

## Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit (EPAU)

### Refugee livelihoods project

In the past two years, EPAU has undertaken a global review of protracted refugee situations (PRS), with funding provided by the Population, Refugees and Migration Bureau (PRM) of the US State Department. This project incorporated a number of related components: a series of case studies undertaken by UNHCR staff and consultants; a review of the existing literature; a synthesis paper on protracted refugee situations in Africa; and a series of presentations given at a number of workshops and conferences.<sup>1</sup>

The first phase of the PRS project has enabled EPAU to assemble a considerable amount of information and analysis in relation to the number and location of the world's protracted refugee situations; the predominant characteristics of such situations; the situation of refugees who have lived in exile for many years; and the constraints that confront such refugees in their efforts to become at least partially self-sufficient.

Building upon these findings, EPAU is now launching a follow-up project, which will examine the potential for UNHCR and other actors to promote refugee sustainable livelihoods in situations of long-term exile. The project will focus largely but not exclusively on refugee situations in the world's least developed countries. Although at this stage the project will primarily focus on refugee situations, it may subsequently be extended to include returnee and IDP situations.

More specifically, it is hoped that the second phase of the PRS project will:

- enhance UNHCR's understanding of the livelihoods strategies adopted by refugees, at the level of the individual, the household and the community;
- ascertain the extent of UNHCR's involvement and investment in the promotion of refugee livelihoods, disaggregated by year, region and type of intervention;
- evaluate the extent to which UNHCR and other actors have contributed to or constrained the establishment of refugee livelihoods;
- assess the relative effectiveness of different livelihoods interventions, including, for example, support to refugee agriculture, microfinance programmes, income-generating projects, vocational training, food for work etc.
- identify examples of effective and ineffective practice in relation to the promotion of refugee livelihoods;

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<sup>1</sup> A list of these outputs is available on request.

- provide substantive input to the self-reliance guidelines currently being prepared by DOS;
- examine the potential for enhanced partnership with other organizations, especially WFP, in the promotion of refugee livelihoods; and,
- establish a methodology for the analysis of refugee livelihoods, as well as the evaluation and monitoring of UNHCR's activities.

The project will adopt a differentiated approach to the analysis of refugee livelihoods, paying particular attention to the issues of gender, age and physical capacity (including the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on refugee livelihoods). The project will also examine the relationship between refugee livelihoods and UNHCR's protection mandate (for example, issues related to freedom of movement, residence rights, access to the labour market, etc).

Phase II of the PRS project will commence in mid-2003 and has an anticipated completion date of December 2004. The activities to be undertaken in relation to this project are likely to include:

- a historical review of UNHCR's involvement in self-reliance and livelihood issues;
- the production of a CD-Rom containing literature and guidance materials on livelihoods issues;
- a series of case studies of refugee livelihoods and self-reliance, to be undertaken by UNHCR staff and a pool of suitably qualified consultants;
- the preparation of thematic papers on the promotion of livelihoods in situations of displacement and instability;
- participation in relevant conferences and speaking engagements on refugee livelihoods;
- contributing to UNHCR's policy dialogue with donor states and host countries, the World Food Programme, World Bank and UNHCR implementing partners on the issue of refugee livelihoods;
- the establishment of an interactive electronic network on refugee livelihoods, facilitating the exchange of information, ideas and papers amongst UNHCR staff, consultants, staff of other agencies, academic and research institutes, etc; and,
- the convening of regional evaluation workshops on refugee livelihoods, bringing together those individuals and institutions which have been involved in the network.
- the publication of a UNHCR book on refugee livelihoods.

All of these activities will be undertaken in close association with other UNHCR entities, especially the Division of Operational Support.