCR can boil down to a decision between refugees and non-refugees is then perceived by members of host communities as “Congolese” vs “Zambians” and thus potentially undermines the trust in the UNHCR/GRZ approach to refugee integration.

Despite these challenges and problems, persons of concern and host community members appreciated health care-related interventions of various organizations such as Brave Heart, World Vision, UNHCR, Action Africa Help (AAH), Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), UN Population Fund (UNFP) and the Ministry of Health. Nonetheless, the general view among persons of concern and host communities was that health care access has deteriorated or remained the same over the past five years. The text box below provides more insights into the views of persons of concern and host community members about access to health care.

Persons of concern and host community feedback on challenges in accessing health care

“We pay extra money when we visit the hospital because we are not Zambians. This is known because we are asked to present our IDs for registration which shows that we are foreigners.” (FGD young men, Lusaka)

“The main challenge is drugs at the clinic. You find that when we come with a sickness at the clinic, it takes too long to get drugs. Sometimes it takes one or two months to get drugs.” (FGD young women, Lusaka)

⁷⁵ This situation is also common in other rural and peri-urban areas in Zambia.

“We don’t have a clinic at block E and its about 10 kilometres to the nearest clinic. Due to this, we hire bicycles to take the patients to the clinic for we have no bicycles.” (FGD host community, Meheba)

“Lack of transport; there are times we have patients here in the community, the ambulance should also be coming to pick our patients right from where we live and take them to the hospital instead of just rounding the settlement. For instance, I had an elderly patient at home, I took it upon myself to see the officer in charge and explained my predicament. The officer in charge helped and assigned the ambulance to pick the patient up though [the] law did not allow it.” (FGD host community, Mantapala)

“There are a lot of people who get sick, and we are treated differently and in a bad way... When in [an] emergency, it is exceedingly difficult to see medical personnel especially during the night. Medical workers are usually not available as they say sometimes that they are on holiday.” (FGD Livelihood Group, Meheba)⁷⁶

“The whole Meheba and Manyama, we depend on one doctor. Why don’t we have one doctor or a doctor on call who will be helping specifically the refugees here? Because everything is just Manyama. We have three government clinics but only one doctor and we are many in this place.” (FGD young men, Meheba)

Access to food

In all settlements, food assistance was prioritized for new arrivals and persons with specific needs, provided to them through a cash-based intervention (CBI) programme.⁷⁷ Additional assistance was provided through core relief items (CRIs). However, both the food rations and cash assistance are perceived as being inadequate. The risk of chronic malnutrition among refugee children was reported to be high.

“The mealie meal, soya pieces, porridge and cooking oil that we are given does not last us for the stipulated time. People receive very small amount of food and the fact that people do not go outside makes it difficult because children eat small amount of food hence getting sick with malnutrition.” (FGD women, Meheba)

“The UN gives us k185 per family,⁷⁸ and with that amount how can we manage to fend for our families with such an amount, even just buying mealie meal is a big problem. When that money is sent to us, it takes a number of days for us to access that money. Ration money is challenging to withdraw. The agents take long to come and pay us.” (FGD men, Mantapala)

Rising inflation has continued to affect the effectiveness of CBIs as the real value of the money kept being eroded. This was compounded by the GRZ’s failure to integrate eligible vulnerable refugees and others of concern into the national social protection programmes. Currently, CBIs (despite being multipurpose) factually only cover food and should be extended to other sectors such as education, water and health if funding allows. Cash-for-food, which was introduced in 2016 under UNHCR direct implementation, was transitioned to digital cash in 2018 through a financial service provider as part of

⁷⁶ “Livelihood Group” consisted of refugees engaged in livelihood activities:

⁷⁷ UNHCR transitioned from cash-for-food to multipurpose cash for basic needs but is aware that most of the cash is used to cover the costs of food.

⁷⁸ 185 ZMK = US\$ 11

accountability measures to ensure the direct and efficient transfer of funds.⁷⁹ Prior to the start of WFP's cash-based transfers programme in Mantapala in May 2020 (see0) malnutrition and severe malnutrition among persons with specific needs, particularly children under five, has been regularly reported.⁸⁰ Persons of concern indicated that they were using coping mechanisms which, if further encouraged, could help to underpin self-reliance.

Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

UNHCR has endeavoured to provide sanitation coverage at health centres, reception centres, isolation centres, warehouses and schools within the refugee settlements. Thousands of toilets have been constructed in refugee settlements.⁸¹ These developments were supported by public awareness-raising and health education campaigns to promote behaviour change around hygiene, water safety and environmental and sanitation practices. However, these investments appear to be insufficient as cases of open defecation were reported as being widespread. Instances of shallow pit latrines (pit latrines that are less than 2.5 metres deep) were also mentioned as widely occurring. Whereas both persons of concern and host communities experienced these challenges, host communities especially in Mantapala felt that persons of concern were relatively better off.

“UNHCR promised to build toilets for villages around the settlement. They said whatever they will be doing for refugees, they will also be doing for us. As a host community, we would also love to have toilets like the ones found inside the settlement since we have no rights to them to serve as compensation for moving us out of our land to accommodate refugees.” FGD host community, Mantapala

Hygiene was reported as being of very low standard across all settlements. The only WASH service that persons of concern and communities felt had progressively improved over the past five years is water. They attributed this improvement to the collective efforts of different organizations such as the Ministry of Water Development, Sanitation and Environmental Protection; World Vision; UNHCR; UNICEF; NCA; JICA and Habitat for Humanity. These perceptions do not reflect the KfW funded UNICEF efforts and role since 2019 for improving and expanding WASH services in the settlements.

Access to education

UNHCR has supported the establishment and/or operation of learning institutions within the settlements, has helped to construct teachers' houses, and has supported the deployment of community and relief teachers to address the severe teacher shortages that plague schools in the settlements. In 2020, UNHCR was supporting 12 community and relief teachers in Meheba, 21 in Mayukwayukwa and 40 in Mantapala. Although this model is unsustainable, it is widely acknowledged as being highly necessary as otherwise, children would not be able to learn.

⁷⁹ Agencies that are or have been providing food and related assistance include HUAWEI (food and soap); the Ministry of Home Affairs (food stamps such as groundnuts, carpenter fish, soap, lotion, sandals/slippers and cloths); Caritas Czech Republic (farming inputs); CONCERN Zambia (seeds, animals, slashers, and hoes); UNHCR (food CBI and food rations); Self-Help Africa and Concern Worldwide and iDE who discontinued their assistance prior to 2018.

⁸⁰ UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia 2020, p. 24; UNHCR, 2016, Operational Plan Zambia 2016, p. 44, 47

⁸¹ In Meheba and Mayukwayukwa concrete platforms (sanplats toilets) under the Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) model were constructed, although in 2018 funding constraints prevented distribution of sanplats (UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia 2020, p. 21). In Mantapala the PHAST (Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation) was pursued right from the start.

Generally, learning facilities are perceived as severely inadequate. In Mantapala for example, most primary schools do not have the highest grade for older pupils, and pupils are often forced to walk very long distances to access other schools with higher grades. The inadequate number of secondary schools has created overcrowding and stiff competition to join, and a significant number of refugees drop out of formal education after completing primary school due to the lack of secondary school facilities. Moreover, Zambia's encampment policy, which greatly restricts movements of refugees outside settlements, is gravely affecting children's post-secondary education opportunities.

“Children who are completing secondary school are unable to further their education to tertiary level due to lack of support. Others who have little support still can't make it because of limitations of movement. Acquiring a study permit, which costs about ZMK 7,000, is just too expensive for us.⁸² We desire to see our children have a bright future, not just staying at home with their good marks.” FGD women, Meheba

Each year, a small number of refugee children are supported with payment of primary school fees and/or provided with school bags, shoes and other in-kind assistance. Other donors such as the Government of Germany (under the DAFI scholarship programme) have collaborated with UNHCR to sponsor post-secondary level education or skills training for young people who are refugees to pursue certificate, diploma and degree courses in various fields.⁸³ Unfortunately, the number of beneficiaries is insignificant compared to all those in need of assistance.

“It is difficult to further the studies because to go for further studies, you need to have a study permit which is very expensive. Only a few children are chosen to be sponsored. Former Angolans do not receive any scholarship while the other national foreigners are given [them].” FGD men, Meheba

Other agencies that were alleviating education challenges (through child sponsorship, construction of classrooms and teachers' houses, sponsoring community teachers) under the overall auspices of the Ministry of Education include Caritas Czech Republic, World Vision (implementing UNHCR projects), and Brave Heart. A persistent challenge is that, although most refugee schools are now part of the national Education Management Information System (EMIS), refugee education statistics are not included in national education reports. Thus, there is limited inclusion of persons of concern in national and sector development plans and interventions.

Overall, both persons of concern and host community members felt that access to and quality of education have progressively declined over the past three to five years.

“On this one, there is nothing much to explain because all the challenges have worsened. Education challenges have worsened, those days from grade 1 to 7 we never used to pay but now they lie to us that the teachers are from the community hence we need to pay, and you would find that you have five children at the same school and you are told to pay [ZMK] 100 or [ZMK] 150.” FGD host community, Mayukwayukwa

The statement indicates some apparent confusion about payment requirements, as generally UNHCR is paying community teachers and there should be no extra charges for parents.⁸⁴

⁸² ZMK 7,000 = US\$ 410. While this amount was mentioned by a settlement resident, UNHCR Country Office reports that the cost is actually significantly lower and that no person of concern is paying the amount quoted and that permits during the evaluation period did not exceed ZMK 2,000.

⁸³ The sponsorship covers tuition fees, living and internship allowances.

⁸⁴ UNHCR may want to check why parents state that they are required to pay for community teachers. As this aspect is too detailed, it is not included in the general recommendations but is a suggested action for the UNHCR Country Office.

Access to shelter

The GRZ provided land to refugees in the settlements to enable them to have a shelter and grow their own crops through subsistence farming. Each refugee household received a 25 metre x 30 metre plot of land for shelter and 2.5 hectares of farmland.

UNHCR managed the distribution and/or construction of refugee housing units (RHUs) for new arrivals and vulnerable refugees. These included pit latrines to maintain and/or improve hygiene and sanitation. Progressively, UNHCR has trained and empowered groups of selected refugees to mount the RHUs as a community empowerment measure. Some community groups with assistance have begun producing bricks to construct more permanent structures on an entrepreneurial basis, but the cost involved is likely to prevent most persons of concern from acquiring and using them.

Different stakeholders including UNHCR staff agree that a sustainable solution to shelter and housing is urgently required. Insights from persons of concern indicated that housing in refugee settlements is often overcrowded and of poor quality.

“The rooms accommodate both the elderly and the children which is not conducive. The allocation of rooms is not done fairly where you find one person in a room alone while others are more than 10 in a room. Sometimes they give one room to two families.” FGD young women, Lusaka

“For the years that I have been here, refugees are still coming, and this is causing three families to be accommodated in one house.” FGD women, Lusaka

Cash-based interventions (CBIs)⁸⁵

Key takeaway: *Cash-based interventions (CBIs) in Zambia are in principle well designed and have won the cooperation of the telecommunications authority, financial institutions and telecommunications companies. The digitalization of money transfers to refugees is a significant achievement for UNHCR. With the start of WFP’s cash-based transfers in Mantapala (May 2020) the number of eligible persons covered has increased significantly. However, for most of the review period, the CBI impact on the lives of refugees remained limited, because despite its gradual introduction since 2014 and the general eligibility of new arrivals and persons with specific needs, it only reached a limited number of people. Reasons include limited funds available for UNHCR, underdeveloped local markets that do not offer goods in sufficient quantities and quality to allow for income generation, and technical deficiencies (like insufficient network coverage and too few people with mobile phones). In their current scope, CBIs do not yet contribute to livelihoods activities and self-reliance.*

CBIs are an integral part of UNHCR’s protection and solutions strategy and are part of the agency’s Basic Needs Approach; as such, they are an essential instrument of its assistance to refugees. CBIs aim to – alongside other measures – break the dependency chain for refugees by giving them the capacity through the cash transfer to make decisions based on their own priorities.⁸⁶ The CBI programme advanced and matured substantially during the review period. Introduced in Zambia in 2014

⁸⁵ CBIs theoretically support basic needs but have in the main been restricted to food purchases. CBIs in general are multipurpose and are in a few limited cases paid for other purposes, which are then specified.

⁸⁶ UNHCR, 2016, UNHCR Implementation of the Policy on Cash-based Interventions – Progress and Next Steps

as part of UNHCR's global drive towards expanding CBIs,⁸⁷ the major achievements were to progress from envelope cash payments to digital payments in 2017 through a UNHCR/UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) project, and to reach a contracted agreement with a Zambian financial institution and two of the country's telecommunications companies (MTN and Airtel) to facilitate digital cash transfers.⁸⁸ This made Zambia one of the 47 countries in which CBI is paid as a bi-monthly multipurpose grant. For new arrivals the period of payment was extended in 2019 from 12 to 18 months in Meheba and Mayukwayukwa, and up to 36 months in Mantapala. Other recipients are single-headed households and people with specific needs.⁸⁹

However, the scope of the CBI programme has only recently been broadened (in May 2020) with the start of WFP's cash-based transfers (CBT) in Mantapala. Of about 10,000 refugees considered eligible in Mantapala, 6,500 persons were enrolled by July 2020 and the target number was expected to be reached by January 2021.⁹⁰ This is a major increase from around 4,000 refugees who had benefitted from CBI by mid-2019.⁹¹ However, WFP's absence in the other two settlements necessitates UNHCR to cover the food gap by its own means. In addition, the cash amount transferred to refugees in Mantapala is significantly smaller than that given under UNHCR's CBI payment in the other two settlements.⁹²

Although the shift from direct food support to CBIs/CBTs in Mantapala is a positive step, it does not allow refugees to move towards self-reliance: for example, 77 per cent of household expenditures goes on food items with little to no resources left to invest in livelihoods.⁹³ Thus, in Mantapala, refugee households are considered "to have greatly limited opportunities to build and improve their livelihoods, let alone become self-reliant".⁹⁴ CBIs apparently do not fully cover PWSN. Of the 4,462 PWSN⁹⁵ identified in Meheba and Mayukwayukwa, only 56 per cent were enrolled for CBIs, whereas according

⁸⁷ In 2014 the process started to substitute the distribution of food and other items with direct cash transfers to refugees, then in collaboration with the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS), building on and benefiting from the ministry's already established programme for the most vulnerable Zambians; see: UNHCR, 2019, *Zambia: journey towards cash based interventions in refugee settlements*, [CBI Journey Zambia Aug2019 \(1\).pdf](#)

⁸⁸ In a very positive step, the Zambia Information and Communication Technology Authority (ZICTA) recognized the household-based Refugee Certificate as a valid "Know Your Customer" (KYC) ID for these services; see: *ibid.*

⁸⁹ These include people with disabilities, with chronic illness, unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), older people who are sick, and vulnerable people living with HIV; see UNHCR, 2020, *Operational Plan Zambia 2020*, p. 69.

⁹⁰ UNHCR Zambia, 2020, *Fact Sheet August 2020*, p. 3; and UNHCR/WFP, 2021, *Joint Needs Assessment*, p. 31.

⁹¹ UNHCR, 2019, *Zambia: journey towards cash-based interventions in refugee settlements*, [CBI Journey Zambia Aug2019 \(1\).pdf](#), p. 2. At the end of June 2019, 839 people with specific needs in Mayukwayukwa and Meheba received CBI funds, whereas more than 6,000 people with specific needs had been registered; see: UNHCR, 2019, *Operational Plan Zambia 2019*, p. 100

⁹² UNHCR had increased its CBI amount from ZMK 100 (US\$ 10 at that time) to ZMK 280 (US\$ 28) in 2019 whereas WFP started with ZMK 155 (then US\$ 8.5), increasing to ZMK 187 by January 2021, see: UNHCR, 2019, *Zambia: journey towards cash-based interventions in refugee settlements*, p. 2

⁹³ This is one of the findings of the joint needs assessment mission to Mantapala that UNHCR and WFP carried out in September 2020. They also found that only slightly more than half of households have some productive assets; see: UNHCR/WFP, 2021, *Joint Needs Assessment Mantapala settlement – Brief*, p. 2

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3

⁹⁵ The total number of PSN were given at 6,486 in August 2020; see: UNHCR – DIMA/RBSA, 2020, *Registration Data Zambia*.

to the general principle, all PWSNs should be part of the CBI programme. There is also a perception that CBI disbursements are made selectively which is reflected in statements of FGD participants.⁹⁶

Of the various reasons for the limited scope of CBI payments, two stand out as major barriers to a broader successful roll-out of CBIs: UNHCR's lack of funds for the programme, and the lack of local markets that are diversified enough to meet demand in quality and quantity, and to become a driver of income generation. This was particularly the case in the new settlement of Mantapala, which had been set up in a non-developed area in Luapula Province.⁹⁷ Other factors constraining the expansion of the CBI programme are the limited number of cash-out points, which raises the danger of missing rotating agents for withdrawing cash, network coverage, a lack of smart phones, and mixing up of sim-cards (sometimes refugees change sim-cards or use additional ones, or the one initially registered for the CBI is not available).⁹⁸

Beyond the technical aspects of the CBI programme looms a predicament (time bound CBI with no or limited chances for employment) for which no immediate remedy is in sight. This is echoed in one statement from the FGDs:

“Food is only given to new arrivals but after a year they stop giving. But we don't have jobs, so how do we survive when going to look for employment outside is not allowed?” FGD women, Mayukwayukwa

CBIs and CRIs are very important cornerstones of UNHCR's support to refugees and with regard to CBIs, the agency intends to roll these out more broadly in the future. The duration of CBI payments is by its very nature limited as it is supposed to help and facilitate refugees to engage in livelihood activities that eventually allow them to sustain themselves or bridge the time until repatriation. However, against the background of an increasingly protracted refugee situation with still severe labour-related restrictions (in terms of work permits and movements), the CBIs are not sufficient to help refugees to engage in livelihood activities in a way that moves towards self-reliance; and – once an intervention ends – they return refugees to a situation where they have no means to sustain themselves. The Operational Plan 2020 lists self-reliance as a major unmet need in Meheba and Mayukwayukwa – which are the older settlements in Zambia and which host most of the refugees in protracted situations.⁹⁹

3.3.2. Inclusion, livelihood support and self-reliance

Key takeaway: *Components for socioeconomic inclusion (livelihoods) are well conceptualized and implemented, but due to budget constraints only cater for a limited number of persons of concern,¹⁰⁰ thus limiting the overall impact on the lives of refugees. Progress regarding integration of refugee matters has been made at the programmatic level (GRZ Roadmap, UNSDPF Addendum), in sectoral service delivery and with regard to government planning at national and district levels. However, legal and policy impediments remain as blockages to achieving economic inclusion and livelihoods ambitions.*

⁹⁶ “CBI payments are given to new arrivals, and they only pay for one month looking down on the previous month which they did not give”; FGD Mantapala. Also: “It has remained the same. This is because the CBI help we get is not given every month but mostly after three months”, FGD women, Meheba, FGD files 2021;”. And: “UNHCR is only supporting those people with disabilities who are 70 years, but below 70 are still the same and we face same challenges”, FGD young men, Meheba; p.44, 42, and 34.

⁹⁷ UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia 2020, p. 28. Luapula Province is the province with the second highest poverty rate in the country, which stood at 81 per cent, see: PRB website, JOO

⁹⁸ Sim-cards are provided by UNHCR, but refugees need to supply their own mobiles; KII May 2021

⁹⁹ UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia 2020, p. 17

Inclusion has several dimensions – social, cultural, economic, political and legal. While political inclusion (i.e. political participation with active and passive voting rights) is not on the agenda of UNHCR's MYMPPSS and the GRZ's Roadmap, social and economic as well as legal inclusion are key components of all the major national and international policy and strategy documents. Emphasis is on the alignment and mainstreaming of refugee matters into programming documents and local planning and budgeting cycles. The precondition for this has been the GRZ's commitment to the CRRF as expressed by President Lungu in 2016 and the Roadmap.

The goal of livelihood support is the eventual economic inclusion of refugees. The agency's livelihoods strategy in Zambia rests on four areas (1. legal framework; 2. development of agricultural, informal and trade sectors; 3. inclusion of refugees in national and development programmes; and 4. skills development).¹⁰¹ In 2020 in all settlements, 5,086 people were supported under the livelihoods programme, which is about 15 per cent of the working age population against a target of 30 per cent.¹⁰² A broad variety of activities are carried out in particular under areas 2 and 4. They include market developments, skills training, targeting particularly women and young people, and enabling and diversifying agricultural production.¹⁰³

There are generally some very positive conditions in place in Zambia that can provide a favourable basis for livelihood activities. Most importantly there is the free allocation of land for shelter and agricultural activities. A study commissioned by UNHCR Zambia in 2017 concluded that refugees can have a major positive impact on the country's economy, if freed from legal constraints (regarding movement and work permits) and if support programmes are sufficiently funded.¹⁰⁴ Such conducive conditions, however, were not in place in 2017 and still are not evident. Due to the gate pass policy,¹⁰⁵ three-quarters of refugee livelihood activities have been undertaken within the settlements of Meheba and Mayukwayukwa (UNHCR study 2017),¹⁰⁶ thereby underutilizing the potential of livelihoods activities.

However, the livelihoods programme suffers from two main constraints that were discussed before when addressing CBIs and SGBV – the lack of adequate funding and the restrictions on movement and employment. The lack of funds regarding livelihoods was decried by UNHCR staff in several KIIs, with examples to demonstrate the problem. First, in 2018, through the agency's partner Self Help Africa, less than 10 per cent of the refugee population in Meheba and Mayukwayukwa was reached, whereas the eventual target was 50 per cent.¹⁰⁷ In Mantapala about 15 per cent of the active working population (aged 18 to 59) received direct livelihoods support.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰¹ UNHCR, 2020, "Zambia – Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Factsheet", September 2020, p.1.

¹⁰² KII, May 2020; UNHCR's September 2020 Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Factsheet, gives the number of refugees at 63,739 of whom about 49 per cent are in the working age cohort, see: UNHCR, 2020, Zambia – Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Factsheet, September 2020, p.1; UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia 2020, p. 37.

¹⁰³ KII, May 2020; see also UNHCR, 2019, Livelihoods Zambia Factsheet, p. 2; and UNHCR, 2020, Zambia – Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Factsheet, p. 2

¹⁰⁴ UNHCR/INESOR/RSC-Oxford, 2017, *Zambia refugees economies – livelihoods and challenges*, study commissioned by UNHCR and conducted by the Institute of Economic Social Research (INESOR) Univ. of Zambia in partnership with the Refugee Study Centre, Univ. of Oxford, UK

¹⁰⁵ Refugees need a gate/mobility pass of temporary validity to move outside the settlements. It is signed by the Commissioner of Refugee's settlements representative, the Refugee Officer.

¹⁰⁶ UNHCR/INESOR/RSC-Oxford, 2017, *Zambia refugees economies – livelihoods and challenges*, p.4

¹⁰⁷ UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia 2020, p. 36

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 37

Second, the lack of funding led to the discontinuation of the urban livelihoods support.¹⁰⁹ Also, the prestigious “Graduation Approach”, pursued by the Zambian chapter of the global Poverty Alleviation Coalition (PAC) led by UNHRC and the World Bank,¹¹⁰ formed by the Country Office with five partner organizations (World Vision, Trickle up, Caritas Czech Republic and Self Help Africa) had to downscale its programme of targeting 6,000 households to 1,200 across the three settlements for which World Vision secured funds and which started in 2021.¹¹¹

Third, it was noted that the different livelihood training programmes on crop production and livestock as well as business management training are well designed. Caritas Czech Republic is UNHCR’s implementing partner for this programme and it facilitates the different training following the graduation approach principle. However, the slots for training are limited. In 2019 150 people participated, in 2020 100.¹¹² For the 80 slots in 2021 they received 500 applications. For a limited number of those who complete the training, this facilitates access to the country’s Farmer Input Support Programme, which provides a concessional loan to farmers for seeds and fertilizers for crop production, thereby making progress on the actual integration of refugees into government programmes.¹¹³ While these support measures may help to change the lives of the individual refugees who are included for the better, their impact on broader refugee communities will remain minimal.

Even though refugee-hosting districts have huge agricultural potential,¹¹⁴ agricultural production therein remains severely constrained by underdeveloped agricultural value chains; a lack of agricultural infrastructure;¹¹⁵ constraints in accessing markets; and limitations in acquiring credit. Most rural areas of the refugee hosting districts are not connected to the national grid. The lack of a renewable and alternative energy source limits the potential of enterprises to grow, expand and thrive.

3.3.3. Durable solutions

Key takeaway: *Of the three options for durable solutions (local integration, resettlement to a third country repatriation), only local integration bears the potential to cater for large numbers of refugees and former refugees. Yet progress has been very limited over the past five years as most eligible Rwandans and Angolans do not have the required national IDs through which they can obtain Zambian residence permits, the legal precondition for inclusion in the local integration scheme. Furthermore, problematic housing arrangements, dilapidated infrastructure and lack of services limit the attractiveness of the local integration scheme. However, if legal ID requirements can be relaxed as pledged by the GRZ, and if local integration areas are in fact better integrated into national planning and the economic value chain, the programme could become the broadest pillar of the durable solution architecture. Resettlement to third countries does work well, but is limited to specific groups of refugees and can only cater for a maximum of around 1,000 refugees per year. Repatriation is currently and for the foreseeable future not an option for the overwhelming majority of refugees and former refugees.*

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 91

¹¹⁰ For more information please visit the Alleviate Poverty webpage: <https://alleviate-poverty.org/zambia>

¹¹¹ Information UNHCR Country Office Zambia, November 2021

¹¹² KII, May 2021

¹¹³ 200 refugees in Meheba and Mayukwayukwa were included for the farming season 2020/2021; see UNHCR, 2020, Zambia – Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Factsheet, September 2020, p. 2

¹¹⁴ Crops, livestock, fishing and agro-forest enterprises.

¹¹⁵ For instance: no agricultural mechanization, poor road conditions, absence of electricity or other power sources.

Local integration

Local integration has not yet lived up to its potential, mainly because of unresolved legal impediments around residence permits for former refugees. With repatriation not being a viable option for the vast majority of refugees in Zambia,¹¹⁶ and resettlement to a third country only open to a limited number of refugees, local integration remains the primary option that could potentially help most of the persons of concern. However, not all refugees are currently eligible for resident permits – only former refugees from Rwanda and Angola, and not refugees from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia, despite their lengthy stay in Zambia and initial plans to expand the programme to include them as well.¹¹⁷ This in turn puts pressure on UNHCR to continue providing assistance to the majority of refugees who have limited capability to work and become self-reliant.

The local integration programme built on experiences from the Zambia Initiative (2003–2007) and targets Angolans and Rwandans. However, a broadening of the programme to include Congolese refugees who have lived for 10 years or more in Zambia is envisaged in the GRZ Roadmap, though is not yet realized. The programme started in 2013 and was expected to conclude by 2016. By then, however, only a limited number of those eligible refugees had received the residence permit, valid for 10 years and the precondition for both the local integration scheme and Zambian naturalization. The issuance of a residence permit is dependent on national IDs from the refugees' home countries. Angola was supportive of the process and started to issue national IDs in 2013, although the process has now substantially slowed down. By the end of 2020 only 8.6 per cent of eligible Angolans (1,136 out of 13,140) and 2.7 per cent of eligible Rwandans (118 out of 4,259) have been issued resident permits.

The Rwandan High Commission in Zambia refuses to issue passports on a larger scale beyond individual cases, so Rwandan refugees would need to return to Rwanda to apply for a new passport, an option that is largely unappealing to them as they reportedly fear for their safety in Rwanda¹¹⁸. Thus, there is a clear reluctance by many to go back to Rwanda to obtain a passport/ID. This leaves the vast majority of former Rwandan refugees without the required national ID and therefore unable to access the local integration scheme in larger numbers. In 2018 Rwandans received temporary Zambian residence permits, valid for three years. While this was a welcome initiative by the GRZ, it was also a one-off decision that was not then embedded in a policy approach to the issue; this became evident when the permits started to expire in early 2021 without any plans for replacements. Some stakeholders including senior UNHCR staff felt that two interventions could avert the statelessness of former Rwandan refugees: one, the GRZ would have to amend its requirements for issuing a residence permit to a former refugee, or at least waive the requirements for the cases of Rwandans; two, state-to-state dialogue at the highest level would be required to encourage the Rwandan government to issue unconditionally national identification papers to former refugees.

It was noted that in 2017, the socio-economic component of local integration programme was handed over to the Department of Resettlement in the Office of the Vice-President while UNHCR in conjunction with the GRZ remained responsible for the legal component. Within the UNCT, UNDP assumed the lead from UNHCR and became the UN counterpart to the Department of Resettlement. Education, livelihoods, health, social protection and security services became mainstreamed into GRZ

¹¹⁶ UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia 2020, p. 39, 42; UNHCR, 2016, Operational Plan Zambia 2016, p. 3, UNHCR, 2018, Operational Plan Zambia 2018, p. 9x

¹¹⁷ KII, February 2021

¹¹⁸ Lewis; Themba, 2015, "Zambia shouldn't make integration and freedom of movement contingent on registration with Rwandan authorities"; International Refugee Rights Initiative website; <http://refugee-rights.org/zambia-shouldnt-make-integration-and-freedom-of-movement-contingent-on-registration-with-rwandan-authorities/>

programming and have been delivered through government staff who reside in the settlements. However, significant service delivery frailties in local integration areas have since deepened. Key challenges faced in the local integration areas include dilapidated infrastructure, poor access to basic services, lack of social protection for older people and extremely vulnerable people with physical and mental disabilities, and a lack of opportunities for economic empowerment and building of resilience of young people. As a result, a considerable number of former refugees moved back from local integration areas to their initial residences in the settlement, as those places were often much closer to markets, schools, health facilities and livelihood opportunities. Participants of the FGDs also voiced frustrations about the lack of progress.

“Now the local integration has consumed the system and people are fighting over plots...we are remaining with one small place to cultivate rice because other areas are given to those who are locally integrated. We have been waiting since 2016 to be given documents so that helps us to survive in farming. We want to depend on our own [sic].”

“We were given temporary residence permit for three years and has expired. We do not have any documents that can protect us to move outside the camp after staying in Meheba for 20 years...the permits that were given lasted three months and...has expired.” FGD participants, Meheba

The lack of progress required UNHCR to resume responsibility for people with special needs.

Resettlement

The other durable solutions avenue is resettlement in a third country. Third-country resettlement is contingent on the available slots or quotas provided by the proposed resettlement countries. Normally, persons of concern considered for the programme must have been in-country for at least five years. From beginning to end, the process can take up to 10 years. Together with the five-year requirement of having stayed in Zambia, this can make it a 15-year process, a timespan that also deters refugees. UNHCR focuses, however, particularly on identifying persons with urgent or emergency resettlement needs to benefit from resettlement both as a protection tool and a durable solution (compelling protection cases of violence survivors and/or torture including SGBV, women and girls at risk of exploitation, refugees with medical needs and/or at risk of extradition – e.g. applicants who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer). For those cases, resettlement can be speeded up significantly to between six months and one year.

The number of those eventually resettled has generally remained low, fluctuating between 850 and 1,000 with the exception of 2020 (the outbreak of COVID-19) during which only 200 people were resettled. For example, 817 refugees were accepted for resettlement and successfully departed to resettlement countries in 2019–2020.¹¹⁹ Between 2017 and 2020 a total of 1,505 persons of concern were resettled in third countries.¹²⁰

As a result of the continued UNHCR advocacy and with the support of the RBSA, Zambia has been able to realize additional resettlement quota allocations in 2021 in Sweden (200 places), Finland (250), and the United States of America (800). This trend is expected to continue for the next three years up to 2024.

Voluntary repatriation

The number of persons of concern who would like to return home voluntarily remains low. For example, a Return Intentions Survey for Burundian refugees conducted in 2020 in Mayukwayukwa revealed that

¹¹⁹ United States of America, Canada, Australia, Finland, Sweden and Norway.

¹²⁰ Information provided by UNHCR Country Office Zambia, November 2021.

more than 95 per cent of all respondents were unwilling to return home, citing insecurity and fear of persecution as the main reasons. UNHCR provided those persons of concern who desired to return to their home countries with assistance for repatriation. UNHCR provided counselling services and advice on the current situation of governance, livelihoods and security in areas of origin. In collaboration with IOM, reasonable financial support to cover the transport and accommodation expenses is provided.

3.3.4. Funding and resource mobilization

UNHCR experiences consistent, significant gaps between anticipated expenditure and actual funding. At a global level this is a clear message conveyed in promotional materials on UNHCR’s website to highlight gaps of sometimes more than 50 per cent between ambition and actual budget available. This is largely a marketing decision, designed to appeal to the public conscience. However, when planning is framed around budgets that are historically unlikely to be received, and when operations are continually deferred due to the lack of funding instead of hard decisions about priority spending being taken within budgetary availability, frustration arises – as reflected in statements such as “operations and strategy need to speak to each other”.¹²¹

Until very recently, UNHCR’s budgeting – including the contracting of implementing partners for the delivery of services – has been done strictly according to the calendar year, with any unexpended funds returned to a central fund at the year-end. This has not allowed for any delivery contingencies including procurement delays; it has contributed significantly to the failure to complete infrastructure and other operational plans; it has complicated operational planning; and it has negated value-for-money. This latter point arises through the continual re-contracting of NGO and INGO partners with very little actual time for performance once ramp-up and close-down time frames were taken into account. UNHCR staff noted that while multi-year planning was still in its infancy, it has already had a significant positive impact on areas such as partnership consolidation and delivery; these benefits are anticipated to trickle down further into operational delivery.

Table 3 illustrates the history of anticipated budget and actual expenditure at the country level by programme area from 2016 to 2020. It confirms that funding priority over the review period has focused on basic needs and essential services (35 per cent of total expenditure), with logistics and operational support (19.6 per cent) and fair protection process and documentation (18 per cent) being second and third funding priorities respectively. Durable solutions and protection from violence were allocated about 7 per cent each in spending. Coordination and partnerships reported no spending.

Table 3 Actual expenditure per programme area 2016- 2020 (Source: UNHCR Zambia CO)

Rights Group	UNHCR Zambia Expenditure (\$)											
	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		TOTAL	
	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
Favourable Protect. Environ.	320,814	3.1%	544,543	4.6%	397,043	2.7%	275,877	2.0%	181,459	1.3%	1,719,736	2.7%
Fair Prot. Processes & Doc.	1,095,474	10.5%	2,764,541	23.3%	3,605,293	24.5%	2,405,613	17.3%	1,747,673	12.8%	11,618,595	18.0%
Sec. from Violence & Exploit	642,921	6.2%	645,919	5.4%	1,036,951	7.0%	1,252,425	9.0%	1,084,198	8.0%	4,662,414	7.2%
Basic Needs & Essential Serv.	4,168,005	39.9%	4,352,469	36.7%	5,585,020	37.9%	3,656,610	26.2%	4,985,428	36.6%	22,747,533	35.2%
Comm. Empowerment & Self Rel	1,910,671	18.3%	1,070,104	9.0%	1,051,184	7.1%	1,331,786	9.6%	1,227,037	9.0%	6,590,782	10.2%
Durable Solutions	1,155,868	11.1%	676,554	5.7%	665,589	4.5%	1,166,679	8.4%	895,960	6.6%	4,560,650	7.1%
Leadership, Coord. & Partner.	7,013	0.1%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	7,013	0.0%
Logistics & Operations Support	1,150,383	11.0%	1,819,830	15.3%	2,388,233	16.2%	3,850,192	27.6%	3,479,361	25.6%	12,688,000	19.6%
Headquarters & Regional Sup.	193	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	168	0.0%	10,688	0.1%	11,049	0.0%
TOTAL	10,451,342	100.0%	11,873,960	100.0%	14,729,313	100.0%	13,939,350	100.0%	13,611,804	100.0%	64,605,773	100.0%

¹²¹ UNHCR interlocutor

3.4 KEQ 2: Relevance and sustainability of the UNHCR Country Strategy

How relevant and sustainable is the existing operational plan and strategy to the current and evolving needs of refugees, other persons of concern, and host communities in Zambia – and what major contextual and emerging factors need to be considered in the immediate, intermediate and longer-term planning for the operation?

Key takeaway: *The existing strategy is acutely relevant to all refugees and persons of concern but is not necessarily sustainable in all its aspects. Nor does it speak as strongly to longer-term development planning or changing context realities – including the increasingly long cycle of refugee movements (short term, to an average stay of 17 years and sometimes for life) – as it does to meeting more immediate needs. The most challenging aspect of the strategy is the weighting between Protection and Solutions. It is the assessment of the evaluation consultants that the MYMPPSS delivers effectively on Protection within resource windows available but creates unrealistic expectations of Solutions, creating potential barriers to the achievement of Protection outcomes.*

3.4.1. UNHCR's longer-term vision in Zambia

The longer-term vision of UNHCR in Zambia is to ensure that refugees can lead a dignified life and can contribute to Zambia's economy by ensuring their self-reliance, and to hand over the management of refugee settlements and services to the GRZ as a means of facilitating socioeconomic inclusion. In practice however, these goals proved difficult to reconcile due to structural barriers; firstly, due to the absence of a favourable legal policy environment (see KEQ 1), and secondly, due to resource and funding constraints that impede an effective hand-over to and longer-term planning with development and government partners. The generally limited financial resource base of the government, which became even more fragile over the past two years due to the financial crisis with defaulting on the Eurobonds payment in November 2020, severely constrains the government's takeover capacity.

This has been visible in the two refugee settlements of Meheba and Mayukwayukwa. The GRZ had assumed responsibility over the settlements in 2010 but has not been able to sustain and maintain the infrastructure and the services to refugees. UNHCR's Operational Plans regularly point out that significant parts of the infrastructure are dilapidated and need rehabilitation (shelter, health and education facilities, warehouses and workshops, boreholes and water points)¹²² as does the Health Post run by the GRZ at the Makeni transit centre in Lusaka,¹²³ a need that has been recorded by UNHCR since 2016, but not addressed yet.¹²⁴ Also, UNHCR had to resume providing basic needs support to the most vulnerable of the locally integrated former Angolan and Rwandan refugees, as the GRZ has not been able to do so.¹²⁵

Thus, in essence, the scarce resource base of the GRZ is negatively affecting the lives of refugees and prevents UNHCR from realizing its other key objective. This is not the result of a specific neglect of refugees or discrimination against them by the GRZ, but a consequence of the overall socioeconomic conditions that affects the Zambian population in general.

¹²² UNHCR Operational Plans Zambia for 2020, pp. 2, 17, 33, 50; for 2019, pp. 96, 102, 109; and for 2016, p. 5.

¹²³ UNHCR, 2020, Operational Plan Zambia 2020, p. 73

¹²⁴ UNHCR's Operational Plan for 2016 already lists the rehabilitation needs, see: UNHCR, 2016, Operational Plan Zambia 2016, p. 143.

¹²⁵ KIIs, March 2021 and May 2021

3.4.2. Protection and Solutions

The solutions component of the Country Strategy rests basically on three components: integration of refugees into the Zambian community, resettlement in a third country and voluntary repatriation to the refugees' country of origin. While these are very relevant, their operationalization has faced significant hurdles (see also 3.3.4).

“Solutions” as a policy approach has a very clear and distinct meaning within the parameters of the UNHCR Five Core Strategic Directions. In line with the New York Declaration, the CRRF and the GCR, UNHCR defines Solutions as efforts towards ending a person’s status as refugee through: (a) finding a home in a new third country (third-country resettlement, complementary pathways, obtaining an opportunity for study in a third country); (b) returning to one’s original country (voluntary repatriation); or (c) proceeding to a local integration solution within the host country.¹²⁶

While these are very relevant to the aspirations of refugees, their operationalization has faced significant hurdles: Solution (c) was supposed to be achieved first by 2016, then to have made significant progress up to 2018.¹²⁷ Progress towards this end has been limited, more so for former Rwandan refugees as discussed under KEQ 1. Solutions under (a) are an avenue available for a comparatively smaller number of people with specific entitlements and therefore not a pathway to resolve the cases of former refugees or those in protracted situations. Option (b) has apparently little scope as conditions conducive to repatriation prevail in the home countries (for details see KEQ 1). The current status of UNHCR’s Solution component is therefore not successful. That has also been the view of interlocutors from the government, staff of UNHCR and individual refugees.

“This is an area of frustration as the required documentation to enable local integration is not being facilitated by government and, in fact, has recently priced refugees out of that potential. And the longer this goes on, the more protracted the already protracted problem becomes. Even children born in the refugee camps to former refugees are nonetheless considered former refugees themselves.” KII with a UN agency staff member

“Protection” is about covering the basic needs of refugees until one of the durable solutions becomes available. As refugee situations in Zambia, as in many other countries, have become protracted over the past decades, the more important it has become to bridge the time gap between immediate protection and the achievement of a durable solution option through additional support and facilitation measures that centre around livelihoods support and economic inclusion. These were introduced to avoid humanitarian aid dependency of refugees, by enabling refugees to use and develop their own skills and capacities.¹²⁸

Though not spelled out clearly in the country strategy documents, advocacy for economic inclusion and livelihoods support involves efforts to foster interim or transitional solutions, while more enduring solutions (integration, repatriation and resettlement) are pursued. It is within this context that the evaluation consultants understand statements by senior UNHCR staff that the pursuit of livelihood capacity-strengthening, education, health support and other intervention measures were in fact “solutions” that provide a path out of dependency for refugees. These transitional solutions could prepare refugees in protracted situations for eventual inclusion in the local integration programme, once

¹²⁶ For more information, please see the following UNHCR webpage: <https://www.unhcr.org/solutions.html>

¹²⁷ UNHCR, 2018, Operational Plan Zambia 2018; UNHCR, 2016, Operational Plan Zambia 2016; KII March, April and May 2021.

¹²⁸ For a discussion of the evolution of development-oriented refugee assistance, see: Krause, U., 2017, *Development-oriented refugee assistance – learning from the past to plan for the future*, Germany: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/iez/13575.pdf>

its impasse regarding the former Angolan and Rwandan refugees has been resolved, and ongoing planning considerations of opening up local integration for refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi are completed. However, given the resource and other contextual constraints (like government ownership), transitional solutions are not sustainable in either the medium or long term.

3.4.3. Interconnected strategies but different interpretations and pace

Despite their differences, the MYMPPSS, the GRZ Roadmap, the UNSDPF and the 7NDP focus on similar refugee protection and solutions goals, but with varying levels of emphasis and intent. All the strategic frameworks mentioned are premised on multi-stakeholder collaboration and engagement. While UNHCR sees itself as a pivot point for coordinating refugee protection and response initiatives, the GRZ, as expressed through its GRZ Roadmap, provides overall leadership and policy direction. Other UN agencies in the context of Delivering as One, the HDN and the UNSDPF provide sectoral refugee support in line with their institutional mandates.¹²⁹ However, the potential for inter-agency cooperation is something for the UN CT and the HDN working groups once being effectively set up to consider.

The GRZ's ability to lead and own refugee response is constrained by economic hardships facing the country and limited technical capacity in addressing serious policy constraints for refugees. Critical legal and policy reforms have not been realized within the anticipated time frames, thwarting ambition, and creating structural barriers for inclusion, local integration and self-reliance. An example of this is the enduring incompatibility of the Refugee Act and the Immigration Act (see KEQ 1), the consequences of which are experienced daily at the settlement level especially with regards to movement, access to legal documentation, employment and income-generating activities.

On the other hand, mechanisms to better coordinate UN agencies' refugee response remain weak and ineffective. A significant exception was in 2018 when mobilization for the Mantapala response was led by the Resident Coordinator through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). Mantapala was hailed rightly as a huge success being the first ever CRRF activation in an emergency situation. It was a showcase demonstration of multi-stakeholder collaboration and of the effectiveness of the OneUN approach (see also 3.3. KEQ 1). In other instances, UNHCR has been forced to outstretch its resources to cover protection gaps – as was the case when UNHCR resumed providing humanitarian assistance to persons with special needs among former refugees who had become eligible for local integration. UNHCR, pursuing on the one hand a needs-based protection approach but being on the other hand a provider-of-last-resort, is effectively overstressing the organization's resources. Thus far, partnership and coordination in the context of the MYMPPSS is a weak link that threatens the sustainability of refugee response. A key factor to be considered in future planning is the way in which reflections on the humanitarian–development nexus will be conceptualized in strategy articulation and responsibility allocation, particularly at the individual agency level and at the level of the UNSDPF.

Operational planning, while acutely relevant and responsive to refugee and host community needs, has been overly ambitious and chronically underfunded in relation to the provision of protection support and basic services inclusive of health, education, water and sanitation, livelihood interventions and, to a lesser extent, solutions. Operational planning has also been unable to take a sustainable approach towards refugee needs, due in large part to previous UNHCR annual operational planning policy. Given

¹²⁹ For example, UNICEF on education and WASH, UNDP on development, WFP on food assistance. Humanitarian responses are included in their country strategies. It would, however, need an additional evaluation to assess the degree to which they are already connected or connectable to the HDN and the OneUN approach.

resource limitations, protection is also not available to everyone at every sectoral level of intervention. In fact, as demonstrated in KEQ 1, actual numbers of individuals who are supported are quite small.

Ambition is repeatedly set at levels beyond reasonable expectations of budget resources in a planning process that replicates the global ambition but is chronically underfunded by approximately 50 per cent.¹³⁰ As a senior UNHCR official observed to the consultants, the annual budgets and actual expenditure “do not talk to each other” – i.e. the country budget in conjunction with the RBSA’s plans pitch for a much broader and larger set of activities than the actual budget caters for. Multiple interlocutors cited challenges of the impact of chronic underfunding on planning, operations and staffing, suggesting there were too many tasks and expectations for conditions beyond their control. The funding crisis is possibly also a reflection of the difficulties that donor and partner organizations are facing in trying to translate their official GCR support and commitment into tangible funding pledges. A clearer and consensual understanding of the HDN concept within the UNCT, the GRZ and major partner organizations may help to signal a way out of this situation.

Until very recently, it has been the modus operandi of UNHCR to work within strictly annual budget parameters and that any funds not expended within the one-year period were required to be returned. This placed the Country Team under enormous pressure to mobilize, procure, fund, and close down processes within a very short period. Similarly, until recently, the arrangements of implementing partners were also quite short-term, with constantly changing partnerships undermining the consistency of delivery and value-for-money potential, and limiting nimbleness. These frustrations with regards to efficiency and effectiveness around the limitations of one-year budget and operations windows was recognized by UNHCR and should be addressed moving forward, given UNHCR’s transition from annual operational planning cycles to multi-year strategies. This is a welcome and positive change.

From the perspective of the evaluation consultants, overarching long-term operational planning needs to “talk more” to strategy to consider jointly evolving local and regional economic and political changes, some of which are positive and others less so. As another agency head commented, longer-term development planning needs to be embedded from a much earlier stage. This is where the overlap with the HDN approach is most relevant. There are concurrent realities too around the cycles of refugee movements: Globally a reduced willingness and generosity of third countries to facilitate resettlements can be observed. At the same time the duration of those refugee movement cycles have become longer in duration, creating an imperative to focus more on “settlement” and the establishment of new communities rather than transition facilities. Thus, there needs to be an advocacy and negotiation effort towards embedding a refreshed understanding of local integration.

3.4.4. Regional strategic planning and resourcing

At the regional level, the RBSA’s Strategic Directions 2020–2022 identifies an ambitious plan of action and engagement that is reflective of the UNHCR Global five Core Directions. The RBSA document identifies eight key ambitions as well as core regional priorities. These include priorities on registration, data and information management and analysis – noting that “there is almost no data available in the region on statelessness” (even though the ambition is to end statelessness by 2024 -) – on SGBV, exploitation, abuse and harassment; on child protection; on asylum in mixed population flows; on emergency preparedness and response; on internal displacement, climate change, advocacy, coordination, refugee empowerment and self-reliance. According to the Strategy:

¹³⁰ UNHCR’s own digital portal includes appeal notices based on the impact of underfunding that runs on average at 50 per cent.

“We will prioritise inclusion of persons of concern in various national and international frameworks, through active engagement with different actions, in particular UN Agencies, development agencies and donors... The Bureau will cultivate and pursue opportunities and partnerships through the Country level UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework...”

However, the 2020 projected budget for the region stood at US\$324.7 million in November 2020 of which 44% were unfunded:¹³¹ “The challenge of ambition versus reality is not only a country one, but a regional one as well.

3.5 KEQ 3: COVID-19 implications and responses

What were the major implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for persons of concern, and what are the enabling and limiting factors in how the organization has responded?

Key takeaway:

The COVID-19 pandemic had an immediate and wide-ranging negative impact on the life of persons of concern, as the Zambian government suspended several key services in the refugee settlements and transit centres as part of the COVID-19 mitigation measures (including status determination processes, issuance of birth certificates and alien cards upon which access to key government services depends). Livelihood activities were also fundamentally hampered as movements outside the camps were restricted, leading together with other impacts to worsening food conditions within the settlements. Persons of concern felt the COVID-19 impact was more severe on their economic situation than on their health. UNHCR, partly in conjunction with the GRZ, the UNCT and other partners, reacted quickly to mitigate the most severe impacts, providing immediate assistance for livelihoods, education, SGBV prevention and health. In a positive step the UNHCR Country Office reopened its Mayukwayukwa office in order to be closer to persons of concern.

3.5.1. COVID-19 implications

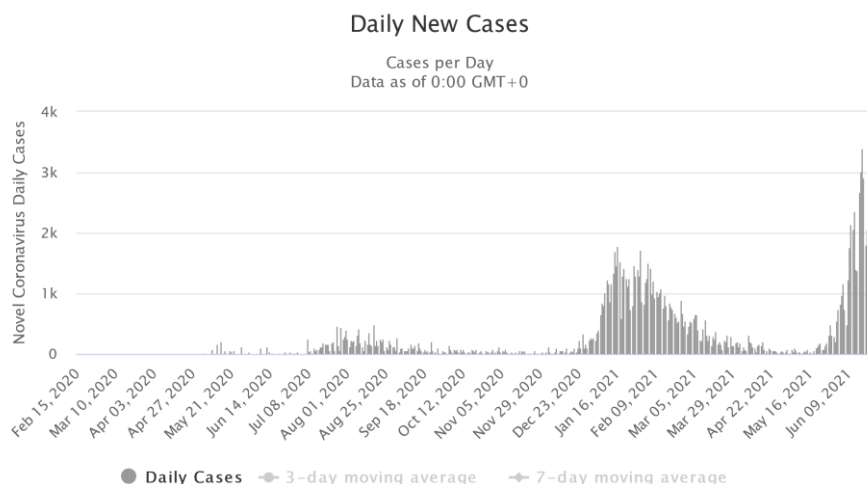
The GRZ reported the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 on 18 March 2020. As of April 2020, there were 89 confirmed cases, three deaths and 42 recoveries. During 2020 (the period under review) COVID-19 cases in Zambia remained relatively low. In May 2020, the daily case numbers were around five with a seven-day average of seven, and they remained low, with a small peak in August 2020, until December 2020. However, as of 2021, the daily case number increased rapidly to 264 with a seven-day average of 213, and cases have dramatically escalated since then. By June 2021, 2,816 new cases were reported per day with a seven-day average of 2,723, and with more than 3,300 deaths recorded¹³² (see Figure 3). Official figures do not disaggregate the statistics by cohort, but at the time of the field visit by the evaluation consultants to Mayukwayukwa, Meheba and Mantapala, there were no cases of deaths from COVID-19 reported in refugee settlements.¹³³

¹³¹ UNHCR, 2020, Funding Update Southern Africa as of 10 November 2020; <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/83002>

¹³² Up-to-date interactive data on COVID-19 case test numbers, fatalities and vaccination rates can be sourced on interactive sites, including <https://covid19.who.int/region/afro/country/zm>

¹³³ By September 2021, 358 persons of concern had received one dose and 234 had received both doses of an anti-COVID-19 vaccine. Between March 2020 and the time this report was written, 4,825 persons of concern had been tested for COVID-19 of whom 102 were positive. Two fatalities were reported during this time. UNHCR Zambia, 2021, Fact Sheet September 2021; p. 2, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR%20Zambia%20Factsheet%2C%20September%202021.pdf>

Figure 3 Zambia COVID-19 Statistics February 2020 - June 2021



Source: <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/zambia/>

The COVID-19 pandemic had an immediate and wide-ranging negative impact on the life of persons of concern. From March 2020 refugees were not allowed to leave the settlements in order to contain the pandemic. The immediate negative impacts of COVID-19 were reported by several participants of the FGDs:

“COVID-19 has brought no movement into business as everyone is expected to stay at home. It has affected business people.” FGD former refugee, Meheba

“Food is mostly gotten from outside the camp. Since COVID-19 came, movements were stopped and that means no food into the camp.” FGD young women, Mayukwayukwa

Further, the government suspended several key services in the refugee settlements and transit centres as part of the COVID-19 mitigation measures (including issuance of birth certificates and alien cards upon which access to key government services depends). Since the start of the pandemic in early 2020 no birth certificates and alien cards have been issued in Mantapala settlement, as the issuing Department of National Registration Passport and Citizenship (NRPC) discontinued its missions to Mantapala due to the pandemic, leading to a backlog of several thousand cases. In Meheba, NRPC continued its services, but the vast number of new refugees were allocated to Mantapala. The backlog had far-reaching consequences for those affected, as without the alien card, refugees were not able to access a number of services, including issuing sim-cards (limiting their access to mobile financial services) and driving licences. The impossibility of opening a bank account or obtaining a mobility pass to leave the settlement, also fundamentally constrained the refugees’ ability to start working towards self-sustainability.

Livelihood development partners reported that COVID-19 and social distancing principles also resulted in limited engagement in training activities. Training activities in 2020, including car mechanics training,¹³⁴ stopped altogether for a period and were only slowly reintroduced in much smaller groupings with consequent delays in programming. The slowdown in livelihoods training impacted not only on the

¹³⁴ Reported anecdotally by a refugee (male) in Mayukwayukwa.

sense of isolation and economic hopelessness, as reported by refugee representatives, but also had a trickle-down effect on the refugees' ability to look for work due to movement restrictions.

The impacts on movement and declining access to food and livelihoods prompted protests by refugees within the settlements. This led to a rapid assessment mission on the impact of COVID-19 conducted by UNHCR in June 2020 in collaboration with the GRZ, WFP, UNDP, Caritas Czech Republic and World Vision International Zambia, in Lusaka and the three refugee settlements and hosting villages. The assessment found that 84 per cent of persons of concern were being negatively affected in some way and that the livelihoods of at least 70 per cent had been negatively impacted by the pandemic, compounding an already distressed economic situation. Alarming findings with regards to basic access to food and meals were also reported, with numbers of individuals reduced to having only one meal a day as a consequence. This number was as high as 56 per cent in Meheba and most refugees, across all settlements, were living "hand-to-mouth". At the time of the survey, crop forecasts were positive, basic food items were available in local markets but 87 per cent of respondents "an increase in the price of basic items". These are concerning findings, given the country context which, even prior to the COVID-19 crisis, was characterized by a fragile economy with recent sharp increases in poverty levels.

3.5.2. COVID-19 response

As with many institutions, COVID-19 severely impacted on the capacity of the Country Office. However, UNHCR, partly in conjunction with the GRZ and the UNCT and other partners, reacted quickly to mitigate the most severe impacts by providing immediate assistance for livelihoods, education, SGBV prevention and health. UNHCR, the government and other partners developed a contingency plan for COVID-19 to maintain operational continuity, while also addressing the impact of the pandemic on the well-being of refugees and host communities. The following are examples of COVID-19 response in Zambia:

1. Persons of concerns received a digital cash grant equivalent to \$50 through UNHCR's mobile partners (MTN and Airtel), to help them cope with hardships related to COVID-19 .
2. UNHCR facilitated 150 refugee tailors to produce more than 75,000 cloth face masks that were distributed to refugees and their hosts. Soap and other hygiene materials were also distributed. In Lusaka refugees donated 5,000 cloth masks to community schools in Kayama compound.
3. With assistance from the RBSA, UNHCR received additional funds to respond to and support livelihood-affected refugee populations in the three settlements and in Lusaka.
4. A total of 604 persons of concern were supported, through digital mobile cash payments, to rebuild and recover their lost productive assets.
5. UNHCR deployed health and nutrition officers, livelihoods assistants and WASH assistants to all three settlements.
6. Some 22 dialogues with communities took place to discuss prevention and response to gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse and COVID-19 prevention.
7. In July 2020, UNHCR in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, trained 185 individuals including refugees on COVID-19 prevention measures.
8. There were 4,000 textbooks distributed to various schools to reduce the pupil-book ratio.
9. Under the COVID-19 back-to-school interventions, all schools in settlements received hand-washing stations, infrared thermometers, desks and masks as COVID-19 prevention interventions. Furthermore, UNHCR supported Kasempa multi-disability schools with provision of soap, washing stations and cleaning materials as well as donations of 2,500 kg of soap to the District Education Board Secretary in Kalumbila and Kaoma for host community schools.
10. Using the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) funds, UNHCR provided 500 educational tablets and 500 solar radios to be used as learning tools to help children with remote and catch-up learning. The table below shows how the materials were distributed.

Table 4 Distribution of remote learning materials per settlement

Category	Settlement			Total
	Mantapala	Maheba	Mayukwayukwa	
Radios	364	72	63	500
Tablets (primary)	229	202	69	500
Study kits (junior secondary)	158	761	1,081	2,000

One of the most significant and most far-reaching decisions was to reopen the Mayukwayukwa field office as a direct unit of the Country Office. The field office was closed in 2018 but was reopened in 2020 as a result of the rapid assessment mission on the impact of COVID-19 to enable closer interaction with the settlement by the Country Office during and after the pandemic.

In urban areas, UNHCR through its implementing partners initiated remote management of SGBV cases. An SGBV hotline for the urban cohort was also established. CARE International was brought on board to provide capacity-building and to support community volunteers on preventing SGBV. Other SGBV stakeholders involved were the Young Women Christian Association (YWCA), which provided safe shelters for survivors, and STOP THE VIOLENCE, which provided psychosocial support to SGBV survivors. Due to COVID-19, delayed access to SGBV services was experienced in 2020 as the pandemic disrupted physical case management.

It was noted that following the outbreak of COVID-19, the national response prescribed by the GRZ was mirrored in the settlements. The GRZ endeavoured to supply supplementary drugs and medical supplies, tools, equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) to refugee locations. In addition, isolation and quarantine centres were constructed, and caregivers were identified to work in these centres. Intensive hygiene campaigns were conducted by UNHCR in all settlements at community, household, school and health-centre levels to raise awareness and prevent the spread of the disease. Key messages included frequent hand-washing and good personal, domestic and environmental hygiene practices. Hand-washing facilities were installed at many public places such as transit centres, partner offices, health facilities, schools and at household level within the settlements.¹³⁵

Overall, the FGDs found that the impact of COVID-19 had been less significant on health than on income, prices for commodities, access to work and freedom of movement. Although vaccination levels were low in Zambia at the time this evaluation was carried out, the FGDs indicated that the knowledge of COVID-19, its symptoms and means of transmission, was generally good as a result of community education and information campaigns, and that there was familiarity with the “five golden rules”.¹³⁶ In visiting the refugee/host communities, the evaluation consultants also observed strict adherence to guidance on the wearing of masks, hand sanitization and social distancing.

Vaccination levels in Zambia however remained alarmingly low with only 1.5 per cent of the entire population having received at least one jab as of July 2021. While the GRZ launched a voluntary COVID-19 vaccination exercise targeting a total of 8.4 million people over 18 years, it is unlikely that vaccination programmes will reach significant numbers of refugees and host communities in the short term. Increasing case numbers are exacerbating the challenge of maintaining restrictions based on

¹³⁵ The entire refugee population in Meheba and Mayukwayukwa, including some former refugees and host community, benefited from an annual allocation of 6 kg of soap. In Mantapala, chlorine and soap (250 ml and 500 g respectively) per person per month were handed out to refugees.

¹³⁶ Mask up, social distancing, no handshake, washing hands, and sneezing into elbow.

preventive health measures, while ensuring the economic impact is containable. In the meantime, a vaccination-acceptance advocacy programme in camps will be necessary given the extremes of the FGD responses:

“I will not accept the vaccine...because there is a lot of fear and because the vaccine contains a chemical that makes the veins and reproductive system weak.” FGD livelihoods, male participant, Meheba

“I can accept [the vaccine] because it is the same virus as polio. So it is good to prevent it. As Jehovah’s Witnesses we are waiting for the vaccine so that we can start meeting at church.” FGD, young men, Mantapala

At a global level, at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, UNHCR established global weekly virtual consultations with NGO partners on preparedness and response in refugee situations. Co-organized with the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), the objective of these meetings was to create a space for regular dialogue between UNHCR and NGOs on challenges and for sharing good practices on emerging responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the evaluation team was unable to determine the impact of this initiative thus far.

A UN Zambia COVID-19 appeal of 15 May 2020 (of which UNHCR was part) presented at the Cooperation Partner Group (CPG) meeting, elicited little, if any response from donors. Dissatisfaction was also expressed at the lack of bilateral consultations by UNHCR within the Zambian donor community. It was reported that donors at the CPG meeting such as the EU and diplomatic representatives of donor countries were taken by surprise when the proposition of a UN Zambia COVID-19 appeal was tabled. There had been no bilateral or other consultations by the office of the UN Resident Coordinator prior to that meeting to prepare the ground for a more favourable response. It is not clear whether such an approach may have solicited a more positive response, as donors preferred to continue working through established and functioning mechanisms and already established bilateral relationships with specific UN agencies – particularly in an emergency situation like this.

3.6 KEQ 4: Alignment of the Country Strategy

To what extent is the Operational Plan and Country Strategy aligned to the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), the UN Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (UNSDPF), and the work of other humanitarian/development actors including the government and private sector?

Key takeaway:

The MYMPPSS and the GRZ Roadmap, published in the same period, are both succinctly worded and clearly crafted strategies, well-aligned to the CRRF. The MYMPPSS and the GRZ Roadmap reflect both the structure and intent of the GCR objectives and UNHCR Strategic Directions. Similar language, reflective of UNHCR’s Strategic Directions, is utilized in both documents; this enhances the perception of complementarity, with the respective strategic objectives similarly followed by action points. The other key GRZ strategy document, the 7NDP, embeds many of the concerns around refugee response matters, and implies inclusion of refugees as marginalized persons, despite not mentioning refugees specifically. This gap, and intention of inclusivity, is acknowledged in the later Roadmap. It is hoped that the 8NDP will more specifically reference and include refugees as a community cohort of concern. The UNHCR Annual Operational Plans are extremely detailed documents that describe how the MYMPPSS is to be operationalized in more concrete, practical intervention terms. They are, however, very specialized, working documents and are not written or formatted for an external audience.

The aggregated number of objectives (more than 50 in the 2020 Operational Plan alone) – in the MYMPPSS and Roadmap plans, proposed areas of intervention, and multiplicity of heads of reporting across multiple thematic areas collectively envisaged in the documents – creates a daunting scope of objectives overall. Despite the MYMPPSS being the “UNHCR” country strategy, the level of mutual dependency between stakeholders for success, and the overlapping of implementation strategies and plans mean that it is challenging to distinguish where the obligations of one partner end and where they begin for another partner. There is no clear delineation of responsibility for achieving mutually expressed objectives.

The UNSDPF (2016–2021), amended in 2020 to reflect the 7NDP, does not appear to be aligned with the CRRF in the same explicit way as the MYMPPSS, Roadmap or Annual Operational Plans. Though not reflecting the specific objectives of the CRRF or GCR, it does embed refugees specifically in four of its five Results Groups. It also empowers UNHCR as Chair of the HDN Thematic Working Group. However, refugees as a cohort are not mentioned in the UNSDPF Results Matrix. Like the 7NDP, it is assumed that refugees are captured in the language of vulnerable persons, but achievements are unable to be disaggregated and the GRZ does not reflect on its past refugee response (Zambia Initiative and Local Integration status) and its current one.

3.6.1. Interconnectedness and alignment of stakeholder strategies

The various strategic instruments of UNHCR, the GRZ and the UNCT were all developed within the same period (2016–2021) as international commitments to refugee protection evolved through the New York Declaration, the CRRF and the GCR. Their interconnectedness and alignment are discussed in detail below.

Alignment of GRZ strategies

The GRZ's 7NDP (2017–2021) preceded the GCR. It was designed around an integrated, multi-sectoral approach under the aim of “Accelerating development efforts towards the Vision 2030 without leaving anyone behind”. The 7NDP is a comprehensive outline of ambitious objectives with regards to overall national development with specific references to priorities of concern to UNHCR including poverty and vulnerability reduction; strengthened coordination of social protection systems; improved access to equitable and inclusive education and improved access to water and sanitation among its many areas of action. While it refers to vulnerability and marginalized communities, it is not specific to refugees as a community subset. Representatives of the GRZ assured the evaluation team that the definition of marginalized communities implied the inclusion of refugees, and indeed the practical, field-based approach of the GRZ in areas of education, health and agriculture, for instance, reflects that intention.

The New York Declaration (2016), the CRRF (2016) and the GCR (2018) developments at an international level, as well as the publication of the UNHCR's Strategic Directions 2017–2021, then found voice for refugees at the local level in Zambia through the articulation of refugee-specific strategies announced by the GRZ in its Roadmap (2019–2021) and the development of the MYMPPSS (2019–2021) by UNHCR Zambia.

Refugee concerns are the specific focus of the key GRZ document, the Roadmap, prepared after the 7NDP, in response to the CRRF and the GCR. Zambia declared its willingness to be part of the CRRF roll-out in November 2017. The Roadmap is the GRZ's strategy for implementing the CRRF (2016), itself the foundation of the GCR (2018). The Roadmap acknowledges the lack of reference to refugees in the 7NDP but reinforces the inclusivity of refugees as beneficiaries. It is the hope of UNHCR that the 8NDP embeds refugees more specifically in its language and focus. The Roadmap also sets out the vision of the CRRF in Zambia and provides strategic guidance on its implementation. It aligns the GRZ with the international commitments of the New York Declaration and is the government's demonstrated

strategy to act on its commitment to roll out the vision of the CRRF and to host and support the world's refugees by adopting the GCR.

UNHCR's Strategic Directions (2017–2021) commit the agency to five key principles of engagement: Protect, Respond, Include, Empower and Solve. The language of the Roadmap, which is focused on intervention areas including emergency response, inclusion and solutions, adopts similar language and highlights priorities directly aligned to the UNHCR's Strategic Directions.

UNHCR Zambia's MYMPPSS (2019–2021) was published in the same period as the GRZ Roadmap and acknowledges the UNHCR Strategic Directions for 2017–2021, the GCR, the 7NDP and the UNSDPF. Its five strategic objectives are framed as a direct reflection of the UNHCR's Strategic Directions.

UNHCR Operational Plans

UNHCR Zambia's Annual Operational Plans are extremely detailed, densely written documents that seek to operationalize the vision of the MYMPPSS in more specific terms. They use narratives relating to risk, context and challenges; include midyear reporting, although this is narrative-based and not timed to targets set; and do not report against softer ambitions such as advocacy intentions. Reporting on progress is difficult to distil.

The Operational Plans are a subset of the MYMPPSS and establish annual protection goals and interventions. These plans can exceed 150 pages and would be assisted by indexing and a clear explanation of the approach, and in particular, prioritization of interventions according to budget. In 2021, at the end of the period under review, a new framework of Global Strategic Priorities for 2021 was published and a new RBM system was introduced which provides a more straightforward guide to goals and proposed areas of engagement. The aim was to providing opportunities for more focused reporting and streamlined operational planning.

Alignment with the GCR four objectives

The GCR (2018) identified four objectives.¹³⁷ The MYMPPSS as a country strategy does not embed objectives (i) or (iv) and is limited in its capacity and inhibited as a result of COVID-19 limitations, in terms of making progress against objective (iii). While there was little information available to the evaluation team on the role of the RBSA in advancing objectives (i), (iii) and (iv), the recommendations section of this report does address this opportunity. The GCR Indicator Framework (July 2019) was published at the same time as the Roadmap and the MYMPPSS and is therefore not reflected in the MYMPPSS. The evaluation team was unable to source a country-specific response to the Indicator Framework despite the many detailed progress and situational reports (and data reporting specific to this evaluation provided by the Country Team), published by the Country Office on a range of issues from the planning for the influx of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for the Mantapala response to the regularly updated statistics in refugee numbers and responsive protection interventions.

The MYMPPSS, GRZ Roadmap and UNSDPF strategies have emerged as being well-aligned, complementary and cohesive, which reflects a high level of collaboration between partners. The MYMPPSS and the GRZ Roadmap reflect both the structure and intent of the GCR goals and UNHCR's Strategic Directions and are therefore mutually reinforcing. In terms of structure and commitment, the

¹³⁷ The GCR Four Objectives are: (i) ease pressure on host countries; (ii) enhance refugee self-reliance; (iii) expand access to third-country solutions; and (iv) support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

MYMPPSS and the GRZ Roadmap are formulated in clear alignment with the CRRF and in particular are a reflection of the UNHCR Five Strategic Directions, themselves a strategic reflection of the GCR. The MYMPPSS was also developed in consultation with, and was validated by, a range of stakeholders including the GRZ and UN sister agencies.

Planning documents¹³⁸ acknowledge the AGD and participatory needs assessment approaches which have found voice in the rapid needs assessments and thematic area-based action plans undertaken by the Country Team. The GRZ's Roadmap and the assumption of refugees being included among vulnerable people within the context of the 7NDP is a strong positive indication that the GRZ's policy intent reflects its global commitment. For tracking of specific commitments and for advocacy purposes, it would be helpful to make more specific acknowledgement of refugee issues and response time frames in future NDPs.

Opportunities to strengthen reference to refugee response in UNSDPF

The UNSDPF 2017 version also underwent revision in the course of the period under review to align more closely with the 7NDP, with a revised version published in April 2020. The UNSDPF is more a reflection of the collective UN response in partnership with the GRZ of the 2030 SDG Agenda. Recognizing the near-impossibility of embedding every priority within one plan, reference to refugees in the UNSDPF is relatively limited, and as a cohort refugees are not mentioned in the UNSDPF Results Matrix. While it does not mention any of the global refugee agreements, it does refer in Results Group 3 to refugee influx and the livelihood challenges faced by refugees; sets the inclusion of refugees in national policy and the operationalization of this as an indicator of a conducive governance environment; and it allocates UNHCR to chair the HDN Thematic Working Group which, as it will be discussed under KEQ 5, has the potential to provide a platform for collaboration and cohesion as agency directions evolve. Within the UNCT, the Mantapala response demonstrated the potential of the UN family to garner its collective resources to deliver a world-class emergency response. Globally, the HDN as a convening and strategic planning principle is gaining traction – and its contextual nimbleness extends to the civilian dimension of the security–development nexus as well as the longer-term humanitarian–development–peace nexus that is more prominent in crisis-affected states. In the Zambian UNCT context, the HDN is still in its infancy. The HDN has the potential to be a useful tool and a model for planning, collaboration and cooperation for the whole of the UN Zambia structure, extending to its policy and implementation relationships with the GRZ and beyond to the private sector, philanthropic entities, donors and the broader international community.

The MYMPPSS as an institutional strategy has relevance and connectedness across all five UNSDPF results groups.¹³⁹ While UNHCR as an agency is linked more specifically to UNSDPF Results Group 5, it has a mandate to contribute usefully to all areas and to seek refugee consideration across the board. This could be one of the responsibilities of the proposed Advocacy and Communications Office (see Chapter 5).

Alignment challenges

In recognizing that a strategy is not a one-size-fits-all application, and that every institution, agency or other partner is also guided by strategic directions, UNHCR faces an important challenge. That is to

¹³⁸ For example, the Zambia Chapter of the DRC Regional Refugee Response Plan January to December 2018 p. 16; the consistent focus on security and protection from SGBV.

¹³⁹ UNSDPF Results Groups: (i) Economic diversity and job creation; (ii) Poverty and vulnerability reduction; (iii) Reduced development inequalities; (iv) Enhanced human development; and (v) A conducive governance environment.

ensure that country strategies are: contextualized to fit refugee movements, needs, resources and viable solutions; flexible enough to work within an increasingly politically and financially challenged sector; nimble enough to allow for the positive recognition of the other multiple strategies that guide UNHCR's partnership model; able to provide for honest and realistic periodic assessment of achievement and barriers to achievement; and able to recognize that the government is not a humanitarian actor. This last consideration is critical to the over-arching vision of the theory of change, and as expressed to the evaluation consultants, of ultimately handing responsibility for protection implementation over to government.

Within UNHCR, alignment of strategies is a cascading process from the global to the regional, to country and to local level. As the strategies cascade, the number of partners required to deliver on success increases, each with its own discrete priorities.

In the period under review, strategies from the global to the local all underwent revision and restatement. It has been a period of massive change, most of it in the years since 2017. The ability to roll out and deliver on planning has also been enormously challenged by unforeseen risks presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has continued long past the end of this evaluation (2020).

The aggregated number of strategies, objectives, plans and proposed areas of intervention reflected in the MYMPPSS, Roadmap, Annual Operational Plans and UNSDPF, and the multiplicity of heads of reporting across multiple thematic areas, create a daunting scope of objectives. The Country Team may be better served by a simplification of objectives and interventions as reflected in the theory of change.

The evaluation was unable to measure the strategic impact in relation to the private sector. However, it acknowledges delivery of cash transfers through mobile companies and banking institutions as well as creative and innovative initiatives to link livelihood efforts up with small commercial opportunities. The evaluation encourages a stronger focus on this level of economic inclusion. These small private sector levels of participation represent an effort to bring the private sector on board with support for refugee responses, with UNHCR driving that effort. Legal reform to enable greater freedom of movement and employment does however underpin the future effectiveness of this strategy. Even if a refugee undertakes training, without permission to work or permission to travel for employment purposes, training and other efforts raise expectations of employment opportunities that cannot be met. Efforts to contact private sector partners were unsuccessful.¹⁴⁰ The evaluation has identified opportunities through advocacy and partnerships and through a closer relationship with the UN Capital Development Fund, for example.

While the MYMPPSS specifically guides UNHCR *and other stakeholders' activities*¹⁴¹ for a three-year period, its vision and strategic objectives are inextricably tied to aspects outside the control of UNHCR including GRZ policy: and responsiveness, delivery and willingness of other UN agencies to engage and play their anticipated roles. The Operational Plan is, however, very specific to UNHCR action. The challenge this raises relates both to the complementarity of the other aspects and the contribution of each player to the whole; to perceptions of parallel but separate strategic paths; to questions of attribution and contribution to results; and to the nature of the relationship between UNHCR and the GRZ.

¹⁴⁰ Several attempts were made, for example, to speak with a Lusaka-based jeweller who had provided training to four refugees but calls were not responded to.

¹⁴¹ Authors' emphasis.

3.7 KEQ 5: Opportunities for leveraging further support

How can UNHCR leverage further support for protection, effective inclusion and solutions for refugees within the context of ongoing organizational reforms (decentralization), UN reforms (Delivering as One), and National Development Plans and frameworks (7NDP), as well as the GCR?

Key takeaway: *As the focal point on refugee policy and response, UNHCR’s strategic approach should ideally be leveraging support for protection, effective inclusion and solutions across a range of institutional relationships including with the RBSA, the GRZ, UN family agencies, the international community (donors) and the private sector.¹⁴² While this has been happening informally and in an ad hoc manner, it has not been systematic or measurable, and where opportunities have been available, they have not all been leveraged effectively. There is a lack of direction and coherence in the Country Office’s advocacy approach that is inhibiting the uptake of momentum to deliver this support.*

3.7.1. Advocacy as the key tool for leveraging support

Advocacy runs through the different operational plans from 2015 to 2020 as well as through the MYMPPSS as a key tool and activity to achieve its objectives with regard to policy reform and strengthened coordination and collaboration with stakeholders. However, relevant interlocutors within and outside UNHCR were unable to identify which strategic approach to advocacy the Country Office follows, and this also remained unclear to the evaluation consultants. When the 2017 Refugee Act was in the preparatory and consultative stages, the Country Office was reported by several KIIs to have lobbied strongly for deleting the restrictions on movement and education. While no further details were given on what the actual lobbying consisted of, it was narrated in KIIs that the Country Office engaged only twice with one of the key players, the respective parliamentary committee, for the drafting of the Act. Like any other stakeholder, the Country Office gave two presentations to the committee but there was no prior or follow-up engagement with it. This is not to say that a broader and at the same time more targeted advocacy approach here will have led to the desired results, as the final decision-making rested with parliament and the government, but the Country Office did not use avenues for advocacy available to their full potential and therefore missed the opportunity to leverage more impact on the outcome of the legal framework review process.

Also, the Country Office in 2020–2021 missed the opportunity to become engaged in the revision of the Disaster Management Act, a consultative revision process to which a broad range of stakeholders contributed. This would have been a natural area of engagement for the Country Office under the GRZ Roadmap Focus Area 3.4 (“Assess sector specific response strategies...”) with its focus on humanitarian needs responses in reaction to disasters under the Disaster Management Consultative Forum.

3.7.2. Leveraging the GRZ

During the period under review, the GRZ took the bold step of being one of the first countries to sign up to the new refugee response framework as articulated in the GCR and the CRRF. The GRZ subsequently shaped its own country strategy (Roadmap) to make it reflective of the global commitments. In the period of review, the GRZ also articulated the 7NDP, which embedded refugees

¹⁴² Many of these institutions have themselves been concurrently challenged during the review period by policy redirections, organisational reforms and inadequate resourcing, putting pressure on available personnel resources to cope with unusually high demand levels for reform and adaptation in the unique context created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

implicitly within the definition of vulnerable persons. It is noted that UNHCR is encouraging a more explicit reference to refugees in the 8NDP. A simple explicit acknowledgement of refugees being included within the definition of vulnerable persons may be all that can be achieved, but this would nonetheless be an encouraging step forward.

The GRZ was in election mode for the year prior to August 2021 when the opposition won a resounding electoral victory in peacefully conducted elections. The outcome was a non-contested transfer of power that may yet result in new key appointments. The election of a new government and the drafting of the 8NDP present opportunities for UNHCR to work more closely with the GRZ and particularly with new ministers and high-level office-bearers, to address delays in policy development and uptake, legal reform uptake and modalities of engaging with the government at a structural level.

Currently the Office of the Vice-President and the Commissioner of Refugees is UNHCR's point for cooperation with the GRZ on all matters relating to refugees. An Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee (IMSC) established in 2018 has not functioned ideally and it has been suggested by the Ministry of Home Affairs that a Permanent Secretary-level technical committee will be more responsive. The COR position is at the Director level and its competencies include all operational matters. In the absence of a similarly formalized cooperation entry point at the policy level, the COR by default is also UNHCR's focal point on policy matters. This, however, limits UNHCR's policy leverage within the GRZ as policy matters are vested in the position of Permanent Secretary.

The Directorate of Resettlement deals with the resettlement of all eligible Zambians, but also with the allocation of land to refugees and their resettlement within Zambia. Here the connection between the operational and the policy level of the GRZ and the UN family is linked through the Special Policy Advisory Group (SPAG) on Resettlement. The evaluation consultants were advised that the SPAG was established under the auspices of the Office of the Vice-President, is co-chaired with the UN Resident Coordinator and a Permanent Secretary, and operates to reflect on issues of resettlement. The key Director-level entry point on the SPAG is the Director of Resettlement with an area of responsibility far broader in application than refugees.¹⁴³ This group brings together the highest levels of government on matters of common interest. No such analogous high-level SPAG on refugees that brings together all arms of government with an interest in refugees currently exists. While extensive positive and informal connections ensure that debate and issues for consideration reach appropriate ears, the structural gap of a strategic formal structure such as the proposed SPAG on Refugees wherein cross-cutting refugee policy deliberation between the UN/donor/international support community and the GRZ can meet is limiting UNHCR's policy leverage substantially. A similarly high-level body to the existing SPAG on Resettlement could provide a platform for all refugee policy and operational challenges to be pursued – including resettlement – and, supported by the COR, could serve as the primary point of coordination with the government. Discussions with the GRZ and the Country Office indicated a strong interest in and prospective benefit from consolidating this opportunity.

While the absence of a results framework has inhibited formal reporting of efforts made by UNHCR to leverage the GCR, the landscape is reflective of what clearly has been a significant and consistent effort to ensure that the ideals of refugee protection, inclusion and solutions have been embedded within government policy. The close alignment of the GRZ Roadmap to global commitments and directions, and the clear familiarity of the COR and its staff with refugee policy issues, implementation challenges and integration of refugees into population-wide service delivery are examples of constructive policy

¹⁴³ At a national level, as was explained to the evaluation consultants, resettlement is primarily a domestic issue and a much broader one than impacts solely on refugees. It includes consideration for allocations for retired public servants right through to the re-housing of freed prisoners in need of homes. In fact, refugees are not the priority cases for policy deliberation.

synergies. Application in key areas such as legislative reform remains a challenge; resourcing and political will to implement strong policy statements are also core inhibitors to success.

3.7.3. Leveraging the RBSA

UNHCR itself has undertaken recent decentralization processes and has also introduced a new RBM system. The decentralization process was still new enough at the time of the evaluation for it not to have secured any real traction. The evaluation team was unable to extract any definitive expression from the RBSA of its own vision until very late in the evaluation process. The evaluation team also struggled to get information from the RBSA on specific interventions in Zambia although there was positive, if limited, reporting from the Country Office about well targeted and timely interventions from the RBSA, particularly around COVID-19 response support as one of the bureau's earliest intervention responses.

Looking ahead, the RBSA and UNHCR have an opportunity to work more closely on institutional capacity development, particularly around RBM and coordinated in-country and regional advocacy strategies, wherein the RBSA can encourage policy reform through its role in regional forums where the GRZ is a player. The RBSA could also play a more proactive role in the region in identifying and advocating for return-to-country solutions as a tangible contribution to this fraught issue. It may also be able to support a strengthening of the Country Office's advocacy approach.

3.7.4. Leveraging the UN family

The trajectory of reform in the UN family with regards to a One UN/Delivering as One (DaO) approach is still a work in progress. Many agencies reported the continuation of a competitive, silo approach especially with regards to resource mobilization and protecting donor relations. The evaluation team's assessment of engagement among UN agency interlocutors is that while the principles of DaO and OneUN are acknowledged, practice remains somewhat insular and, frankly, is not mutually supportive. The Mantapala response driven by the Resident Coordinator utilizing CERF funding and engaging many agencies and other partners was an effective demonstration of collaboration, but the energy dissipated quickly once funds were exhausted.

It is the view of the evaluation team that a way needs to be found to reorient the UN agencies in particular towards a more collaborative model of shared refugee response. Within the framework of the UNSDPF, structures have been proposed which, when working more smoothly, have the potential to drive a deeper partner relationship between agencies. The UNSDPF established three thematic working groups, one of which is the Humanitarian–Development Nexus (HDN) led by UNHCR. Its mandate is to work in conjunction with Ministerial and National Steering Committees, the COR and the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit (DMMU) on issues of refugees, migrants, sustainable settlement (of former refugees/new permanent residents) in Zambia, and on crisis response and prevention.¹⁴⁴ The function of the thematic group is to lead the coherent design and implementation of the United Nations in Zambia policy and strategic interventions in relation to the identified theme and to engage at policy, advisory and strategic levels with government and counterparts. This can include donors, the international community, INGO partners and the private sector. This attention on collaborative coherence as a first step is important; one agency representative noted that the COR is an inadequate entry point for the HDN: *“If we continue with COR as the sole entry point, we will not be able to make*

¹⁴⁴ UNSDPF Addendum, 2020; pp. 41; UNHCR CO Zambia, 2020, Terms of Reference for the Humanitarian Development Nexus Thematic Group

the transition into a complementary development response,” – thus reiterating the important issue about a higher-level entry point for government engagement.

3.7.5. Strengthening UN agency linkages

The mission of the UN Capital Development Fund (CDF) is focused on the mobilization of public and private funds under the strategic goal of *Leaving No One Behind in the Digital Era*.¹⁴⁵ It aims to work for the poor in areas of financial inclusion, digital finance, cash transfers and financial literacy with a focus on living sustainably beyond finance in areas as diverse as agriculture, health, education, solar grids and digital health. UNCDF in Zambia has relationships with all the major banks, mobile phone providers such as Airtel and with the GRZ, particularly the Ministries of Finance and ICT, think tanks and innovation hubs. It is able to support technical assistance and innovative modalities not generally available to other agencies. UNHCR Zambia cooperated with UNCDF in the key strategic area of financial inclusion by providing in collaboration with Airtel Money and Standard Chartered Bank digital financial services (CBI digitization) for PoC in Meheba and Mayukwayukwa in 2017 and 2018. There has, though, not yet been engagement with Mantapala or between UNCDF and UNHCR in more recent times, owing to among other reasons a year-long gap in UNCDF staffing in Zambia which has now been resolved. UNCDF does engage with UNICEF on cash payments; it has a “symbiotic” relationship with UNDP; and it relates to UNFPA on a roundtable advisory basis. A core challenge is the basic requirement of access to mobile phones and the Internet, which is an urban development planning aspect of interest to UNDP. UNCDF has been more directly engaged with refugee settlement solutions in Uganda from where possibly additional useful lessons and examples might be drawn, and as an agency engaged in cross-country learning.

3.7.6. Strengthening UNHCR leadership through the HDN

The evaluation team heard very positive expressions of interest from UNHCR and other UN agencies in the potential of the HDN Thematic Working Group even though it is only in its very early stages and operating modalities were still being elaborated. The evaluation team sees the HDN Thematic Working Group as a future opportunity and therefore focuses strongly on this as an immediate potential win for UNHCR Zambia in terms of leadership and coordination.

At the time of the evaluation, only one meeting had been held, and the TORs were still being drawn up, somewhat belatedly. More than one UN agency commented that they had not been informed of the meeting and another agency that had offered to help kickstart the process by co-chairing was not invited. However, it is the view of the evaluation team that with a stated objective of UNHCR to focus more on policy and advocacy with a gradual handing over of responsibility to the GRZ, the HDN Thematic Working Group could be a critical space in which to share and test UNHCR thinking with the rest of the UN family and interested stakeholders. Further, this space could help efforts to analyse and assess UN Zambia policy direction, and to ensure commonality on critical approaches to humanitarian responses that by their nature engage many other agencies.

Three perspectives on leveraging of opportunities emerge that can be encapsulated in the saying that “it is difficult to see the wood for the trees” at present. That is, the bigger vision and trajectory are obscured by a myriad of smaller issues and impeded by political inaction.

First, there is a clear delineation of responsibility for specific refugee response areas such as reception and transport (IOM), WASH and education (UNICEF) and local integration (UNDP) but these are not

¹⁴⁵ CDF Policy Announcement October 2019

always in harmony. In all, six UN agencies are engaged in refugee response matters: (UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNFPA, IOM and UNDP) all of whom with the exception of UNFPA have a presence in settlements. A maximum of three agencies is present in any one location while UNDP has permanent officers in the field. The GRZ is represented permanently in all settlements by the COR and at the provincial level by the Ministries of Community Development and Social Services, General Education, Local Government and Housing, Health and Agriculture. Donors have a very distant relationship with refugee communities, but maintain few platforms for engagement with UNHCR. Additionally, NGO partners are present in one, two or sometimes three locations, carrying out relatively modest interventions. The private sector is present only in Mantapala through, for example, the Bee Sweet Company. In Lusaka, a small jeweller has been training a few young refugee men but with no promises of future employment. There is no common platform at present wherein all participating partners can come together.

Second, clear differences are evident regarding the definition of the HDN and how reforms that are driven by this platform can be realized in Zambia. Lack of clarity on the HDN as an approach is not uncommon. During the evaluation process, various UN family agencies presented the team with clearly conflicting definitions and working understandings of the term HDN. These included: “UNHCR doing the humanitarian work then handing over to UNDP”; and “UNHCR focuses on policy and advocacy then hands over implementation responsibility to the GRZ”. An exit strategy by UNHCR leading to full adoption of refugee support by the government is another interpretation. A further interpretation was that the HDN “has nothing at all to do with handover to government”, conflicting with the view that the HDN implies a gradual exit by UNHCR and gradual adoption of that role by government.¹⁴⁶ The lack of a common understanding among agencies could mean that their respective objectives are not well harmonized. A range of academic references perused by the evaluation team also threw up a diversity of opinions about what HDN means.¹⁴⁷ A perception emerging is that UNHCR “owns” refugee work when in fact multiple agencies contribute significantly both at emergency and development levels. In fact, responsibility for protection, security, inclusion, livelihoods and some of the durable solutions ultimately rests with government. UNHCR itself has said that its preferred future model is focused on policy and advocacy.

In the context of the uneven trajectory of effectiveness of the overall country strategy between protection and solutions, the HDN provides an immediate platform for negotiation and for the leveraging of support in focus areas for protection, effective inclusion, solutions, and also in collaborative arrangements that currently present challenges within the broader context of ongoing reforms. Being still a nascent concept loaded with different understandings, the HDN has not yet been utilized within the UNCT in the described sense, but nevertheless can constitute an extremely valuable platform which may help UNHCR and the UNCT to cater for the semi-permanent situation in which most persons of concern in Zambia find themselves and who require transition from humanitarian/protective to developmental interventions and support.

¹⁴⁶ Interpretations were offered by a range of agency interlocutors who deliberately have not been identified here.

¹⁴⁷ Strand, 2020: 104, quoted in: Lie, J.H.S., 2020, “The humanitarian-development nexus: humanitarian principles, practice and pragmatics” *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 2020, p. 1; Oxfam, 2019, *The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: What does it mean for multi-mandated organisations?*

3.8 KEQ 6: Lessons learned

What lessons can we draw from the evidence gathered through this evaluation to inform UNHCR's next multi-year, multi-partner planning in Zambia and its contribution to the next UNSDPF?

Key takeaway: *A key lesson is to create coherence between viable expectations as articulated in the Country Strategy, and budget realities, and to consolidate a well-articulated strategy with a clear theory of change and results matrix that can embed multi-year planning targets and milestones into a systematic reporting system. Supporting this vision with an advocacy strategy and structure of stakeholder engagement will create an enabling environment in which vision, operations, resources, regional and political realities and agency collaboration can work together to advance refugee response in Zambia.*

Lesson 1: A theory of change supported by a measurable results matrix can strengthen the Country Strategy. Until now the Zambia Country Strategy has evolved in the absence of a theory of change (ToC). Developing a ToC around which the Country Strategy can be frame-worked, supported by a results matrix that provides for the systematic tracking of inputs and progress against milestones will help to provide a consistent picture of achievement and a basis for assessing the impact of challenges. The ToC would be reviewed at half-yearly intervals to track progress and re-test risks and assumptions.

Lesson 2: Local realities do not always sit easily with global directions. Globally led strategic directions need to be contextually applied and modified where necessary. The extension of the definition of "Solutions" to embrace more development-oriented support would reflect reality and modify expectations of limited third-country resettlement hopes, currently the focus of many individual refugees; it would mitigate the inability of many to voluntarily return home; and would encourage others to take up livelihood and self-reliance options.

Lesson 3: A reframed strategy to reflect a realistic balance between Protection and Solutions, through giving conceptual recognition to interim or transitional solutions, may help to limit expectations of unattainable solutions and increase focus on self-reliance. Over the time frame of the evaluation, the largest budget item for UNHCR Zambia was understandably allocated to meeting basic needs and essential services. Fair protection processes and security from violence and exploitation are the next highest ticket items followed by logistics and operations support. Durable solutions have consistently received a significantly smaller budget allocation and a currently limited definition. However, the overall strategy is framed in a way that gives equal weighting to both Protection and Solutions and in so doing, raises expectations of Solutions that are not possible to deliver. Livelihoods support and economic inclusion, towards which UNHCR is working, receive considerable budget allocations and should also therefore be recognized conceptually and strategically as interim or transitional solutions.

Lesson 4: An aligned budget and strategy may assist in prioritizing interventions and may reduce levels of underachievement or even failure, and of activity rollover due to under-resourcing. UNHCR consistently plans for expenditure significantly in excess of the available budget. Annual operational plans, budget and strategy are therefore inconsistent and planning is disrupted by the rolling-over of unfunded activities.

Lesson 5: Refugees should be explicitly referenced as vulnerable persons in strategy documents including the 8NDP. The assumption that refugees are included in the definition of vulnerable persons within the context of the 7NDP has not posed significant problems with regards to protection. However, the preference in the 8NDP is for more specific reference to refugee populations as vulnerable groupings. UNHCR's advocacy programme with the GRZ must reinforce this amendment as a priority.

Lesson 6: Delivering as One (DaO) as a collective strategy will benefit from concerted collaboration. OneUN/DaO remains on a trajectory towards effective implementation. All agencies are required to cede space to enable enduring collaboration and partnership so that the Mantapala experience of 2018 becomes the norm and does not remain the exception.

Lesson 7: The Country Office is currently under supported in the areas of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) and advocacy. Reflections on the importance of measurable reporting models highlight the need for dedicated MEL resources to support the Country Office.

Lesson 8: The rate at which reforms in strategy, policy and working procedures are introduced needs to be monitored for uptake, understanding and absorption capacity, and with regard to emergency circumstances (such as COVID-19). The period under review, which was affected by COVID-19, has seen the local refugee framework changed through the GCR and the CRRF, leading to the development and introduction of new strategies in the GRZ, UNHCR and UN country levels. The period has also seen the introduction of new results-based management systems that many staff are still unfamiliar with; the introduction of many new staff; limited corporate memory retention; a reduction of overall budget; the election of a new government and the decentralization of the Regional Bureau. Five years of constant change and adaptation takes its toll particularly on those who have to lead on every new process. The impact of reform and change on staff needs to be considered as does the absorption capacity for constant revision; this needs to balance nimble adaptive approaches with a reality check on the welfare of staff who are living with uncertainty.

4. Conclusions

Conclusion 1: The MYMPPSS (and the complementary GRZ National Roadmap), driven by the GCR and the CRRF and aligned to global commitments, represent a dramatic and very positive shift in the Country Strategy. The strategy is acutely relevant to all persons of concern. The strategy and its application though do not speak as strongly to longer-term development planning or changing context realities as its potential might allow. The main inhibiting factors to the achievement of results in Protection and Solutions are: i) the increasingly long cycle of refugee movements and concomitant resourcing pressure to attend to basic needs of refugees for longer durations; ii) donor reluctance to support direct government funding; iii) limitations in establishing a functional legal framework and reforms that encourage refugee inclusion and self-reliance.

Conclusion 2: The ambition of the strategy is repeatedly thwarted by unmet resourcing needs exacerbated by the lack of alignment between operational and strategic ambition. Refugee basic needs and services consume most of the operational budget. Durable solutions are poorly funded comparatively, while the delivery of the strategy is highly dependent for its success on the inputs and response from other stakeholders. Advocacy efforts are not based on a clear strategy or approach and the opportunities to advocate for refugee rights/needs are not utilized to their full potential.

Conclusion 3: There is an imbalance in the weighting between Protection, which is driven by UNHCR, and Solutions, which is dependent upon third-party cooperation. The MYMPPSS delivers effectively on protection within resource windows available. Protection assistance achievements are noted with the provision of basic needs including food, shelter, access to health, education, skills training, SGBV protection, COVID-19 pandemic response and support to the especially vulnerable with, however, limitations in scope in most areas due to funding constraints. These constraints apply also to livelihoods activities and economic inclusion, and are here aggravated by as yet unresolved severe legal constraints (on movement and employment). Unrealistic expectations among refugees regarding resettlement as the prime avenue for solutions further inhibit the potential impact of protection and economic inclusion programmes as refugees do not feel sufficiently incentivized to fully embrace economic opportunities.

Conclusion 4: The overall UNHCR country strategy is underpinned by the commitment of the GRZ to the principles of refugee protection as evidenced by the assumption of the CRRF and the acknowledgement by the GRZ of the CRRF as being a driver of government strategy, objectives and engagement. However, there is no high-level institutional platform for engagement among UNHCR, GRZ and other key stakeholders on refugee response issues through which policy, legal reform and other bottlenecks can be addressed. UNHCR is hobbled in its ambition to leverage strategic influence because platforms for high-level engagement with government do not exist; opportunities like the chairing of the HDN Thematic Working Group under the UNSDPF are under-exploited; and because advocacy, while recognized as a critical tool to progress reforms, policy and support is currently ad hoc with no clearly defined strategy. The understanding of the HDN is still emerging and subject to wide and often contradictory interpretations. The UNSDPF does not provide for disaggregated results with regards to refugees. The HDN platform is an opportunity to bring cohesion to the HDN concept and vision for Zambia as explained in the recommendations.

Conclusion 5: Where Delivering as One/OneUN works well, as demonstrated with the Mantapala Settlement response, it can deliver results of significance. A challenge is in maintaining that trajectory of collaboration and in sustaining the financial commitment and interest of partners over the longer term.

Conclusion 6: The MYMPPSS is not complemented by a theory of change or by a logframe or results matrix that provides for the systematic tracking of inputs against outcomes or progress against

milestones. (The GRZ's Roadmap is similarly challenged.) Tracking of results and impact must be supported by appropriate tools and skills.

Conclusion 7: COVID-19 challenges have been met head-on with proactive, inclusive interventions including an early, rapid multi-stakeholder assessment, community information and behaviour modification campaigns, and practical support including masks, sanitizers and soap, and amended implementation practices. No cases or deaths have been reported in any of the settlements. COVID-19 has however exacerbated the already restricted movements of individuals, impacting on income and employment, and increasing dependency.

5. Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Align strategy and contextual and operational realities, and ensure multi-year strategic plans prioritize financially achievable interventions

Key audience: UNHCR Representative and the RBSA

Suggested action:

It is recommended that operational planning be scaled back to reflect realistically available resourcing and that planning prioritizes core needs and investments on the one hand, and desired objectives as a supplemental priority on the other. Actual gaps will be then seen in terms of core needs rather than unmet objectives. With multi-year planning, it is intended that forward planning will be simplified, and more flexible and annual operational reporting can then more accurately reflect achievements. Logistical updates that will support more efficient operations include:

- update of the BIMS database to help verify provision of assistance and other matters;
- prioritization of infrastructure upgrades;
- continued utilization of rapid multi-stakeholder assessments for short-term response and to inform the advocacy strategy.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen UNHCRs monitoring capacity in Zambia and develop a complementary results matrix that embeds measurable targets and systematic reporting for the upcoming multi-year strategic plans

Key audience: UNHCR Representative, DSPR and the RBSA

Suggested actions:

1. The UNHCR Zambia Country Team should conduct a review of the MYMPPSS (in the context of the GRZ RoadMap, 8NDP, UNSDPF and the recommendations in this report) to ensure the complementarity of the proposed theory of change as reflected in its seven results pillars and six high-level outcomes - properly reflect the strategic intents and operational capacity of UNHCR Zambia. A logical framework or results matrix inclusive of identified incremental, measurable output targets and milestones should be developed as a tool for tracking progress in the context of multi-year plans.
2. Capacity to undertake regular and systematic monitoring of progress and evaluation of results should be established, ideally through the establishment of a Monitoring Unit within the CO or – if budget or other constraints foreclose this option - through either the recruitment of a dedicated Monitoring and Reporting Officer, or through training/reskilling of programme staff.

Rationale: The Country Office should be in a position to adequately measure results, identify challenges, opportunities and emerging risks, and manage UNHCR Zambia inputs to the new results-

based management (RBM) system. This would also facilitate accurate reporting under the GCR Indicator Framework, the UNSDPF Results Matrix, and the GRZ Roadmap – all of which would be key entry points to facilitate dialogue between UNHCR, the GRZ, and the UNCT on strategies for supporting refugee programmes in Zambia.

Recommendation 3: Establish a high-level platform of engagement as a key entry point with the government for deliberation on policy regulations, partnership and related matters on refugee response and durable solutions

Key audience: UNHCR Representative and the GRZ

Suggested actions:

1. A Strategic Policy Advisory Group (SPAG) - based on the model of the existing SPAG (on Resettlement) – should be established as the key entry point for engagement with the GRZ on refugee policy issues that require legislative, policy or other more formal consideration.

Rationale: UNHCR has well established lines and forms of cooperation with the GRZ at the mainly operational level through the COR and established committees. There is need for a high-level platform to become systematically engaged with the GRZ at the policy level making in order to better support the GRZ in its policy decision making process with regard to all matters related to refugees. This new SPAG should be pursued as this proposal is generally agreed among key stakeholders to be an important next step in driving the whole-of-government approach and in reconciling operational and policy issues. The proposal for the SPAG on Refugees is also reflective of the GRZ position that an active inter-ministerial committee remains critical to operationalizing the whole-of-government approach and to ensuring that there is widespread ownership of government commitment on response to persons of concern to UNHCR.

2. A key priority for UNHCRs engagement with the government should be the consolidation and conclusion of the legal framework reform process utilizing the HDN Thematic Working Group and proposed SPAG as key advocacy platforms.

Rationale: The conclusion of the legal framework reform is essential for both, UNHCR and GRZ, for UNHCR to be able to pursue its Strategic Objectives (SO) of the MYMPPSS, particularly SO 4 (strengthening of livelihood opportunities) and SO 5 (durable solutions, including local integration), for the GRZ to be able to implement its 2016 UN Leaders' Summit on Refugees pledges (concluding local integration of Angolans & Rwandans and expanding this integration option to protracted Congolese refugees ; relaxing the encampment policy, and promote self-reliance). Options for progressing legal reform include the drafting of regulations pertinent to the 2017 Refugee Act (currently a work in progress) prior to its harmonization with the Immigration Act, or to pursue harmonization followed by the drafting of regulations applicable to the revised, harmonized legislation. The former government preferred the former approach. UNHCR has been engaged in advocacy through the provision of technical legal assistance and other measures to resolve the contradictions posed by the Refugee Act and the Immigration Act, both of which fall under the Ministry of Home Affairs, and both of which apply to refugees but provide for very different treatment. Such advocacy should continue but will be assisted greatly by the implementation of complementary recommendations including those related to the SPAG, and the HDN Thematic Working Group.

Recommendation 4: Develop a clear, multi-tiered advocacy strategy and establish complementary communications capacity within the Country Office

Key audiences: UNHCR Zambia and the RBSA

Suggested actions:

1. It is recommended that, in partnership with the RBSA, the Country Office develops an advocacy strategy that articulates specific goals, audiences (including non-traditional partners), engagement modalities and means of assessing progress against results. This strategy should be reflective of the MYMPPSS and be reviewed on a biannual basis, continually adapted to be responsive to emerging situations.
2. To effectively execute the advocacy strategy the communication and advocacy capacity within the Country Office should be strengthened, ideally through setting up an advocacy and communications unit – or if this is not feasible due to budget and other constraints - through either the recruitment of a dedicated Advocacy/Communications Officer, or through training/reskilling of programme staff. Together with a SPAG on refugees this up-scaling of the office's advocacy capacity would seriously strengthen the office's advocacy capacity and its leverage with GRZ and the UNCT.
3. Further, the RBSA should be tasked with leading on advocacy, regional dialogue and response to GCR Objectives (i), (iii) and (iv) in addition to supporting the reporting obligations under the GCR Indicator Framework.

Rationale: Advocacy is one of the key tools for UNHCR to leverage support of the GRZ and within the UN CT and therefore to being able to deliver on its Strategic Objectives. The lack of a clear and explicit advocacy strategy by the CO and the lack of respective dedicated office staff has been hampering the scope of the CO's advocacy efforts. Strategic, targeted advocacy through a dedicated plan for progress at the level of government policy and uptake will drive the intent to devolve more responsibility to the GRZ as reflected in the ToC outcome areas one, two and three. It can also drive policy reform momentum in a more specific way at the level of the National Development Planning processes and in particular at the input on human development concerns.

Recommendation 5: Leverage UNHCR's strategic advantage through effective leadership of the Humanitarian–Development Nexus Thematic Working Group in all aspects pertaining to refugees.

Key audience: UNHCR Representative as the Co-Chair of the HDN Thematic Working Group and the Resident Coordinator as the Head of the UNCT in Zambia.

Suggested actions:

1. UN Zambia's Humanitarian–Development Nexus (HDN) Thematic Working Group, a technical working group, chaired by UNHCR, should be empowered to lead on collaboration, cooperation, consultation and response on refugee policy determination. It should provide a centralized platform for proactive refugee inclusion in the UNSDPF and with the GRZ and other partners, beginning with an agreed working understanding of the humanitarian–development nexus approach and responsibility delineations.
2. The HDN Working Group shall also advise and support financial needs assessments and operational coordination involving multiple partners, and drive transparent discussions on issues of delineation or allocation of responsibilities and funding.
3. Actions to be taken by the HDN Working Group might include:
 - referral of matters to a high-level SPAG;
 - reflection on a common understanding of what the humanitarian–development nexus means for discrete agency responsibilities in the context of a more harmonized, collaborative approach to refugee issues in Zambia;
 - establish clarity on definitional baselines (for example: if children and descendants of refugees inherit that refugee status);
 - review the UNSDPF Results Matrix to reflect and disaggregate more effectively refugee response achievements.

Recommendation 6: Deepen and extend the engagement with the UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) to help drive IT-led interventions

Key audiences are UNHCR Representative, UN Resident Coordinator, and the UNCDF

Suggested action:

It is recommended that the UNCDF be included in the HDN Thematic Working Group to mainstream work with refugees in areas of financial inclusion, digital finance, cash transfers and innovative solutions in the areas of livelihoods/agriculture, health, education, solar grids and digital health.

Recommendation 7: Consider redefining solutions (durable and interim/transitional) in the context of what is achievable in Zambia to bridge the gap with protection modalities, and to embrace these more fully

Key audience: UNHCR Representative and the RBSA

Suggested action:

It is recommended that UNHCR Zambia, with the help of the RBSA, reflect on the respective language and focus around Protection and Solutions in the MYMPPSS, mindful of inhibiting factors that apply to Solutions. A refreshed interpretation of Solutions in the next iteration of the MYMPPSS and/or the Multi-Year strategic Plans may reduce the expectation by refugees regarding resettlement to a third country while being realistic about the limitations regarding local integration and voluntary repatriation. The prioritization of budgetary allocations to livelihoods training and economic self-sufficiency, and the enhanced collaboration anticipated through the HDN forum will underpin these reorientation efforts.

Recommendation 8: Enable locally mobilized funds to be utilized locally in consultation with donors

Key audience is UNHCR Representative in consultation with the RBSA and UNHCR HQ (DER)

Suggested action:

It is recommended that, within agreed parameters, when locally based advocacy results in additional funding support for specific purposes, the mobilizer should ensure that investment is seen to have a locally driven outcome and is targeted back to the purpose for which funds have been contributed. This will build confidence in the commitment of UNHCR locally to deliver on plans and promises, and locally mobilized supporters will be able to relate to and see the dividends of their support directly. Where there is a mobilization split between local initiatives and support to the central budget, then that arrangement must be transparent.

6. Annexes

6.1 Annex 1: Terms of Reference

COUNTRY STRATEGY EVALUATION ZAMBIA

Key information at glance about the evaluation	
Title of the evaluation:	UNHCR Country Strategy Evaluation Zambia
Type of evaluation:	Centralised
Time-frame covered:	2015-2020
Evaluation commissioned by:	UNHCR Evaluation Service
Date of advertising	October 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

UNHCR's country operations around the world aim to work effectively to pursue protection and solutions, to support the inclusion of internally displaced, refugees and stateless people in national and local services, and to contribute to societies and economies, especially in refugee hosting countries. Such efforts require learning lessons from implementation on the ground. These lessons inform UNHCR's strategic thinking, programme design and implementation both at the global and operation level, as well as ensure UNHCR country operations are supported in the application of strategic policy frameworks - such as the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), UNHCR's Strategic Directions (2017-2021), the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), and regional/national guiding frameworks - in the pursuit of protection and durable solutions for Persons of Concern (PoC).

To help inform this learning process, UNHCR's Evaluation Service began rolling out Country Strategy Evaluations (CSEs) in 2019.¹⁴⁸ This Terms of Reference lays out the background, objectives, purpose, scope, intended users, and envisioned methodological approach for a CSE in Zambia, that will further guide the design and implementation of this evaluation. Details on the Call for Proposals and team qualifications are included at the end of the ToR.

2. BACKGROUND

There are more than 67 million people of concern to UNHCR around the world—refugees, stateless persons, returnees, and IDPs affected by conflict — a number which has doubled over the past two decades. These historic levels of displacement have highlighted the need to revisit some of the traditional approaches to the provision of protection and assistance as well as the search for solutions.¹⁴⁹ UNHCR is committed to taking a strategic, evidence-based approach to identifying those

¹⁴⁸ The terminology for these evaluations changed in 2020 from Country Portfolio Evaluations to Country Strategy Evaluations, in order to align them to the MYMP. Completed CSEs include Angola, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Morocco. At the time of writing, CSEs are also planned in Egypt, Uganda, Myanmar and Ukraine.

¹⁴⁹ UNHCR's Global Appeal 2018 – 2019 available at:

http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/ga2018/pdf/Global_Appeal_2018_full_lowres.pdf

areas where UNHCR can have most impact,¹⁵⁰ and where we can most effectively leverage others in securing protection and solutions.

The adoption of the New York Declaration in September 2016 ushered UNHCR and partners into a new era of collaboration as States agreed to address and resolve refugee flows through a new model—the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)—that places the rights, interests and potential of refugees and of their hosts at the heart of a multi-dimensional response extending beyond humanitarian action. Building on lessons learnt through the practical application of the CRRF, the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) provides a platform through which UNHCR can reinforce existing, and build new partnerships, to improve response to refugee situations. Important developments linked to UN Reform, the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 are also fundamentally reshaping the way in which UNHCR works.

In alignment with the five core areas of UNHCR’s 2017-2021 Strategic Directions to ensure protection, respond in emergencies, promote inclusion, empower the people UNHCR serves, and expand opportunities for solutions, UNHCR country operations develop multi-year and annual protection and solution strategies, guided by participatory planning exercises (joint assessments of needs and priorities with partner organisations and key stakeholders including governments, donors, and people of concern). The annual planning process further defines country priority actions and allocates resources against these priorities in line with global and regional priorities.

In January 2019, the High Commissioner announced that UNHCR would move its Regional Bureaux to the field, setting in motion a far-reaching and consequential transformation for the organization¹⁵¹. The impetus for UNHCR’s internal change process was driven, in part, by new developments in a rapidly evolving international context. At the global level, there has been an appetite for new approaches that go beyond traditional humanitarian action, and a realization that forced displacement is not just a humanitarian but also a political and a development challenge. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by world leaders at the UN General Assembly in September 2015, and its commitment to ‘leave no-one behind’ provide a powerful basis for the inclusion of refugees, the internally displaced and stateless people in economic development planning, as well as in all other measures taken by States to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

By mid-2020, the new decentralised organizational structure and way of working is largely in place. A decentralized UNHCR will:¹⁵²

- Ensure more effective protection to refugees and people of concern in ways that promote the exercise of fundamental rights, facilitates access to opportunities and assistance, and empowers them to seek their own solutions.
- Respond faster and in a more flexible way, especially at the onset of emergencies;
- Align with UN system reform and the presence of sister agencies and partners;
- Better integrate regional dynamics into annual and multi-year strategic planning and work more effectively with regional stakeholders, sister UN agencies and partners, in particular development actors and private sector interlocutors, towards inclusion of refugees and others of concern within host communities;
- Ensure consistent support to country operations (CO), including the ability to course-correct in light of new challenges and opportunities, translate global priorities into regional and country specific strategies, and foster greater programmatic integrity and value for money.

¹⁵⁰ UNHCR Strategic Directions 2017 – 2021 available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/5894558d4.pdf>

¹⁵¹ UNHCR has seven Regional Bureaux, which were previously located within Headquarters in Geneva. Bureaux cover the full spectrum of setting regional strategies and priorities, managing performance and compliance, identification and monitoring of emerging issues and risks, and the provision of technical support and guidance to country operations. The Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, which covers Zambia, is based in Pretoria, RSA.

¹⁵² UNHCR Update on Decentralisation and Regionalisation (2020): <https://www.unhcr.org/5d1b87787.pdf>

The new Regional Bureaux are anticipated to become critical hubs for collaboration and strategic engagement, as well as for addressing any cross-cutting operational challenges. Regional Directors have primary accountability for strategic decision-making, regional prioritization, and quality assurance — and enhanced delegated authorities to effectively manage their respective regions. Technical experts, with functional links to the Divisions at HQs, are fully integrated within the regionalized bureau structures and lines of authority. The Regional Bureau for Southern Africa covers the following key areas:

1. **Strategic Planning and Management:** ensure the region's overall coherence with UNHCR's global objectives and HC's Strategic Directions; set regional bureau-wide priorities, manage and direct all regional resources, assess contextual changes in order to adjust regional operational priorities and provide oversight on key back office functions. It also provides operations with support and guidance in the area of programme management, operational/technical support, human resources management, supply/ procurement, financial management, administration and Information and Communications Technology (ICT).
2. **Protection:** elaborate and empower regional approaches to UNHCR's global protection priorities; monitor and support the exercise of UNHCR's core protection mandate at country level and enhance solutions opportunities both at the country and regional levels.
3. **External engagement:** implement regional strategic communications strategy and oversee daily communications and public information requests, manage relationships with external partners, coordinate reporting and information management and create opportunities and support to engage with developmental partners.

In addition to these transformations, 2020 marks an unusual year in which all operations globally were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond the obvious health implications, restrictions on cross-border and internal movements, decline in economic activity, and social distancing associated with the COVID-19 response have not only affected UNHCR's ability to deliver to PoCs, but have also had a profound impact on the lives of refugees and on the communities and Governments that host them.

3. UNHCR OPERATIONAL CONTEXT IN ZAMBIA

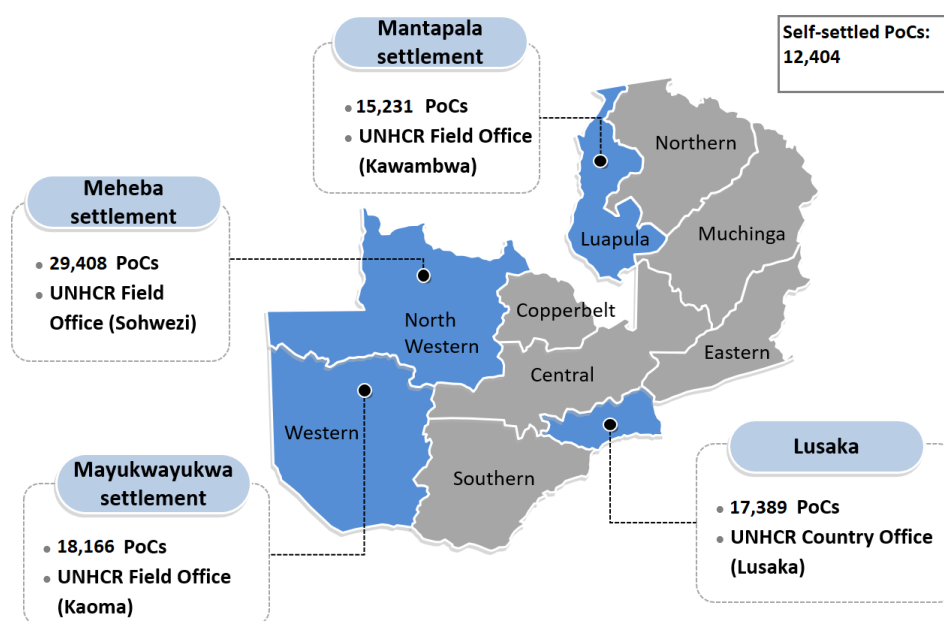
Despite being a peaceful lower-middle income country with a population of approximately 18.4 million people¹⁵³; Zambia continues to face equality challenges, particularly in the areas of life expectancy, education skills, and poverty – which are differentiated by gender and geographical location.¹⁵⁴ Most of the refugee hosting communities are in highly deprived geographical locations, with limited access to education and skills, health services, clean drinking water and sanitation, as well as income generation and livelihood opportunities. In addition, Zambia is at the crossroad between Eastern and Southern Africa and is a destination as well as a transit country for mixed migration flows. Zambia has a long history of providing international protection and assistance to refugees and is a champion among Southern African countries in providing opportunities for socio-economic integration. This is reflected in the national Refugees Act (2017), which lays out the foundation for refugee domestic law covering protection of asylum seekers in Zambia, as well as socio-economic integration of refugees in the country. The Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR) in the Ministry of Home Affairs is UNHCR's main Government interlocutor under the Refugee Act. A Project-Partnership Agreement (PPA) signed in 2019 between UNHCR and COR has streamlined the way UNHCR engages with line ministries at the provincial and district level. COR manages all border reception centers, numerous transit centers in field and urban locations, as well as refugee settlements (Meheba and Mayukwayukwa) with support of UNHCR and other operational partners.

¹⁵³ <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/zambia-population/>

¹⁵⁴ UNDP (2016)

As of August 2020, Zambia hosted over 92,598 registered Persons of Concern (PoC), of which approximately 63,739 are refugees, 24,040 are former Angolan and Rwandese refugees awaiting issuance and extension of resident permits, and 4,819 are asylum seekers. The majority of refugees stem from the Democratic Republic of Congo (55,313), followed by Angola (18,885), Burundi (8,092), Rwanda (5,991), and Somalia (3,736).¹⁵⁵ At the time of writing, UNHCR had one Representative Office in Lusaka, two field offices in Solwezi and Kawambwa, and one field unit in Kaoma. Staff comprise of 51 national, 17 international, and 24 affiliate workforce members. PoCs are relatively evenly spread across four settlements located in North Western Province (Meheba), Lusaka, Western Province (Mayukwayukwa), and Luapula Province (Mantapala).

UNHCR PoC Settlements and Office Locations in Zambia (August 2020)



Source: UNHCR Evaluation Service, based on data from UNHCR Primes dataport

Zambia is characterised by three distinct refugee situations, each one presenting a different set of needs:

Refugees in need of emergency humanitarian support: Since 2017 the conflict in DRC has led to a steady influx of over 23,000 new arrivals of Congolese refugees requiring emergency humanitarian support.

Refugees in protracted situation in need of humanitarian support: Refugees who arrived in Zambia before 31 December 2013 from DRC, Burundi and Somalia currently have limited prospects and interest for voluntary repatriation due to the volatile security situation in these countries of origin. These refugees also have limited opportunities in terms of local integration, since local integration programmes are currently only available to former Rwandan and Angolan refugees based on the Refugee Convention agreed by the Government. Within this group there are also urban-based self-settled refugees, mainly in Lusaka, who receive very little support due to their status and location. Other vulnerable individuals requiring humanitarian support are children at risk of statelessness due to a lack of documentation.

¹⁵⁵ UNHCR Registration data Zambia (31/08/2020)

Refugees in protracted situation in need of development support: Mainly Rwandan and Angolan refugees, who are eligible for local integration programmes and need longer-term support through development partners and the private sector.

UNHCR’s operational expenditure in 2015 was US\$9 million and increased annually over the following years to: US\$10 million (2016), US\$12 million (2017), US\$15 million (2018), and US\$14 million in 2019. This increase was mostly attributed to continued volatility in Burundi and the DRC (2015), particularly the latter; following the killing of a local chief by Congolese armed forces in August 2016. The violence that ensued in the greater Kasai region of DRC displaced approximately 1.5 million people in 2017¹⁵⁶ - prompting UNHCR Zambia to activate a Level 1 emergency on 10 September of the same year.

The figures below depict the steady increase in PoC numbers in Zambia following the DRC crisis in 2016 – and subsequent increase in operational expenditure as a result. Figure 2 also shows operational funding shortages which on average was about 59% over the period 2015-2019¹⁵⁷.

Figure 1: Number of PoC (2015-2020)¹⁵⁸

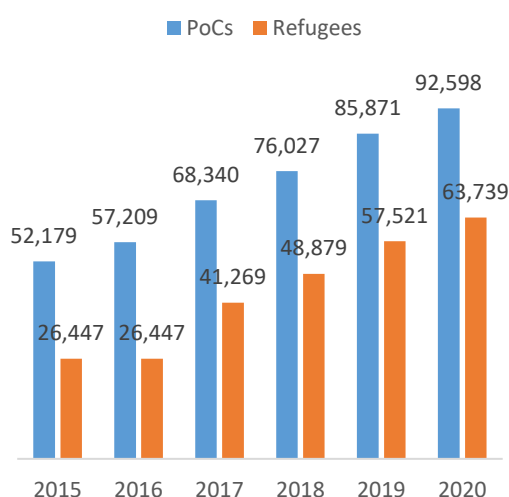
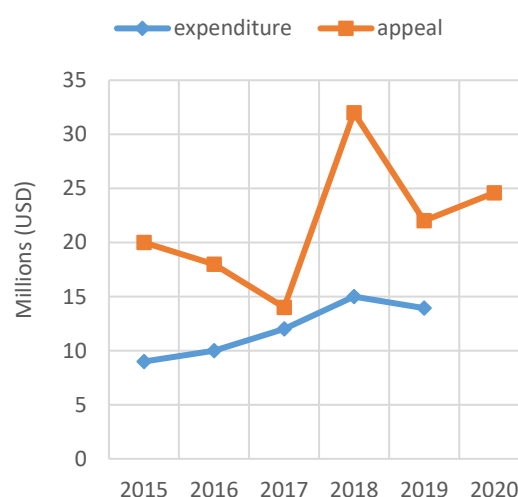


Figure 2: Operational expenditure and appeals (2015-2019)



The Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) initiated the application of the CRRF in 2017, and Zambia became the seventh country to join the CRRF in November of the same year. Within this framework, refugee programmes are aligned to national, provincial and district planning, and funds from the central government meant for service provision in all sectors such as education, health, agriculture, also incorporate refugees. The application of the CRRF in Zambia covers responses for recent arrivals in Luapula Province (Mantapala settlement), the protracted refugee situations and ongoing local integration of former refugees in Western and North-Western Provinces (Maheba and Mayukwayukwa settlements), and urban refugees primarily in Lusaka. The National Roadmap for the Implementation of the CRRF (2019-2021) lays out six areas of focus for the application of government-led, multi-stakeholder comprehensive responses in Zambia:

- (i) admission of rights;
- (ii) emergency response;
- (iii) inclusion;
- (iv) self-reliance;

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.msf.org/democratic-republic-congo-crisis-update---october-2017>

¹⁵⁷ UNHCR Zambia Year end reports (2016-2019)

¹⁵⁸ While refugees make up just over half of this population, other PoC include Asylum Seekers (on average about 6-10%) and former refugees from Angola and Rwanda.

-
- (v) solutions and;
 - (vi) root causes.

Priority sectors include education, health, energy, environment, livelihoods, water and sanitation, and security.

Decades before the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) was conceived, Zambia adopted a whole-of-society approach, enabling social and economic inclusion and facilitating local integration of refugees through the Zambia Initiative and the Local Integration Program for former refugees. The response to the 2017 influx of refugees from neighbouring DRC was the first time that a country adopted the CRRF in an emergency context through a settlement approach envisaging a durable solution from the onset of the crisis, inclusion into national services and engaging all in-line ministries in an All-of Government approach.¹⁵⁹

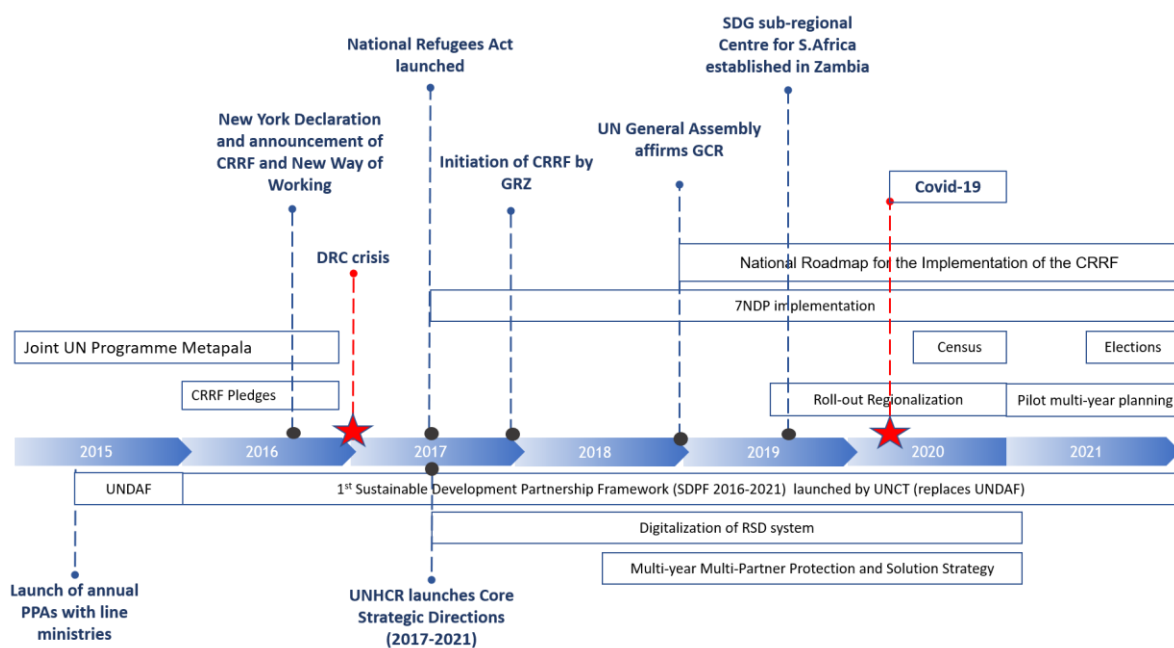
The global objectives of the CRRF are to ease pressure on host countries, increase refugee self-reliance expand access to third country solutions, such as resettlement of complementary pathways, and support conditions in countries of origin. During the Leaders' Summit on Refugees (20 September 2016), the Government of the Republic of Zambia pledged to improve the life of refugees living in the country by:

1. Locally integrating eligible Angolans and Rwandans and extend the local integration program to protracted Congolese refugees;
2. Consider relaxing the encampment policy, allowing for more freedom of movement for refugees by easing the process for acquiring urban residency and permission to leave the refugee settlements;
3. Promote self-reliance and enhance favourable measures for refugees to access work and engage in income generating activities of their choice;
4. Focus on ensuring access to education for refugee children through the provision of education infrastructure in the refugee settlements;
5. Simplify its admission procedures for a fair refugee status determination process;
6. Ensure that refugees have access to civil registration and other legal documents.

The following timeline depicts some of the key events outlined in this ToR that are relevant to UNHCRs country operation in Zambia from 2015-2020.

¹⁵⁹ UNHCR (December 2019): Implementing a Comprehensive Refugee Response: the Zambia Experience.

Figure 4: Timeline of Key events from 2015-2016



4. KEY AREAS OF INTEREST FOR THE COUNTRY STRATEGY EVALUATION

One of the challenges of CSEs is striking the right balance between scope and depth of the evaluation. The following thematic and operational areas have been identified in consultation with the CO as key areas of interest and priority for this evaluation. During the inception period, the evaluation team is expected to determine the evaluability of these areas, as well as explore others that may arise as a result of further consultations with key stakeholders.

4.1 Coordination and Partnerships

In 2016, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Zambia¹⁶⁰ launched the first Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (SDPF) (2016-2021), a strategic document to address some of the multi-dimensional development challenges faced in Zambia. Under this partnership framework, the UNCT has pledged their commitment to foster cooperation and coordination, and to enhance UN coherence in the spirit of “Delivering As One”¹⁶¹ - in order to improve performance towards achieving transformational results that are measurable, and to increase the impact of the UN’s joint response to the development priorities of Zambia. This partnership framework replaces the previous UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) when it expired at the end of 2015.

The Zambian Government has adopted a multi-sectoral approach for coordinating humanitarian and development interventions in support of Zambia’s seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) and the achievement of SDGs. To effectively coordinate the implementation of the 7NDP, the GRZ put in place coordination structures at national and sub-national level. These include the National Development Coordinating Committee (NDCC), Cluster Advisory Groups (CAGs), Technical Working Groups (TWGs), Provincial Development Coordinating Committees (PDCCs), and District Development Coordinating Committees (DDCCs), as well as Ward level development committees.

¹⁶⁰ The UN Country Team comprises: 11 Resident UN Funds, Programmes and Specialised Agencies, 12 Non-Resident Agencies (NRAs) and International Financial Institutions, including the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

¹⁶¹ And the associated DOA Management and Accountability Framework

The UNCT through the Resident Coordinator co-leads on all humanitarian responses in collaboration with the Disaster Management and Mitigation unit (DMMU) within the Office of the Vice-President. Within the partnership framework, the Government chairs each of the seven sub-sector committees with support from one UN agency as co-chair. UNHCR does not co-chair any of the sub-sector committees under this national coordination structure. However, UNHCR is the Chair of the Humanitarian-Development Nexus Thematic Working Group under the SDPF. UNHCR works in partnership with the UNCT, NGOs, and the COR to advocate for refugee inclusion in the provision of services. UNHCR also provides technical and financial assistance to the COR in the development of the Refugee Act/Law and works with line ministries at the sub-national level to promote local integration.

A key area of interest to the Country Operation and subsequently to this evaluation is how UNHCR can further leverage effective inclusion and prioritisation of refugees for the planning cycle of the next SDPF (2022-2026). Closely related to this is the need to understand how refugees are considered and included in inter-agency sectoral coordination and development plans, and what UNHCR can do to improve the lives of refugees and the communities that host them through these coordination mechanisms and partnerships. In order to achieve this, the evaluation is expected to undertake a detailed stakeholder mapping exercise that examines the relationships between key stakeholders and examines opportunities for improved advocacy with existing partners and/or new partners for UNHCR.

4.2 Programme delivery and the enabling & constraining factors to achieving results under the CRRF / GCR, and the Multi-Year Protection and Solution Strategy

UNHCR's Multi-year Multi-Partner Protection and Solutions Strategy (MYMPPSS 2019-2021) in Zambia prioritizes refugee self-reliance interventions, aimed at ensuring community empowerment, education, and building resilience. One of the key longer-term objectives for UNHCR is to transform refugee settlements into integrated settlements, whereby host communities and refugees benefit from services provided by the Government. Within the MYMPPSS, UNHCR continues to prioritize access to international protection for PoCs, strengthening child protection and community mobilization programmes with national authorities, and responding to immediate humanitarian needs regarding access and provision of basic social amenities – all while progressively handing over to relevant governmental line ministries. Engagement with government line ministries (in collaboration with COR) is aimed at ensuring refugee mainstreaming in national development plans and strategic policy documents of the various ministries, in line with the refugee inclusion agenda of the GCR and the CRRF. Multipurpose Cash-Based Interventions (CBIs) will be introduced in 2020 and will replace in kind distribution of Core Relief Items (CRIs) and other services. The focus of advocacy interventions will remain on the implementation of section 42 of the 2017 Refugee Act and the right to self-employment as well as the possible lifting of the reservation to the 1951 Convention on the right to work. Furthermore, the operational strategy will continue to explore durable solutions opportunities in the form of local integration, voluntary returns and third country resettlement. Collaboration with development partners will continue to be nurtured to ensure refugee inclusion in development programmes and interventions. All the above will be done in the spirit of the GCR and guided by the CRRF approach.

A key area of focus for the CSE will be to determine where UNHCR has managed to achieve significant progress towards refugee protection, inclusion and durable solutions under the CRRF. By examining the effectiveness of programme delivery in these thematic areas, the evaluation will also look at key factors enabling or inhibiting the organizations ability to achieve results in these areas. This evidence will be used to reinforce or course-correct the operations strategy across multiple areas of programme delivery. The overarching protection priorities that should form the framework for this analysis are:

- Refugee domestic legislation vis-à-vis the 2017 Refugee Act, vis-à-vis pending Refugee Policy; including issues pertaining to freedom of movement and encampment;

- Key (Government) reservations to the 1951 Refugee Convention and implications on the ability of refugees to become self-sufficient
- Refugee admission and status determination; including issues pertaining to biometric registration & legal and civil documentation
- Community Based Protection and security from violence: including Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), Child Protection (CP), Persons with Specific Needs (PSN), people with disabilities.
- Social protection and the sustainable handover of programmes to development partners
- The MYMPPSS

Furthermore the evaluation will examine the extent to which UNHCR has been able to successfully leverage local integration of refugees in order to improve access to basic services (health and education) provided by the government and the private sector, promote self-reliance and enhance favourable measures for refugee livelihoods, access to work and income generating activities. The evaluation will examine where UNHCR needs to prioritize and deprioritize its investments in order to maximize efforts aimed at improving the lives of refugees. In order to do this, the evaluation will determine whether UNHCR's current approach is aligned to the evolving needs and orientations of PoCs and partners in Zambia.

Additional areas of interest regarding programme delivery are refugee food security, targeted and multi-purpose Cash-Based Assistance, shelter and infrastructure development, camp management and outreach and targeting of self-settled (urban) refugees. These should be reflected on against UNHCRs operational expenditure and budgets in the years 2017-2020.

4.3 Formative Assessment and Recommendations

Evidence from the evaluation should inform the strategic planning process of the operation, by formulating clear recommendations that take into consideration the following aspects¹⁶²:

Decentralisation and Strategic Planning Opportunities

As described in chapter two of this ToR (background), the decentralisation of UNHCR's regional bureaux as of 2019 has set about a transformational change that seeks to strengthen the ability of country operations to deliver to PoCs. As a result of this process, the Southern Africa region has received 30 new technical positions which were repositioned or created to strengthen country operations and capacitate the new bureaux structures with the requisite expertise. Twenty of these positions, including much needed development capacities, were placed within country operations. Although it would be premature to determine the impact of decentralisation on operational performance, the evaluation could identify evidence to inform the Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (RBSA) and CO in Zambia on recommendations for the following dimensions moving forward:

- **Strategic planning:**
 - Striking the right balance between investing in humanitarian and development priorities
 - Integrating regional dynamics into multi-year strategic planning and effective collaboration with national regional stakeholders, sister UN agencies and partners
 - Identifying key areas of the operation that are in need of support, including the ability to course-correct in light of emerging challenges and risks
- **Capacity building and expertise (UNHCR & partners):**
 - Identify technical areas of the operation that need strengthening
 - Identify options for translating global priorities into regional and country specific strategies

¹⁶² It should be noted that the focus of the evaluation is the country operation, and that the formative analysis should support future operational planning, rather than an assessment of the effectiveness/impact of decentralisation vis-à-vis support from the Bureau.

- **External engagement and partnerships:**
 - Identify strategies and options for UNHCR to strengthen its approach to partnerships and advocacy
 - Explore opportunities for UNHCR to leverage new partnerships or strengthen/revisit existing ones
 - Identify donor strategic interests to support Zambia and opportunities for local/regional resource mobilisation

Implications of COVID-19

Restrictions associated with COVID -19 have had a profound impact on refugees in settlements whose economic situation prior to the onset of the pandemic was already eroded. Limited mobility and engagement in Income Generating Activities have set back results achieved in the areas of self-reliance – where the 5% of the active refugee populations who achieved sustained levels of self-reliance in Zambia are gradually losing their income due to the economic impact of the pandemic.¹⁶³ The evaluation will provide a clear account on how the pandemic has affected UNHCR’s ability to serve PoCs in Zambia. UNHCR has been requested to stay and deliver responsibly so that emerging problems can be assessed and reported in a timely manner. UNHCRs strategy is to accelerate and support state preparedness and response in life-saving areas such as public health, water and sanitation. UNHCR continues to provide support to vulnerable groups through information dissemination on prevention measures and communication to persons of concern. UNHCR has actively mobilised community workers in its response to the pandemic – where refugees are being recruited to support in making facial masks, or as public health volunteers. UNHCR will also focus on the social protection sector to ensure that refugee rights are equally protected during the pandemic. In line with ongoing discussions on the CRRF/GCR dialogue in Zambia, the evaluation will consider how UNHCR can build on existing partnerships under the leadership of its main implementing partner GRZ to further mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic.

5. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

CSEs are intended to be forward-looking in their orientation. The main purpose of these evaluations is to generate timely evidence to inform UNHCR’s future operational planning and strategy in Zambia - leading to more effective and impactful UNHCR partnerships and programming, in pursuit of protection and solutions for UNHCR persons of concern and the communities that host them. The scope of the evaluation covers UNHCR’s operations in Zambia from 2015-2020¹⁶⁴.

The CSE will seek to analyse and assess the effectiveness of UNHCR’s plans and activities considering the specific country context and reflect on recent results and the evolving needs of the population across the breadth of UNHCR’s activities vis-à-vis other humanitarian, development and government actors. In highlighting lessons learnt at the country operation level, recommendations from these evaluations should help inform future UNHCR guidance for regional and country level operational planning, resource mobilisation, and implementation.

The primary audience for this CSE is the UNHCR Country Operation in Zambia, the Regional Bureaux for Southern Africa, and the COR within the Zambian Ministry of Home Affairs. Other UNHCR Bureaux and Divisions, as well as UNHCR partners – including government line ministries and humanitarian and development actors – will serve as a secondary audience.

¹⁶³ Consultations with the UNHCR Representative in Zambia.

¹⁶⁴ This time period coincides with decision of the GRZ to facilitate local integration of former refugees from Angola and Rwanda, the introduction of the 7th NDP, the introduction of the *Refugees Act*, and the influx of refugees from neighboring DRC. Consequently during this period Zambia was also the first country to adopt the CRRF approach in an emergency context.

6. EVALUATION APPROACH

4.4 Key Evaluation Questions

The key areas of interest broadly defined in chapter four are further refined with the help of five Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs). These will be further refined during the evaluation inception phase after the evaluation team has consulted with key stakeholders at the level of the operation, the bureau, and headquarters – and once the team has had a chance to assess the level of evaluability of these questions.

Evaluation criteria pertaining to relevance, sustainability, coherence, effectiveness and impact are of particular interest for this CSE.

1. What key results in the areas of assistance, protection, inclusion and solutions have been achieved by the country operation since 2015?
 - a. What were the most important factors contributing or impeding the achievement of these results?
 - b. What role did the CRRF play in the achievement of these results?
 - c. What practices and lessons could help inform the operations decisions towards strengthening these results in the future?
2. How relevant and sustainable is the existing operational plan and strategy to the current and evolving needs of refugees, other PoCs, and host communities in Zambia – and what major contextual and emerging factors need to be considered in the immediate, intermediate, and longer-term planning for the operation?
3. What were the major implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for PoCs, and what are the enabling and limiting factors in how the organization has responded?
4. To what extent is the country operation plan and strategy aligned to the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), the Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (SDPF), and the work of other humanitarian/development actors including the government and private sector?
5. How can UNHCR leverage further support for protection, effective inclusion and solutions for refugees within the context of ongoing organizational reforms (decentralization), UN reforms (DOA), and National Development Plans and frameworks (7NDP), as well as the GCR?
6. What lessons can we draw from the evidence gathered through this evaluation to inform UNHCR's next Multi-Year-Multi-Partner planning in Zambia and its contribution to the next UNSDPF?

4.5 Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The Covid-19 pandemic has altered the way in which ES is able to conduct evaluations, severely limiting the ability to access PoCs and visit programme sites. Although the travel restrictions in Zambia and the rest of the world are unsure, we anticipate that this CSE will need to rely quite heavily on remote data interviews and secondary data analysis. Where feasible, the evaluation team is encouraged to make use of innovative data collection methods that incorporate both qualitative and quantitative approaches. These could include phone-based surveys among PoCs (where feasible), paired-interviews with operational partners, as well as in-depth interviews with UNCT members, the Resident Coordinator, Donors, UNHCR staff and key national and local government partners. Data from a wide range of sources and a representative range of stakeholders will need to be triangulated and cross validated so as to ensure the credibility of evaluation findings and conclusions. The Evaluation Team will be expected to refine the methodology and final evaluation questions following the initial desk review, stakeholder analysis, and consultations with the CO, the RBSA, and HQ. Travel restrictions permitting, an in-country inception visit together with the Evaluation Manager will be undertaken during the inception phase. The final inception report will detail the evaluation methodology, and refined focus and scope of the evaluation, including an evaluation matrix that outlines the relationship between KEQs, sub-indicators, and data sources, data collection tools,

stakeholder analysis, and an analytical framework. The use of a Theory of Change may also be requested by the Evaluation Manager during the inception phase.

The evaluation methodology is expected to:

- a) Reflect an Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) perspective in all primary data collection activities carried out as part of the evaluation – particularly with refugees.
- b) Employ a mixed-method approach incorporating qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis tools including the analysis of monitoring data – as available.
- c) Refer to and make use of relevant internationally agreed evaluation criteria such as those proposed by OECD-DAC and adapted by ALNAP for use in humanitarian evaluations¹⁶⁵
- d) Propose an analytical framework that will guide data analysis and reporting
- e) Be based on an analysis of (i) the strategies, policies, and operational guidelines being evaluated, and (ii) the main actors and stakeholders.
- f) Gather and make use of a wide range of data sources (e.g. monitoring data, mission reports, coordination groups meetings, strategy narrative, budget and indicator reports) in order to demonstrate impartiality of the analysis, minimise bias, and ensure the credibility of evaluation findings and conclusions.
- g) Be explicitly designed to address the key evaluation questions – considering evaluability, budget and timing constraints.
- h) Give special consideration and think of innovative ways to include PoC perspectives, despite travel restrictions due to the COVID pandemic.

The evaluation team is responsible to gather, analyse and triangulate data (e.g. across types, sources and analysis modality) to demonstrate impartiality of the analysis, minimise bias, and ensure the credibility of evaluation findings and conclusions.

7. ORGANISATION AND CONDUCT OF THE EVALUATION

7.1 Evaluation Quality Assurance

The evaluation consultants are required to sign the UNHCR Code of Conduct, complete UNHCR's introductory protection training module, and respect UNHCR's confidentiality requirements.

In line with established standards for evaluation in the UN system, and the UN Ethical Guidelines for evaluations, evaluation in UNHCR is founded on the inter-connected principles of independence, impartiality, credibility and utility, which in practice, call for: protecting sources and data; systematically seeking informed consent; respecting dignity and diversity; minimising risk, harm and burden upon those who are the subject of, or participating in the evaluation, while at the same time not compromising the integrity of the exercise.

The evaluation is also expected to adhere to pilot 'Evaluation Quality Assurance' (EQA) guidance, which clarifies the quality requirements expected for UNHCR evaluation processes and products.

The Evaluation Manager will share and provide an orientation to the EQA at the start of the evaluation. Adherence to the EQA will be overseen by the Evaluation Manager with support from the UNHCR Evaluation Service as needed.

¹⁶⁵ See for example: Cosgrave and Buchanan-Smith (2017) Guide de l'Evaluation de l'Action Humanitaire (London: ALNAP) and Beck, T. (2006) Evaluating Humanitarian Action using the OECD-DAC Criteria (London: ALNAP)

7.2 Evaluation Management

The evaluation will be managed by a Senior Evaluation Officer in UNHCR's Evaluation Service and implemented by a team of consultants. The CSE will be financed by the ES annual budget and final deliverables and related payments are cleared by the Head of the Evaluation Service. The Evaluation Manager will be responsible for: (i) managing administrative day to day aspects of the evaluation process (ii) acting as the main interlocutor with the Evaluation Team (iii) facilitating communication with relevant stakeholders to ensure evaluators receive the required data (iv) facilitating communication with relevant stakeholders to ensure technical guidance on content, and (v) reviewing the interim deliverables and final reports to ensure quality – with the support of the relevant UNHCR Country Office and Regional Bureaux.

UNHCR's Country Office in Lusaka will designate focal points that will assist the Evaluation Manager and Evaluation Team with logistical arrangements and feedback on evaluation deliverables.

A Reference Group will be established with the participation of the key internal, and possibly external, stakeholders including the COR, and key UNHCR partners. Members of the Reference Group would be asked to:

- Provide suggestions to identify potential materials and resources to be reviewed and key contacts to be considered for key informant interviews.
- Review and comment on the draft inception report.
- Review and comment on the data collection and data analysis instruments that will be developed by the Evaluation Team.
- Review and comment on the draft final reports, validate emerging findings and conclusions.
- Advise on the focus of the evaluation recommendations that will form the basis of the Management Response to the review.

Upon completion, each final evaluation report will be shared for validation with the UNHCR Representative, senior management team in Zambia, RG, and the UNHCR Regional Bureau. The Country Office will be asked to coordinate the formal Management Response, which together with the final evaluation report will be made available in the public domain.

Beyond the primary audience for the Zambia CSE, results are expected to inform several other ongoing evaluations include the evaluation of UNHCRs COVID-19 response, evaluation of the Elimination of Statelessness, evaluation of UNHCRs support for Asylum Capacity Development, ongoing stock-taking of UNHCRs decentralization and good practices and lessons learned with respect to the Global Compact for Refugees.

Activity	Key Deliverable	Indicative Timeline	Payment Schedule
Inception phase including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initial desk review - Stakeholder mapping - Inception interviews with UNHCR staff - EQA review on the draft inception report - Circulation for comments and finalisation 	Final inception report (30 pages max) – including desk review, methodology, final evaluation questions, evaluation matrix, data collection tools, stakeholder mapping and analytical framework. ToC is optional, to be discussed during inception ¹⁶⁶ .	Week 1-6 (max 6 weeks)	20%
Data collection phase including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key stakeholder interviews, phone-based surveys (in country and remotely depending on feasibility); document reviews; field visits where feasible. - Workshop on preliminary findings and emerging trends - Stakeholder feedback on preliminary findings 	Workshop on preliminary findings and emerging trends with in-country stakeholders and the Reference Group (where applicable) either in-country or remotely.	Week 7-13 (max 7 weeks)	20%
Data Analysis and Reporting phase including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis and write up - EQA review of draft report, circulation for comments - Stakeholder feedback and validation of evaluation findings, conclusions and proposed recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft 0 Report subject to comments from Evaluation Service - Draft 1 (50 pages max) report subject to comments from RG and UNHCR stakeholders 	Week 14-21 (max 8 weeks)	30%
Dissemination Finalisation of evaluation report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Validation / co-creation workshop with RG, and UNHCR stakeholders on findings, conclusions, and recommendations - Final report including recommendations and stand-alone executive summary 	Week 22-24 (max 3 weeks)	30%

¹⁶⁶ In addition to the quality assurance review by the Evaluation Service, an ethical review of the approach, questions, and tools may be undertaken.

8. EVALUATION TEAM QUALIFICATIONS

The EVALUATION will be undertaken by a team of qualified independent evaluation consultants, comprising of at least a Team Leader and two or maximum three other team members. Although the contracting modality is on an individual basis, bidders are strongly encouraged to apply as a team¹⁶⁷. Bidders should propose names/CVs of Team Leaders and Team members in their proposal. Evaluation Teams are expected to demonstrate evaluation expertise as well as expertise in refugee response and humanitarian operations, with excellent understanding of UNHCR's protection mandate and operational platform, and good knowledge of issues pertaining to the humanitarian-development nexus, gender sensitive programming, and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP). Proposals of teams with demonstrated experience conducting evaluations in Zambia or the Southern Africa region for UN agencies will receive priority. All work and deliverables will be conducted in English. Further required skills and qualifications are outlined below:

Evaluation Team Leader

- A post-graduate or Master's degree in social science, development studies, international relations or economics plus a minimum of 15 years of relevant professional experience in leading evaluations in humanitarian settings and/or development settings, a combination of both is preferred.
- Demonstrated ability in mixed research methodologies, and an excellent understanding of Zambia and or the region, particularly regarding inter-agency coordination, and support to national development plans.
- In-depth knowledge of and proven experience with various data collection and analytical methods and techniques used in evaluation and operational research
- Technical expertise in refugee assistance, basic-needs, and protection work. With an emphasis on durable solutions and local integration, including relevant analytical frameworks and programming approaches and standards.
- Institutional knowledge of UNHCR's protection mandate and operational platform.
- Demonstrated ability to think strategically and guide evaluation team members by composing an analytical framework
- Demonstrated ability to facilitate high-level workshops and demonstrated ability to communicate effectively with a target audience.

Evaluation Team Member(s)

- A post-graduate or Master's degree in social sciences, development studies, international relations, or economics plus a minimum of 7 years of relevant professional experience ideally in humanitarian and/or development settings.
- Minimum of 4 years' experience supporting quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis for evaluation purposes (preferable) or operational research in humanitarian and development settings.
- Good knowledge of humanitarian response programming, relevant analytical frameworks and programming approaches and standards.
- Candidates based in Zambia and/or demonstrating relevant experience conducting evaluations in Zambia or the region will receive priority.
- In depth knowledge with various data collection and analytical methods and techniques used in evaluation and operational research.
- Proven expertise in facilitating participatory workshops involving different groups and participants.
- Excellent communication and presentation skills.

¹⁶⁷ Note that applicants applying individually will also be considered, and the Evaluation Service has the right to propose the final team composition.

6.2 Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix

6.3 Annex 3: Bibliography