

Technical support in action— *some essential areas*



UNHCR/C. Fedele

Medical assistance to Salvadoran refugees in Honduras

Chapter Learning Objectives

In this chapter you will learn how technical support is utilized in these major areas:

- *emergency assistance*
- *local settlement*
- *refugee aid and development*
- *refugee participation*
- *refugee women*
- *refugee children*
- *refugees with special needs*

Introduction

From the overview provided in the preceding chapter, we have already seen that technical support is an integral part of all aspects of assistance activities. Let's now go beyond the theory and concentrate on a few major areas in which we can find specific examples of technical support in action. In reality, the list is certainly far longer than the one you will find here.

Emergency assistance



UNHCR/M. Barton

Ethiopian refugees in Sudan



Emergency situations call for exceptional measures delivered with speed and efficiency. By their nature, refugee emergencies are often unpredictable. They demand speed and efficiency. The consequences of bad choices and inefficiency are far-reaching:

- loss of life
- irreparable effects on the refugee individual, family, and community
- longer-term solutions are more difficult to achieve

The *UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies* provides a comprehensive view of the various aspects you need to consider if you are involved in an emergency operation. Copies are available from the Emergency Unit of Technical Support Service (TSS).

What follows is not intended as an exhaustive description of technical aspects of emergency assistance. It describes the three essential stages. The examples given are selected at random to help you imagine real-life situations.

Stage 1 — Emergency preparedness

There are three essential components of the first stage: refugee emergency alert systems, contingency planning, and emergency management preparedness training.

Refugee Emergency Alert System

In country "A" persons have begun to sell their cattle and move towards the border shared by country "B". It is the middle of the dry season. In previous years the Government has conducted military offensives against the rebels. At this time of year, some military activity has been seen. An increase of asylum-seekers has been observed in country "B". What might one discern from these developments?

These are "emergency alert" signs of a possible refugee influx. Emergency alert includes *the identification, recognition, and interpretation of events that would indicate a potential emergency*. In past years, emergency alert (previously called early warning) was not considered to be one of UNHCR's traditional functions. In practice, however, it has become an essential element of emergency preparedness.

A checklist can be obtained from Headquarters (TSS) which will help you identify and recognize an impending influx.

Contingency planning

At some time or another, we have all listened, dismayed, to international broadcasts of new large-scale influx of refugees into a given country, where no one was ready for the emergency. There was no stockpile system or inventory of available resources, no prior coordination among agencies, and no plan agreed or even discussed on how to respond.

The Refugee Contingency Plan

A Refugee Contingency Plan will help avoid this dilemma. All Field Offices must have one. Contingency planning is *goal-setting, managerial and technical actions taken to prepare for an impending emergency*

Multi-sectoral contents

The scope of contingency planning is necessarily broad. It covers the main sectors of emergency response: protection, food, health, water, sanitation, transport, logistics, procurement, communications, social services, physical planning, and operations management.

The contents of your contingency plan will vary from location to location. A checklist will help you develop your individual plan. You can use the format which appears in Annex 1. The main headings it includes are as follows:

- I. Objectives
- II. Principles
- III. Assessment of present scenario of host country
- IV. Overall preparedness measures in place
 - A. Protection and related issues
 - B. Refugee Emergency Alert System
 - C. Management and co-ordination
 - D. Preparedness training and planning
- V. Contingency planning by sector

Emergency Preparedness Profiles

Emergency Preparedness Profiles are designed to provide factual information on a given country and its infrastructure. The data they contain will help you make your contingency plan and act efficiently in the event of a refugee emergency. A list appears in Annex 2. You may be involved at field level in preparing or revising one of them.

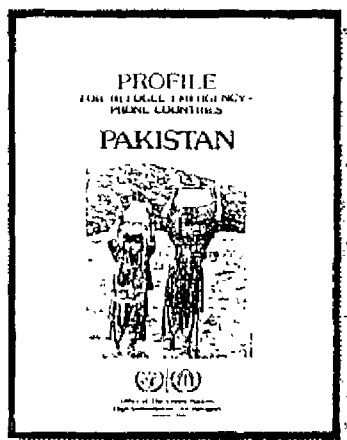
Each country profile contains the following information:

Basic facts— general information of a practical nature on the country, its currency, climate, vaccination requirements, as well as information on its recent history, government, ethnic groups, etc.

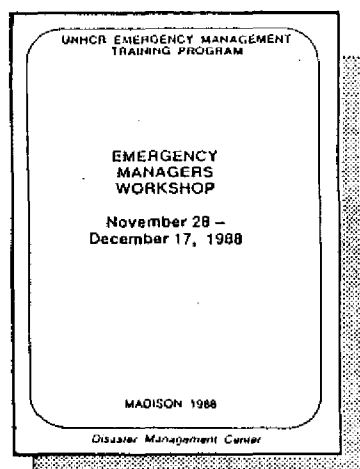
Infrastructural resources of concern to refugees— including health, transportation, communications, water, storage.

Requirements of affected populations— subdivided by country of origin, this information concerns their general background (housing and food preferences), health status, water and sanitation, features specific to their situation as refugees (age, sex, composition, ethnic origin, language, religion, education, occupation, etc.).

Institutional resources/programmes— including host government, UNHCR presence, UN agencies, and voluntary agencies.



Emergency management preparedness training



Training is a key element in emergency preparedness. The Emergency Management Training Programme (EMTP) was developed to meet this need in 1985. It is now a familiar feature of UNHCR's training activities.

This course is open not only to UNHCR staff, but to the staff of operational partners as well.

If you attend this course, you will learn how to apply general management skills to the running of emergency operations. You will be shown, in particular, how they apply to key areas such as health, sanitation, nutrition, water supply, camp planning and logistics.

The courses contain many practical exercises to illustrate the theoretical teaching. Some courses even include a one-day simulation of a refugee emergency. You may be asked to play a role which may be that of a refugee, donor country, staff of UNHCR or an operational partner, journalist or local villager.

If you are interested in attending, details of schedules can be obtained from the Emergency Unit or Training Service at Headquarters.

Stage 2 — Emergency response

The second stage contains two main elements:

- needs and resources assessment
- operations planning and implementation

Needs and resources assessment

This is a stock-taking exercise. It entails collecting information to determine:

- the status of a refugee emergency
- the condition of the refugees
- the adequacy of services provided, and gaps in services which must be filled.

The assessment must also identify resources which can be supplied by the various persons and agencies involved, starting with the refugees themselves, in responding rapidly and effectively to the emergency.

Gap Identification Worksheet

An essential part of a needs/resources assessment is identifying gaps in services. The Gap Identification Worksheet can help you to identify and fill gaps in delivering initial assistance and planning longer-term assistance following an emergency. It should cover the following general headings:

- Immediate Services
- Camp Planning and Construction
- Initial Camp Services
- Long-term Camp Services
- Long-term Administrative Services

You will find a sample in Annex 3. It can be used as it stands, or adapted to individual situations

The needs and resources assessment forms the bridge between contingency planning and operations planning and implementation.

Operations plan

The operations plan is a vital tool which will help you define the roles, responsibilities, procedures, and actions required in organizing an effective response to an emergency (or a repatriation) programme.

To create an operations plan you must go through the following activities:

- set objectives
- identify resources and strategies to meet those objectives
- outline a staffing structure
- establish a command control system
- specify Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's, e.g., for communications, convoy movements, food distribution programmes, or transit/reception centre operations)
- stipulate (in an Annex to the Operations Plan) an "Operations Timetable" noting actions required, persons responsible, and by which date

On the following page is a sample table of contents of an Ops Plan. It concerns the Namibian Repatriation Operation.

Related information such as maps, budgets, timetables and forms to be used can be provided as annexes.

Namibia Repatriation Operation

Operations Plan

(Table of contents)

- I. UNHCR management, Implementation arrangements, and support**
 - I.1 Personnel Management, Administration, and Communications
 - I.2 Implementing Arrangements
 - I.3 Legal and Protection Issues
 - I.4 Public Information
 - I.5 External Affairs

- II. Implementation of repatriation exercise**
 - II.1 Operations Management
 - II.2 Movement of People and Materials
 - A. Movement of People and Personal Effects
 - A.1 From Abroad to Entry Points
 - A.2 From Entry Points to Reception Centres
 - A.3 From Reception Centres to Sub-Centres and Final Destinations
 - B. Movement of Communal Property
 - II.3 Security
 - II.4 Tracing of Family Members
 - II.5 Food
 - II.6 Health, Sanitation and Water
 - II.7 Communications
 - II.8 Construction, Logistics and Warehousing
 - II.9 Procurement
 - II.10 Programme for Transition Period:
 - A. Education
 - B. Income Generation and Employment Support Schemes
 - C. Establishing a case management system for urban returnees
 - D. Materials for Housing and Infrastructure
 - E. Community Services



Remember that the essential value of an *Operations Plan* is to:

- provide a structure and a framework for action
- allow detailed planning by including SOP's, maps, and charts
- set a timetable for each phase of the operation

Stage 3 — Post-emergency actions

During the third stage, it is important to look both ways: back at the just-completed emergency for "lessons learned" and forward to the transition to post-emergency activities.

The "lessons learned" exercise

An evaluation, whether formal or informal, is always needed of any emergency operation. Ask yourself: What went right? What went wrong? How were problems solved (*if they were solved*)? What lessons can be drawn? This will help avoid repeating the same mistakes, and improve performance the next time a refugee emergency confronts a Field Office.

A systematic "lessons learned" survey of major emergencies is performed at UNHCR Headquarters (by the Emergency Unit of TSS and the Evaluation Unit of PMS). Data are gathered by means of a questionnaire which follows the broad chapter headings of the *Emergency Handbook*. If you have been involved in an emergency in any way, your contribution to this exercise is vital. The results can be very revealing.

For example, the survey of the Mozambican refugee emergency in southern Africa showed that the following improvements were needed. You will see that most of the findings apply to any emergency.

- Need for more effective and rapid staff and consultant recruitment.
- In-country early warning systems must be established.
- There must be more regional coordination and information sharing on early warning, procurement, and other emergency related matters.
- A system of refugee registration must be organized and implemented earlier in the emergency response.

- Provision must be made for Representatives to expend funds much earlier in an emergency than generally happens.
- Refugee Contingency Plans should be prepared by all UNHCR FO's in refugee-impacted countries and regions.
- UNHCR should institutionalize the concept of operations planning in emergency situations.
- The lack of a viable Headquarters' emergency staffing roster hampered emergency relief operations.
- More rapid procurement mechanisms need to be established.
- A socio-cultural-economic survey of the refugee population, and a nutrition survey, should be carried out early in an emergency operation, to gather data necessary for planning and implementation.
- There is a need to plan and implement options for long-term settlement planning and self-sufficiency, right from the beginning of a new refugee influx.
- There must be an entire analysis of UNHCR communications in emergencies.

Transition to post-emergency activities

We have already seen in Chapter I that UNHCR's assistance falls into five phases. Let's recall them now:

- Emergency
- Care and Maintenance
- Voluntary Repatriation
- Local Settlement
- Resettlement

The transition from emergency response to any of the four other phases is likely to require technical support.

Countries affected by the Mozambican refugee emergency offer us several examples of transition to post-emergency assistance. These are shown on the left-hand side of the chart on the following page. Specific areas in which technical support is required are listed on the right-hand side.

Examples of Assistance and Technical Support for the Mozambican Refugee Emergency

| Phase of Assistance (post-emergency) | Technical Support |
|--|--|
| <p>Care and maintenance in camps has been necessary in Malawi and Swaziland, due to land shortages and population pressures</p> <p>Local settlement through.</p> <p>(a) Spontaneous settlements in villages in Malawi and Swaziland in cases of tribal, cultural and linguistic compatibility.</p> <p>(b) Planned rural settlements in Zambia and Tanzania.</p> <p>Resettlement from certain asylum countries</p> | <p>Camp planning; shelter, water, and sanitation systems, basic primary health care and curative medicine; case management in sectors of education, training and employment.</p> <p>Nutritional survey; socio-cultural needs assessment; planning and design of water and sanitation systems, expansion of educational facilities; roving health unit, planning for agricultural development and income-generating activities.</p> <p>Same as above; comprehensive site planning; planning for agricultural development and other income-generating activities.</p> <p>Case management in educational sector; employment counselling</p> |

Case Study



Case A

The following case study is an example of the type of situations that occur in the field that require implementation of technical resources. Read the case study, write down your answers to the questions that follow, and then compare your answers to the analysis on the next page.

The country of Phrenia was caught totally unawares by the influx of 50,000 refugees from neighbouring Schizia. The end result was that the refugee population of the country nearly tripled overnight.

Prior to the influx, Phrenia had heretofore been known in refugee circles as a veritable backwater, or more charitably as a retirement post for aging Representatives who had paid their dues elsewhere. Naturally, with this influx of refugees the entire refugee situation in Phrenia changed, from a graveyard assignment to front-page coverage in the *New York Times*. However, with the media interest came the responsibility of the Representative to say, and more importantly, to do something. Neither Phrenia, nor the Phrenia Representative, had ever faced such a crisis before. The Representative began to wish he had applied for the last Emergency Management Training Course.

Sister Mary Elizabeth, who operates a mission school and clinic near the border, telephones the Field Office with some apocalyptic news of malnutrition, measles, diarrhea and cholera affecting the asylum-seekers. The Governor of the affected District likewise calls the Refugee Commissioner of Phrenia, seeking guidance on what to do; in the meantime, the Governor is rounding up all refugees and placing them in an old, deserted complex of Army barracks, the water and sanitation facilities of which had long since fallen into disuse.

The Representative, after confirming with the airline his flight reservation for home leave two days hence, decides to seek advice from Headquarters.

Notes

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Questions



Case Study A

1. Which emergency preparedness actions might the Field Office have taken before the start of the refugee influx:

2. Which emergency response actions should have been initiated by the FO?

3. Once the refugee emergency is over, what should the FO do?

Notes

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Analysis



Case Study A

Case A

1. *Which emergency preparedness actions might the Field Office have taken before the start of the refugee influx:*

- Establish an "emergency alert" system.
- Write a Refugee Contingency Plan.
- Develop, with the TSS Emergency Unit, an "Emergency Preparedness Profile."
- Send one key FO staff member to an Emergency Management Training Course.
- Liaise with the Refugee Commissioner to form an inter-agency emergency co-ordinating committee.
- Carry out an analysis of material stocks on hand in the country/region, which might be required for an emergency.
- Determine Government plans and ideas on matters of refugee status, registration, and emergency response operations, in the event of a refugee emergency.

2. *Which emergency response actions should have been initiated by the FO?*

Form, with Government and experienced NGO's, an inter-agency co-ordinating committee to respond to the emergency

- Carry out an immediate needs/resources assessment; use of "Gap Identification Worksheet".
- Request Headquarters technical mission to assist in needs/resources assessment.
- Focus on immediate ways to combat the life-threatening medical problems (malnutrition, diarrhea, measles, cholera).
- Develop a multi-sector Operations Plan, which should be linked to self-sufficiency and durable solutions.

3. *Once the refugee emergency is over, what should the FO do?*

Conduct a "lessons learned" survey of what went right and wrong, and what lessons can be drawn

- Enact all the emergency preparedness activities summarized in answer No. 1 above.
- Establish a "country disaster plan" and "refugee contingency plan."
- Ensure technical and operational follow-up with respect to the refugee group in the post-emergency situation.

Local settlement

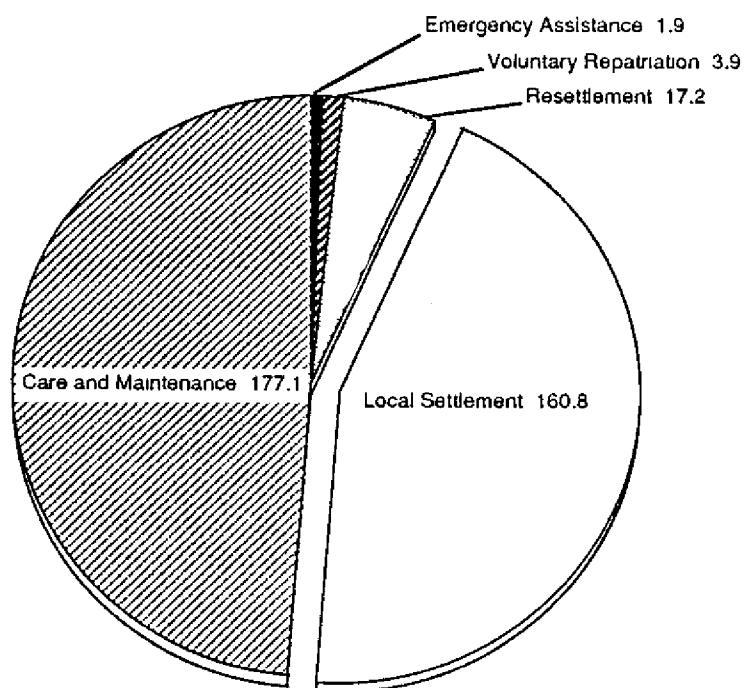
UNHCR/C Fedele

Salvadoran refugees in Honduras

This form of assistance represents the major, most commonly applied durable solution in much of Africa and other parts of the world. In financial terms, it absorbs a substantial share of overall financial requirements. This is illustrated below.

Budget allocation by type of assistance

*(in millions of U.S.
dollars for 1989)*



Local settlement assistance applies to certain groups of refugees. They are as follows:

- refugees in organized settlements
- spontaneously settled refugees
- "urban" refugees

Let's begin with a few facts.

Organized settlements: Some 25% of the refugee population in Africa live in over 140 organized rural settlements established since 1962. Recent examples include: Ukwimi and Meheba in Zambia; Likuyu in Tanzania; Ketou in Benin; Gedo, Hiran and Lower Shebelli in Somalia. Examples in Latin America include: Campeche and Quintana Roo in Mexico, and Playa Blanca in Costa Rica.

Spontaneously settled refugees: These refugees far outnumber those in organized settlements in many countries. Only a fraction have been directly assisted. Major groups include:

- Angolans in Western Zambia
- Burundis and Zaireans in the Kigoma area of Tanzania
- Angolans in Bas-Zaire
- Mozambicans in Malawi, Swaziland and Tanzania

"Urban" refugees: Although most refugees still live in rural areas, the number of "urban" refugees has increased substantially in recent years. Their number includes refugees of both rural and urban background, seeking to settle in urban areas—a development which has led to social problems on an unprecedented scale.

The assistance needs of each of these broad categories are very different, and technical support in each case varies with these needs. A general pattern is nonetheless common to all. The table below shows on the left-hand side the basic stages which go to make up this pattern. Against these stages you will find listed a number of specialized activities of a technical nature. Look carefully at these activities. They can serve as a checklist if you are involved in local settlement assistance.

Local Settlement Checklist

| Stage | Specialized Activity |
|---|--|
| 1. Identification of needs and resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic appraisal of caseload • Needs assessment • Socio-economic viability survey of host area • Assessment of job opportunities • Determination of settlement site, including constraints (land tenure, physical resources, environment support capacity) • Institutional capacity |
| 2. Integrated planning A. Organized settlements B. Urban refugees and spontaneously-settled rural refugees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic, financial analysis and planning of settlement projects • Community development structures • Health, education, water, roads • Housing facilities • Productive activities (agricultural and non-agricultural) • Management and organization • Physical layout, infrastructure • Use of natural resources • Operations Plan for implementation, including selection of implementing partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viability studies • Case Management Systems (counselling, education, employment) • Operations Plan |
| 3. Implementation | |
| 4. Monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic monitoring of projects • Determination of "critical" sectors |
| 5. Technical evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yearly evaluation • Mid-project evaluation for multi-year project • Determination of problems and corrective measures |
| 6. Re-orientation <i>(if necessary)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrective measures based on outcome of evaluation |
| 7. Final technical evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of settlement viability and self-reliance in different sectors • Planning of phase-out |
| 8. Post-evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of continued viability of project • Analysis of "lessons learned" to guide future programmes |

Notes

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