

Through the Alternatives to Camps Series, UNHCR provides key guidance, useful approaches, tools and good practices to support the implementation of the key actions outlined in the *Policy on Alternatives to Camps*. The Series also includes a call for sharing your good practices.



Tanzania/ UNHCR/  
Brendan Bannon/ 2009

# Alternatives to Camps

## Making It Work

### GOOD PRACTICE AND GUIDANCE SERIES



#### Key Action #2: Contingency Planning and Preparedness

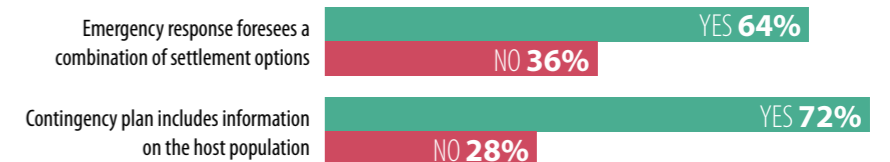
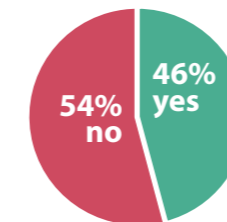
##### THE POLICY SAYS

The implementation of UNHCR's *Policy on Alternatives to Camps* requires in-depth analysis of the potential for pursuing alternatives to camps when undertaking contingency planning and emergency preparedness actions for a possible future refugee influx, and also in relation to existing refugee camps or camp-like facilities or structures. This includes an assessment of national legal and policy frameworks, the capacity of communities and the local economy, infrastructure, administrative structures, service delivery systems, housing, land, water and the key interventions that will be needed to absorb a refugee influx, working together with government authorities at all levels and the potential of host communities.

## The Diagnostic Tool for Alternatives to Camps

The *2015 Global Results of the Diagnostic Tool for Alternatives to Camps*<sup>1</sup> which 96 operations completed suggest that less than half of UNHCR's operations have a contingency plan in place.

### Contingency plan in place



\* UNHCR operations were asked whether the contingency plan included information on the absorption capacity of the local population, and/ or their willingness to host refugees and/ or their needs.  
1 <http://www.unhcr.org/5548c33b6.html>

## Key Tips and Actions

Please find below some key tips that can help you to implement **Key Action #2 on Contingency Planning and Preparedness** of the *Policy on Alternatives to Camps*. This action should be implemented together with the key actions of the *Policy* in order to address alternatives to camps in a comprehensive and mutually reinforcing way.

- **Undertake regular risk analysis together with partners, and minimum and advanced preparedness actions, including contingency plans, in line with the [Preparedness Package for Refugee Emergencies \(PPRE\)](#).**
- **Engage with government authorities and host communities at national and local levels to secure their buy-in and support for alternative hosting arrangements. Provide positive examples of where hosting refugees within communities have worked, especially within the same country or region, and the benefits from the perspective of authorities and host communities.**
- **Avoid the inclusion of camps, if feasible, or parallel delivery systems in contingency plans, and wherever possible, focus on an integrated sustainable approach that strengthens the capacity of already existing structures, such as healthcare and education. Such an approach may include reception and transition sites in an initial phase.**
- **Assess and identify suitable areas and villages to host refugees, paying close attention to issues including security, access, legal frameworks, population figures and profile, existing structures and services, and markets in light of cash-based interventions and livelihoods.**
- **Ensure contribution of partners and stakeholders, including local municipalities and community-based organisations, and establish plans for outreach and referral networks.**
- **Coordinate and plan two-way communication mechanism together with partners, and map out potential information channels in advance of an emergency, where possible. Consider establishing a standard operating procedure and communications plan.**
- **Consider a realistic time frame for implementation of the contingency plan.**



## Highlights from the Field

### TUNISIA INTER-AGENCY CONTINGENCY PLAN

In May 2014, UNHCR Tunisia together with UN agencies and main partners IOM and Red Cross – Red Crescent Movement developed an inter-agency contingency plan in light of a potential influx of population fleeing violence in Libya. In agreement with the Tunisian authorities, the plan covered the period of three months considering two scenarios, including a probable and a worst case scenario. The plan is regularly updated.

The overall response strategy applied an alternative to camps approach with displaced people being hosted in collective shelters and host communities in urban and rural areas. Cash-based interventions were the foreseen assistance strategy given its suitability in the urban context and the potential positive impact on local communities and economies, which also helps mitigate the risk of tensions between refugees and host populations.

The plan took into account the demographic situation of Southern Tunisia and its level of urban and social development in order to ensure that the existing infrastructures and services would be able to accommodate an increase in population. Due to its collaborative development process, the plan had full buy-in from the government, the humanitarian community and other relevant partners.

### CHAD CONTINGENCY PLAN

Following the continued degradation of the situation in Darfur, the UNHCR along with other UN agencies, NGOs, and international organizations established a contingency plan to address the needs of refugees in times of influx in Chad. This plan foresees the protection of Sudanese refugees during the two periods of the rainy season and the dry season in eastern Chad.

The response introduces alternatives to camps that facilitate sustainable communities to reduce pressure on natural resources and dependence on humanitarian aid. For example, Farchana and Goz Beida sub-delegations are prepared to assist refugees to settle in nearby villages. Existing national structures of basic services and assistance programmes are reinforced by this strategy so refugees and host community members enjoy the same services. The strategy pays particular attention to the socio-economic situation of the refugees, which largely depends on agricultural and livestock-related activities.

The response encompasses full involvement of the Chadian government and local communities. UNHCR and Commission Nationale d'Accueil et de Réinsertion des Réfugiés (CNARR) reinforced partnerships with the local authorities to fortify their role within the contingency plan. In this way, the response strengthens involvement of the Chadian government and local communities. Both civil and military authorities have increased advocacy and training to better guarantee protection of the rights of all refugees in emergency response.

## Tools and Guidance

The below documents can be found on the intranet page for [Alternatives to Camps](#).

- **CONTINGENCY PLANNING IN THE DIGITAL EMERGENCY HANDBOOK<sup>1</sup>:**  
Provides guidance and support when forming a contingency plan and preparedness, and gives practical recommendations of essentials to create an effective contingency plan. This includes guidance on site planning, risk analysis and monitoring, transit centres, shelter, security and more. Tools and methodologies for cash-based interventions are under development.
- **PREPAREDNESS PACKAGE FOR REFUGEE EMERGENCIES (PPRE)<sup>2</sup>:**  
As a practical tool for field use, the PPRE provides tools for achieving basic preparedness, risk analysis and guidance for advanced preparedness actions in greater coordination with governments and other partners. It contains tools for managing an effective country and regional contingency planning process, including good practice standards and templates for contingency planners.
- **UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION<sup>3</sup>:**  
Outlines useful approaches, including Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD), when building partnerships with the refugee and host communities, which is a key parameter to contingency planning and preparedness.
- **MASTER PLAN APPROACH<sup>4</sup>:**  
When planning a new site or seeking to convert an existing site, this key feature of the *UNHCR Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter 2014-2018* can help to ensure a holistic approach to settlement planning by linking the settlement to the local context and thereby better considering the integration of refugees and the needs of the local population. The Shelter and Settlement Section is ready to support the implementation of the Master Plan Approach with technical experts and design.

1 <https://emergency.unhcr.org/search?q=contingency%20planning>

2 <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/55576/preparedness-package-for-refugee-emergencies-ppre>

3 <http://www.refworld.org/docid/5209f0b64.html>

4 <https://intranet.unhcr.org/intranet/unhcr/en/home/policy-and-guidance/dpsm/unhcr-policy-on-alternatives-to-camps/contingency-planning-resources.html>

## Call for Good Practices

**If your operation is engaging in successful practices regarding contingency planning and preparedness in light of alternatives to camps, we invite you to share it with us to help improve situations across the organisation by sending an email to: [hqatc@unhcr.org](mailto:hqatc@unhcr.org).**

## More Information

Please contact [camargo@unhcr.org](mailto:camargo@unhcr.org) and [hqatc@unhcr.org](mailto:hqatc@unhcr.org) for more information on contingency planning and preparedness.

A group of Sudanese arrive in South Sudan carrying their belongings on their heads.  
UNHCR/G. Beals

