

## CHAPTER 12: FIELD-LEVEL MANAGEMENT

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## FIELD LEVEL MANAGEMENT

### 12.1 Introduction

1. This chapter discusses the management of assistance in a refugee emergency within the country of asylum; that is, the mechanisms and organization required to combine the many different actions, persons and priorities into a coherent overall approach that meets the refugees' needs. Successful management requires leadership; subject to the role of the government, leadership may be the most important single contribution of UNHCR. Leadership requires that once decisions are reached, they are properly implemented. This discipline is essential in emergencies, when there is often not time to explain the considerations involved. As far as possible, those directly concerned should contribute to decisions that affect them, but final responsibility rests with the Representative.

2. The nature of a refugee emergency makes its management a complex and frequently difficult exercise in which practical and political problems must be resolved quickly and effectively. Much will depend on the role of the government and the implementing arrangements. Management of a refugee emergency is likely to have two levels: that of the capital and that of the location of the refugees, the site level, which will involve the provincial or district authorities of the government's administration. While the principles suggested here are likely to be generally valid, action must be adapted to the imperatives of the situation.

3. The initial stages in the management process comprise: the needs assessment, which determines what must be done; the planning, which determines priorities within a framework for action; the allocation of responsibilities for action; ensuring the means for action, including co-ordinating mechanisms, personnel and material.

4. From the start, the management of a refugee emergency must include continuous monitoring, reporting and evaluation in order to ensure that plans are adjusted and that the action remains appropriate as circumstances change.

### 12.2 Needs assessment and planning

□ A comprehensive plan of action is essential, drawn up with the people who will implement it and taking account of the views of the refugees.

1. Assessment has been discussed in chapter 3; it is the prerequisite to any response. To the extent possible, the assessment must involve those who are to be responsible for the response, including the refugees. Needs can only be assessed against a knowledge of what is required. The determination of the standards to which assistance should be delivered is, therefore, of fundamental importance. This must take full account of social and cultural factors, including the background of the refugees and the conditions of nationals in the country of asylum; the response must be appropriate. Experience suggests that failure to set appropriate standards from the start is a common cause of management problems in emergencies.

#### Plans of action

2. Response to the needs must be planned. The best management tool for this is a simple plan of action for each administrative level. At the start of an emergency there is a tendency to postpone planning, both because information is not available and because there are obvious urgent needs which can be met piecemeal without a plan. This tendency should be resisted: the more critical the situation, the more important it is for the Representative to find the time to take stock, determine priorities and develop a plan for what needs to be done, when, by whom and how.

3. A further indication of points that might be considered in drawing up the overall field plan of action is given in Part 2. The overall plan should include a plan for each refugee site, drawn up by the organization with overall operational responsibility at the site level. The plans at the two levels are interdependent.

4. The most effective plans of action are those developed by or with the people who will implement them. Drawing up the plans should be a team effort to the extent possible; clear direction must, however, come from the government and/or UNHCR. The plans must be comprehensive, covering all needs whether these are being or will be met through UNHCR or by other organizations and sources of funds. Not only will such a plan clarify issues of management and responsibility; it will also provide a head-start for the programming exercise.

5. In drawing up the plan, take account of the views of the refugees. They are the single most important resource in meeting their own needs, and will have definite ideas on how this may best be done. The plan must strengthen the refugees' own resources and self-sufficiency and avoid creating dependency through the well-intentioned provision of outside assistance that is either inappropriate or unnecessary. The plan should also reflect the aim of a durable solution.

6. The plans of action must be available to all who need them.

#### 12.3 Allocation of responsibilities and personnel management

☐ Responsibilities must be clearly defined and understood.

☐ The personnel necessary to implement the plan of action must be made available; local staff will be particularly useful.

☐ The quality of personnel management and leadership will directly affect the success of the emergency operation.

1. The roles and tasks of all involved must be clearly stated. Delay in the definition of responsibility usually leads to each party defining goals independently and setting their own limits of responsibility. This in turn can lead quickly to confusion, gaps and duplication. Responsibilities should be defined for each administrative level, and for both organizations and individuals. With responsibility, which should be delegated to the lowest possible level, must go the necessary authority. Responsibility without authority is useless.

2. Implementing arrangements and personnel needs have been discussed in chapter 4. Organizational responsibilities for UNHCR's operational partners will be defined, in time, in the contractual arrangements governing the co-operation. If, however, formal sub-agreements etc. have not yet been drawn up, and the basis of co-operation remains a letter of intent, the definition of responsibilities contained in the plan of action is more essential than ever. The responsibilities of organizations delivering assistance but who are not operational partners of UNHCR must also be defined. This may create problems, particularly where individual NGOs wish to have responsibility for a specific sector. Final authority rests with the government, and the Representative should consult closely with the authorities. To the extent possible, however, any conflicts of interest should be resolved within the framework of an NGO co-ordinating mechanism, such as that described in the next section.

3. Defined responsibilities of organizations must reflect fully those allocated in the plans of action.

4. Job descriptions, even if the imperatives of an emergency mean their frequent revision, are the most common management tool for defining individual responsibilities. Job descriptions are important for regular UNHCR staff, and even more so for temporary staff and people working as volunteers.

5. A document setting out the assumptions, concepts and principles behind the emergency operation has proved a valuable complement to the plans and detailed definitions of responsibility, especially in large programmes. Such a document should include an explanation of the role and responsibilities of the government, UNHCR, other UN organizations, operational partners, and any bilateral donors, together with the standards in the various sectors and any specific guidelines necessary. Details of the co-ordinating mechanisms should be given.

#### Personnel

6. There should be no delay in committing the necessary personnel to emergency situations. The organizational needs of an emergency cannot, however, be met by the simple addition of personnel; the plan of action and definition of responsibilities must determine personnel needs, not vice versa. Staffing must be flexible and numbers are likely to vary over time. Locally-hired staff usually prove particularly valuable.

7. It is important that the different advantages of local and international staff are understood, and that these different strengths are properly incorporated into a staffing plan. Very obviously, local staff members understand the local situation. They are sensitive to issues that often escape the notice of the international staff member. In addition, the local staff members will often enjoy a wide range of contacts that enable them to "get things done". Finally, and very

significantly, they may speak the refugees' language. Correspondingly, it must be recognized that in the eyes of many of those involved the international staff members bring to the programme an impartiality, an embodiment of its international character, which is essential. They will also have experience from elsewhere to contribute to the management of the emergency.

8. Local volunteers - both nationals and members of the diplomatic and expatriate communities - may come forward to help in the face of evident needs. The value of outside volunteers will vary considerably with the situation, the skills of the volunteers, the time they can devote and the availability of the management personnel needed to co-ordinate and support them. Lack of proper supervisory support often leads to the volunteer taxing already over-extended staff, with the result that the services rendered become ineffective while the volunteer becomes disillusioned.

#### Personnel management

9. Sound personnel management, supervision and leadership are very important to the success of an emergency operation, but can easily be over-looked. Administrative aspects of UNHCR personnel management are discussed in Part 2. The initial motivation of those involved is a major asset but, for persons at levels that do not allow an overview of the operation, this can be replaced by disappointment and frustration if supervisors are too busy to plan, organize, direct, control and continue to motivate their staff.

10. Staff meetings should be convened regularly from the start, and everyone made to feel part of the team. The welfare of that team will have an important bearing on the success of the emergency operation. Very long hours will often be necessary, but supervisors must ensure that staff have

time off, away from the refugee site, and do not get so overtired that their efficiency and the professionalism of their approach suffer.

11. All field staff have a particular responsibility to safeguard their own health, for example, through the regular taking of the correct anti-malaria drug, ensuring vaccinations are up to date and avoiding obvious health hazards like unsafe water.<sup>1/</sup> The need to hospitalize or evacuate key staff can cause a major disruption in an emergency operation.

12. In an emergency there may be many occasions when staff see clearly that by devoting time to helping individual refugees or families in distress they could alleviate suffering directly. To seek to do so would be very understandable, but it can lead to a personal emotional involvement at the expense of the staff member's wider responsibilities towards the refugees as a whole, and to resentment among other refugees. Some staff may have direct responsibility for individual care, though this is often best assumed by the refugee community, but for all staff, compassion must be tempered by a professional approach. Guidance by supervisors is often needed on this point.

#### **12.4 Organization and co-ordination**

- ☐ A single co-ordinating authority is required.
- ☐ UNHCR should take the lead to ensure effective NGO co-ordination if this is not already ensured.
- ☐ The actions of UNHCR staff must be properly co-ordinated.

#### **General**

1. Effective co-ordination is the result of sound management. Co-ordination mechanisms set up without the establishment of clear objectives and assignment of responsibility and authority will be ineffective and substitute words for action. If co-ordination is not based on a good information exchange, particularly with the site level, it may even be counter-productive.

2. A framework within which the implementation of the programme can be co-ordinated and management decisions taken is essential, both for the overall response and within UNHCR. Co-ordination at central and site levels will involve frequent informal contacts between UNHCR, the government, other UN organizations directly involved, the operational partner(s) and other parties concerned. These contacts should be complemented by more formal regular meetings where the overall progress is reviewed and plans adjusted. Arrangements for the general briefing of the diplomatic corps and the UN system are discussed in Part 2.

3. Whatever the implementing arrangements, experience suggests that there are major advantages in the establishment by the government of a single co-ordinating authority (task force, commission, operations centre etc.) on which all the ministries and departments involved are represented. This authority should also be represented at the site level. In countries already granting asylum to other refugees, such a focal point is likely to exist, and may simply need strengthening.

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<sup>1/</sup> The Ross Institute booklet "Preservation of personal health in warm climates" (1980) gives comprehensive guidance.

#### NGO co-ordination

4. Effective co-ordination with and among the NGOs will be essential to the success of the emergency operation. Much will depend on the position of the government, which may wish to control and co-ordinate NGO activity itself. Where a NGO is an operational partner of UNHCR, co-ordination should already be assured, but many NGOs may be operating their own programme for the refugees with their own funds. Some will have been active before the UNHCR programme started and many more may arrive in a major refugee emergency. Where there has previously not been a habit of inter-agency co-ordination, the exchange of information may well not go beyond those who have participated in the co-ordinating meeting. To get the information passed "down" to the site level can initially be as hard as it was to get information passed "between" the agencies.

5. Subject to the policy of the government, where a NGO co-ordinating structure does not already exist it is strongly recommended that UNHCR takes the lead in encouraging the NGOs to set up their own co-ordinating committee and mechanisms. The role of the government on such a committee will depend on the situation; at the least, a representative of the government's own co-ordinating authority should attend as an observer. UNHCR's status might be that of an observer, but an active one, as the meeting of the committee will provide an important opportunity to brief all NGOs on progress, future plans and problem areas, to request specific assistance and to answer the questions on UNHCR's aims and policies that the NGOs may have little other chance of asking. In the absence of other arrangements, there is a strong case for UNHCR itself organizing and chairing such meetings, at least in the first weeks. This may be a crucial component of UNHCR's leadership role.

6. In a large-scale refugee emergency, the NGO co-ordinating committee should also be encouraged to create sectoral sub-committees, for example for health and nutrition. The committee, and particularly such sub-committees, could play an important part in the development of the specific standards for the delivery of assistance. See for example, ch.7.2.18 on guidelines for health care.

7. Some experience has been gained in the working of NGO co-ordinating committees in refugee emergencies. Annex 1, "Elements of a co-ordinating body", might be helpful to those considering the establishment of a committee.

8. A NGO co-ordinating committee can also be of considerable value when new agencies arrive, both in integrating their assistance in the overall programme and with the practical administrative and general briefing arrangements. If there is no such committee, agencies new to the country are likely to turn to UNHCR for initial administrative support, hotel reservations, transport etc. This can quickly become a major preoccupation for UNHCR field staff at the expense of their own work.

#### Within UNHCR

9. Within UNHCR itself, in addition to the staff meetings already recommended, regular and frequent meetings of key personnel will be essential, both centrally and at site level. In a critical situation, a daily early morning planning meeting and another in the evening for reporting will often be useful. Summary minutes and/or decision sheets are an important management tool in emergencies, otherwise under the pressure of events what was decided, and who was to take what action when, may be forgotten.

### 12.5 Management at the site level

☐ Common standards are essential.

☐ Proper involvement of the refugees is fundamental to success at this level.

1. The framework for the organization and co-ordinating mechanisms at the site level is likely to reflect broadly that established centrally, but it will be more affected by the implementing arrangements.

2. Clear understanding of the aims and objectives of the emergency programme and proper co-ordination are even more important at the site level than centrally, for it is here that failures and misunderstandings will directly affect the refugees. Of particular importance will be the adoption of common standards when a number of organizations are providing similar assistance. Regular meetings of those concerned are essential: an overall co-ordinating mechanism chaired by the operational partner may be complemented by sectoral committees.

3. A rapid changeover of outside personnel can create major problems for site-level management. Six months is a suggested minimum length of service for staff involved in running services in the settlement. Some specialists may obviously be required for shorter periods. The importance of continuity is directly proportional to the closeness of contact with the refugees. Only some of the problems can be overcome by the overall operational partner at the site having a standard orientation and briefing procedure to ensure continuity of action and policy despite personnel changes.

4. Certain programme activities are interdependent or have a common component and will need particularly close co-ordination. Examples are environmental sanitation measures and the health services,

and the home visiting component of health care, feeding programmes and social services.

5. There is one fundamental difference between management at the two levels: at the site level the refugees themselves should play a major role. The social organization of the refugee community must support and enhance the refugees' own abilities to provide for themselves. The importance of working with the refugees and using and developing their own skills and organizational structures has been a common theme in the preceding chapters.

6. Refugee settlements are not, typically, simple replicas of former community life, as large numbers of refugees may be living temporarily outside their traditional community leadership structures. In nearly every emergency, refugee leaders, spokesmen, or respected elders will, however, be present. It will be necessary to define with the community the method of choosing leaders to ensure fair representation and proper participation in both the planning and implementation of the emergency programme. The more the settlement differs from former community life, the more important this action is likely to be to the success of the programme.

7. To ensure adequate representation and access for the individual refugee, various levels of representatives and leaders are likely to be required. Bear in mind that there is no reason why a refugee should be representative of the community simply because he or she has a common language with those providing outside assistance. Arrangements should be based on traditional leadership systems to the extent possible. It is natural that other, perhaps less traditional, power bases may emerge within the community. Particular attention should be paid to the sources of such power. A specific consideration is the need, if possible, to separate

physically any previously hostile groups among the refugees.

8. Subject to traditional social patterns, the basic planning unit is likely to be the family, and the basic organizational unit is likely to be groupings of refugees according to living arrangements. A good-sized basic organizational unit might be 80-100 people: this is sometimes referred to as a community unit. Above this comes the section which usually consists of some 1,000. Many settlement services are decentralized to this level. Five or so sections might be grouped together to form a sector for certain organizational and representational purposes. For instance in chapter 7 it is suggested that there should be a health clinic for every 5,000 refugees. Similarly, the participation of elected sector representatives on a settlement management committee, would be appropriate. As to how many sectors might make a settlement, there is no hard and fast advice. It depends on the circumstances. But generally the smaller a settlement the better. Physical layout of the site will have a major influence on social organization, and the importance of preserving and promoting a sense of community has been stressed in chapter 6. The system of refugee representation, which may be a several-tiered one with community-elected representatives selecting from among their number section representatives who in turn choose sector representatives, should be consistent with these physical divisions.

9. The social organization of the refugees must also make use of their specific skills and provide the personnel to run the community services. Details of what might be required have already been given in the relevant chapters, but as a check list:

- (1) health services (traditional practitioners, including midwives, home visiting, health centres, public health education, etc.);

- (2) feeding programmes;
- (3) water supply system (construction, maintenance, protection/treatment and distribution);
- (4) sanitation (maintenance and cleaning of latrines, drainage, garbage disposal, vector control, etc.);
- (5) shelter construction including communal buildings;
- (6) social services (caring for unaccompanied children and the disabled);
- (7) tracing;
- (8) education programmes;
- (9) general administration.

## 12.6 Registration and distribution

□ No programme can work properly unless the number of beneficiaries is known: there are several ways of determining this with sufficient accuracy.

□ A fair distribution system must be established.

### Registration

1. All planning, as well as fair distribution, will require an accurate census of the population. This will be an essential component of the needs assessment. It should be noted that under the Statute (8(f)) UNHCR obtains "from Governments information concerning the number and condition of refugees in their territories". Although it is UNHCR's statutory responsibility to seek refugee numbers - from the government, it must be made clear from the start that it is not possible for UNHCR to mount a programme of assistance without a precise measure of the number of beneficiaries.

2. While an accurate census is essential, a formal mass registration should not necessarily be an



automatic response at the start of an emergency. The arguments for and against initially going further than establishing numbers and an indication of the age/sex breakdown must be weighed carefully, and the objective and benefits determined.

3. The main advantage is that registration provides a unique opportunity to secure basic information, including on health and nutritional status, on which subsequent programming can be based. In addition registration allows a much tighter system of ration distribution. A drawback is that a detailed registration may have an effect on a refugee's attitude to possible durable solutions. For example, in certain circumstances a refugee who was aware his identity was officially recorded might be reluctant to repatriate spontaneously. Equally, registration can, in certain circumstances, give a refugee the impression of a possibility of resettlement that does not exist.

4. In some emergencies registration may be an important factor in protecting refugees. Registration will be an essential component of any individual tracing programme and in this respect there are arguments for registering as early as possible.

5. If a registration is undertaken, the form used and arrangements made must be carefully planned. Whatever the purpose of the registration, certain questions are likely to be common. An indication of these is given in Part 2. Try to avoid the need for a re-registration because key questions were omitted, a common error. After the immediate emergency is over, there may be a need for specific registrations, for example a socio-economic survey, and a phased approach to gathering the further information required should be adopted.

6. Registration requires sufficient numbers of properly briefed

and trained registration clerks or social workers who speak the language of the refugees, understand the purpose of the questions and can assess answers and eliminate obvious distortions. They must have a common code for transliteration between alphabets if necessary, particularly for proper names. If time allows, much will be learned from a small pilot registration.

7. The most practical time to register refugees is on arrival at the site, for example in conjunction with the health screening. Much will depend on the type and rate of any continuing influx. In any large influx there are advantages in passing arriving refugees through a reception/transit centre. This allows their registration and the issue of ration cards. It can ease later programme management problems and help avoid disputes about refugee numbers. Transfer of the refugees to a new site always provides a good opportunity for a mass registration.

8. Where a card is issued on the basis of a registration, a photograph identity card sealed inside unbreakable plastic is probably the least likely to be forged, altered, sold, or exchanged.

#### Numbers

9. With time, a discrepancy in numbers may arise between official figures and the best estimate of those working closest to the refugees. Unless this is swiftly resolved major problems will follow. Representatives and particularly field officers must discuss any such discrepancies with the authorities as soon as they occur, informing Headquarters of significant differences that cannot be resolved. Small discrepancies are likely, given the difficulties already discussed. Large ones can be avoided by timely action.

10. Where registration is deemed inappropriate and where it has not been possible to count refugees as

they enter through a transit centre, every effort should still be made to arrive at an accurate verifiable estimate of the number of refugees. If refugees cannot be counted on arrival, there are certain well-established demographic techniques which can be used: the number of refugee dwellings can be counted, if necessary through the use of aerial photography. Assuming there is some conformity of house size, a random sample of dwellings will provide an average number of inhabitants per house. The population of the settlement can then be estimated as a multiplication of the number of houses by the average house size. As settlement services develop it will be possible to cross-check the estimate of settlement population. Random sampling can establish the demographic make-up of the camp in terms of age breakdown. Then, for example, a vaccination campaign for under fives is carried out. If its out-reach is successful and parents' support for it strong, it should reach nearly all of the target group. If the proportion of under fives in the camp is known, it is then possible to double check the estimate for the total site population. Whenever possible, within each separate community, dwellings should in any case be individually numbered.

11. However, without a system of ration cards (which, if they have been issued at the start, should make this counting exercise redundant) it will be difficult to keep abreast of subsequent changes in the settlement population. If new arrivals do not have to report themselves as there are no ration cards to be issued, the best method is likely to be to make the reporting of new arrivals a responsibility of the refugee leadership. Alternatives to be considered are, either good enough control over house lay-out to ensure that new arrivals build on designated spaces; or if many of the new arrivals are actually joining family members and not building houses of their own, sample censu-

ses should be considered to try and establish how much the settlement as a whole is growing i.e. the same community units would have to be surveyed each time. The rate of growth in these units would then be taken to reflect that of the settlement as a whole. Sample surveying is a scientific procedure and must be done properly if authoritative figures are required: seek expert advice from local demographers if possible.

#### Distribution

12. An effective and fair system for the distribution of goods and supplies will be an essential part of site-level organization, and of critical importance when supplies are short. Monitoring the distribution to ensure that it is fair, including to vulnerable groups, will be an important management responsibility of UNHCR. Monitoring must also ensure that the refugees actually receive the supplies paid for by UNHCR in the contracted specifications.

13. The type of distribution system will depend on the circumstances. Daily distributions are generally to be avoided. At least a weekly interval might be appropriate for dry rations. A decentralized system, initially in bulk to community units or groups and then to families or individuals, is the preferred method. In certain situations, for example where supplies are short or abuses likely, centralized mass distribution direct to heads of family or individuals may be the only way to ensure reasonable equity. Guidance on other aspects of distribution is given in chapters 5 (logistics) and 8 (food).

14. There are two principal means of ensuring fair distribution: a ration card system and an honest refugee leadership. In perfect circumstances a ration card system might be regulated and enforced by such a leadership. However ingenious the distribution system devised, it is most unlikely to work

fairly without the basic support of the leadership. Ration cards are most easily issued when the refugees arrive at the time of initial registration. Done subsequently it is more likely there will be a margin of abuse or, at least, inaccuracy. A simple, effective system is to have colour cards with the number of family members the ration is to serve marked on the card. The refugee is initially, for example, issued a blue card. When the first week's ration is distributed that card is collected and a yellow card indicating the same number of family members issued. This card will be valid for the distribution in a week's time. Obviously the card must not be forgeable. Distribution has nevertheless in many cases been done successfully through an honest refugee community leadership without a ration card system. Whatever system is employed, spot-checks and the nutritional surveys should be used to ensure that the system is working fairly.

15. Responsibility for distribution is thus often delegated to refugee leaders. This can confer considerable power and should be closely supervised. Unless numbers are accurately known, there will be wide scope for abuses at several levels: censuses will need to be repeated as numbers change.

#### 12.7 Reporting, monitoring, and evaluation

- ☐ Sufficient information must be available to the decision-makers so that the operation can be adjusted to meet changing needs or correct short-comings.
- ☐ Situation reports should be sent as a matter of routine.
- ☐ Do not waste energy on exchanging information that is not acted upon.

1. In order that the emergency operation can be implemented and

monitored, a reliable and effective communications system which allows daily contact between UNHCR at the site, any regional base, for example for supplies and storage, and the capital will be essential. The requirement will be for a voice and/or cable link and a mail or courier service. Options are discussed in Part 2.

2. Reporting systems provide the information necessary for monitoring and evaluation, as well as the wider information needed for donors and public information. Regular routines should be set up, and the specific information required defined in standard formats which ensure that important information is there but avoid unnecessary detail. Annex 2 gives an example of a suggested format to be used, adapted as necessary, for reports from both the site level to the capital and the capital to Headquarters.

3. Specific reports will be required for various sectors. Annex 1 to chapter 7, Health, gives an example of a health surveillance report, also covering feeding programmes. Other specific reports might include those on social services, particularly unaccompanied children, tracing and family reunion. Responsibility for preparing reports must be defined, as must those who need to see them. A report that is not read and acted upon, at least by evaluating its information, is a waste of paper and time.

#### 12.8 Special considerations

- ☐ A number of difficult or sensitive issues may arise. A clear policy on these, promulgated in advance to those who need to know, can help defuse many problems.

1. In a refugee emergency the Representative may be faced with a number of other common management or policy questions on which guidance may be helpful. The question of what is acceptable administra-

tive expenditure by an operational partner has been discussed briefly in chapter 4.2.15. The question of UNHCR paying for the purchase or rent of land occupied by the refugees may also arise. UNHCR's policy is that the provision of land is a matching contribution by the government, though construction on it may be financed by UNHCR. In certain extreme circumstances, a possible solution is to find a voluntary agency which is able to buy land on UNHCR's behalf. Headquarters' approval is required for such arrangements. Obviously, donors are reluctant to fund land purchases and when necessary it should be made clear from the start that the international community, however extensive its other forms of support, does expect the government of asylum to provide land.

2. The question of the payment of refugees in cash or kind for community services will inevitably arise. The issue of paying refugees can have a crucial effect on a settlement's character. On the one hand, payment can break any sense of responsibility the refugees should continue to feel for their welfare despite their dependence on outside assistance. On the other, the absence of payment may mean tasks essential to the settlement's well-being are either not done or have to be done by paid outside labour. In the first days of a settlement's existence it is most unlikely that the payment of refugees would be appropriate. In this start-up phase refugees should understand that they have a responsibility to themselves and their fellows to participate in the establishment of their settlement. Even a food-for-work scheme is probably wrong at this stage. In addition to the unfortunate impression of condoning a right to payment, it may also involve commitments which cannot continue to be met, or have to be met at the expense of the whole settlement's general ration. Problems with the supply system are almost inevitable at the

beginning of a settlement's life and no group should in such circumstances get extra food to the direct detriment of others.

3. In the longer-term, certain types of community-wide work frequently start to emerge as areas where standards will drop if some form of payment is not given. This is often the case with key public health services whose importance is not always correctly understood by the refugees. Before any payment scheme is entered into its full potential costs should be calculated and the funds or extra food assured. The amounts involved for a large caseload may be very considerable once the precedent has been set. It should be borne in mind that after payment is introduced every group of workers will clamour to be included in the scheme. It will be necessary to have some very clear but restricted criteria on inclusion. Further, UNHCR should look to those agencies responsible for different sectoral services to meet the wage costs of refugees working in that sector. Also no wage system should be introduced which will inhibit progress towards a settlement achieving self-sufficiency.

4. As important as the level of remuneration - which, as the refugees are already supported, should be well below the national rates - is its fair application to all refugees doing broadly the same work. A major cause of discord at many refugee sites has been the payment by different NGOs of markedly different rates to refugees for the same work. A standard scale is essential. Whether or not there are differentials recognizing different levels of skill will be a matter to decide in consultation with the refugees.

5. Another common question concerns the provision of services to the local population. UNHCR does not have a mandate to provide direct assistance to local populations affected by the presence of refugees. It should be noted that