

**Program and Technical Support Section  
Geneva  
November 1992**

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UNHCR would be grateful for copies of any translations into other languages.**

**Foreword**

This manual is dedicated to everyone with an interest in providing a better life to refugees.

A reliable supply of an adequate quantity of clean, wholesome water is a vital need for any community; it will stimulate productive work and help to improve personal hygiene, food preparation and health care among the beneficiaries. Planning for the provision of drinking water to refugees should take into account their special social, economic and political characteristics, which will determine the approach in the construction, operation and maintenance of service infrastructure. This should, in essence, be different from approaches followed by local urban or rural communities, the standards and levels of service should, however, be kept similar to those received by the "local neighbours".

The purpose of this manual is to explain to those involved in the provision of refugee assistance the technical characteristics and functioning of components, structures or equipment that may form part of a refugee water supply system. It should make them aware of the need to follow rational approaches, adaptable to the specific circumstances of the refugee sites and communities, which will normally require the involvement of specialized technicians. For these technicians, the manual will provide an indication of UNHCR's technical guidelines and criteria for the design, operation and maintenance of the water systems, as well as for the technical management of construction or operation projects.

It is important to point out that, although the manual may sometimes seem too idealistic, its main message should be interpreted as a call to planners, decision makers and constructors to always use the highest possible standards, taking into account the political, social and funding circumstances of each project.

The aim should be to achieve a reliable and cost-effective service for the beneficiaries for as long a time as possible.

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Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees*