Book 1
WHY SELF-RELIANCE?

This section explains why it is important to direct efforts towards self-reliance - clarifying what it is, justifying its incorporation in programmes, recognising that it requires a change in mentality, strengthening commitment to its adoption, stressing that UNHCR's role is to catalyse the development of initiatives (rather than directly implement them), and providing guidance to ensure implementation is effective. It should be read by all UNHCR programme staff but has content of particular importance to representatives, their deputies and other senior managers.

A. What is self-reliance

UNHCR's community development approach gets communities involved in decision-making and planning (right from the emergency phase), and regards refugees as active partners in assistance and protection activities, rather than passive recipients[1].

> The **community development approach** uses empowerment to enable refugees/returnees to shape their futures, improve their environment and overcome limitations in service provision. It is applied from the start of an operation and continues throughout, working towards the identification and implementation of durable solutions. The approach involves refugees/returnees from all population groups (women, men, boys and girls, older persons and host communities) in programme planning, assessments, implementation and monitoring. The use of committees to represent all groups within the community enables everyone a voice and acts as an effective and sustainable targeting mechanism leading to self-reliance.

The community development approach builds from, and further enhances, self-reliance.

> **Self-reliance** is the social and economic ability of an individual, a household or a community to meet essential needs (including protection, food, water, shelter, personal safety, health and education) in a sustainable manner and with dignity. Self-reliance, as a programme approach, refers to developing and strengthening livelihoods of persons of concern, and reducing their vulnerability and long-term reliance on humanitarian/external assistance.

Self-reliance will build upon strong social structures and increasing levels of economic activity, and social and economic links with local communities

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[1] The policy document on the community development approach "Reinforcing a Community Development Approach" was endorsed by the Executive Committee to the High Commissioner's Programme in February 2001. EC/51/SC/CRP.

(the hosting communities among whom refugees live, or those communities receiving returnees). Social self-reliance refers to the ability of a community to function with a level of cohesion, social accountability and mutual dependence-taking decisions, mobilising resources, and building and maximising interpersonal capacity to address issues and initiatives for mutual benefit. Economic self-reliance is based upon access to, and management of, material and monetary assets.

Self-reliance provides: the basis for Durable Solutions; a foundation working towards the Millennium Development Goals; and capacities contributing to the realisation of the Agenda for Protection[2].

B. Why adopt self-reliance

Traditional humanitarian/relief assistance is increasingly viewed as undermining the capacities of individuals to cope with crisis. It leads to dependency.

Self-reliance is a process that is feasible in your programme setting - it is appropriate in all stages of an operation. Self-reliance is right no matter what the ultimate durable solution will be. There are a number of arguments:

1. **Ensuring that refugees are treated in accordance with human rights principles**

2. **Addressing human development and self-esteem among refugees/returnees**

3. **Addressing coexistence issues and peace-building**

4. **Ensuring food security and tackling poverty reduction**

5. **Working with host governments and poverty reduction strategies**

6. **Guiding the UN Development Group**

7. **Building from policy**

8. **Coping with budget constraints**

9. **Developing donor interest**

10. **Harmonising approaches**

11. **Building a basis for durable solutions**

12. **Learning jargon and recognising reality**

[2] Goals 4 and 7 of the *Agenda for Protection* (2003). See Annex 1.1: References.

C. The possible arguments

1. Ensuring that refugees are treated in accordance with human rights principles

All activities should be rights-based. Protection includes all activities aimed at ensuring the equal access to and enjoyment of rights by women, men, girls and boys of concern to UNHCR - in accordance with the relevant bodies of law. Self-reliance can, if undertaken properly, assist in ensuring that persons of concern are better protected by strengthening their capacity to claim their civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. It can also provide a basis for equality, equity, empowerment and participation of persons of concern, as well as more accountability of humanitarian agencies within an operation.

Self-reliance - a further step up for refugees and returnees.

2. Addressing human development and self-esteem among refugees/returnees

Old programmes need new approaches. Self-reliance can: empower refugee and hosting populations; renew hope and vigour; and demonstrate real and measurable changes in the nature, impact and cost of a programme - addressing protracted situations where there is no end in sight and there is pressure to do something.

3. Addressing coexistence issues and peace-building

Avoid conflict by sharing development benefits. Disparities can lead to friction between refugee and hosting populations. As a key component of development processes (that are inclusive of both refugee and host populations) self-reliance will promote collaboration, trust, and social and economic interaction between communities, and strengthen coexistence.

Field experience: Coexistence in Ecuador

In Ecuador, the spill-over of the Colombian conflict is creating a serious humanitarian crisis, with some 1,000 Colombians requesting asylum in the country each month (June 2004). Since 2000, more than 29,000 Colombians have presented asylum claims to the Government's Refugee Office, of which some 9,000 persons have obtained refugee status. Although the refugee statistics are relatively small, estimates show that the total number of Colombians in Ecuador might be far higher and could well reach a quarter of a million.

Colombian refugees and asylum seekers are well received by the Ecuadorian people and authorities. The Ecuadorian Government has an effective eligibility commission to carry out refugee status determination and, instead of living in refugee camps or settlements, Colombians live alongside nationals, dispersed in host communities. Many settle in urban areas.

With the continuous flow of Colombians into Ecuador there is an increasing need for more equitable burden-sharing. The presence of large numbers of Colombian nationals in Ecuador raises security concerns among authorities and affects relations between nationals and Colombians in refugee hosting areas. Although public opinion concerning the arrival of Colombians has become more negative, the Government of Ecuador has confirmed that its humanitarian and refugee policy remains in line with international norms and standards.

In coordination with the Government, UNHCR wants to promote self-reliance and co-habitation between the national and refugee population[3] - building broad-based partnerships between governments, humanitarian and multi- and bilateral development agencies. As a first step UNHCR has initiated a programme of community-based Quick Impact Projects to address the vulnerability of refugee hosting areas, support self-reliance, and develop a dialogue to build social cohesion between refugees and local communities. Instead of creating a parallel refugee support system UNHCR wants to enhance local development, which would allow the Government's Refugee Office to support local communities that absorb important numbers of refugees.

Americas Bureau, UNHCR, Geneva.

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[3] This is based on the Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) approach.

4. Ensuring food security, and tackling poverty reduction

Offset constraints in the food supply pipeline. Self-reliance can yield food crops, and generate income for purchasing food - alleviating human suffering, preventing social unrest and avoiding political embarrassment.

Human potential potentially lost. Hold on to human resources or you may lose them.

5. Working with host governments and poverty reduction strategies

Host countries like to see benefits for their own populations. Governments work towards the MDGs and want to see results. Self-reliance, as the basis for development and economic growth in both refugee and hosting populations locally, can strengthen host government support for poverty reduction strategies and programmes - leveraging concessions and exemptions, and strengthening partnerships[4].

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[4] See the *Handbook for Planning and Implementing Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) Programmes* (2005), Part 1, Module 1, Section 3.

Field experience: Government support and healthy media coverage in Tanzania

On 16 December 2004 an Annual Regional meeting for Coordination, chaired by the Regional Commissioner, took place at the Regional Commissioner's office attended by Members of Parliament, District and Regional Sector Heads from Kibondo, Kasulu and Kigoma. UNHCR and WFP were invited to attend.

On the agenda was UNHCR's contribution in the Kigoma region. The chairman of the meeting, the Regional Commissioner, thanked UNHCR and WFP for the contributions they had made in the region, noting the construction of secondary schools, roads, Kasulu police station, water wells, the rehabilitation of the airstrips, provision of furniture for secondary schools, etc. The Regional Commissioner had earlier broadcast this message on (the local) Kigoma radio station and requested UNHCR staff collate details of these contributions in order that he may ensure nationals know what UNHCR has been doing not only for the refugees but also for Tanzanians.

It was minuted that... "UNHCR and WFP were working and collaborating well with the local authorities in the whole region" and that the local government was "happy with the team".

UNHCR Tanzania and operational partners.

6. Guiding the UN Development Group

The UNDG, of which UNHCR has been a member since 2004, has issued a Guidance Note on Durable Solutions for Displaced Persons[5]. This document recognises durable solutions as a development challenge, and that poverty reduction and self-reliance contribute to solving displacement situations. The Note also uses the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to motivate UN Country Teams to ensure that displaced persons are included in national development strategies and programmes, and that equal attention be given to the needs of host communities.

7. Building from policy

UNHCR directives (derived from UN General Assembly recommendations[6]) call for the adoption of self-reliance through Convention Plus[7], the Agenda for Protection[8] (Goal 5 - Redoubling the search for durable solutions[9]), and the Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and People of Concern[10].

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[5] See Annex 1.1: References for UNDG's *Guidance Note on Durable Solutions for Displaced Persons* (2004).

[6] The General Assembly has recommended that UNHCR enable refugees to become self-reliant, has recognised the need for additional assistance to promote self-reliance, and has urged governments to cooperate in such efforts. (United Nations General Assembly Report of the Fifty-Fourth Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme - Item 19 k. EC/51/SC/CRP)

[7] The High Commissioner's Convention Plus Initiative complements the 1951 Geneva Convention. Convention Plus provides a forum for countries hosting large refugee populations to increase burden sharing via the provision of additional development assistance through multilateral agreements. Convention Plus asserts that promoting self-reliance is an obligation.

[8] The *Agenda for Protection* (2003) recognises that improved refugee protection is best achieved through enhanced multilateral commitment, cooperation and coordination in implementing practical arrangements and solutions to protracted displacement.

[9] See Annex 1.1: References for UNHCR's *Agenda for Protection* (2003), page 74.

[10] The *Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern* (2003) - see Annex 1.1: References - guides the implementation of durable solutions: Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR); Development through Local Integration (DLI); and sustainable Repatriation, Reintegration, Reconciliation and Reconstruction (4Rs). The promotion of self-reliance is an integral part of all three approaches.

8. Coping with budget constraints

Prevention is cheaper than cure. Invest early and get money into self-reliance in good time in order to: reduce dependency; offset demand for handouts and subsidised services; and reduce the impact of budget constraints.

9. Developing donor interest

Donors are increasingly interested in providing development aid, rather than humanitarian aid, to support refugees in protracted crises. Self-reliance, as the basis for development, is likely to increase donor interest in a programme.

10. Harmonising approaches

Self-reliance complements other UNHCR innovative approaches. Self-reliance builds on other initiatives like the Community Development Approach[11] and the Team Approach[12].

11. Building a basis for durable solutions

Prepare refugees for durable solutions. Self-reliance provides the basis for whatever comes next - whether it is resettlement, local integration or repatriation and reintegration[13].

12. Learning the jargon and recognising reality

It's time to catch up. Self-reliance is not new. It has been part of the language and process of development for some time as the basis for livelihood development. It is only relatively new to us in the humanitarian field. There are ways to strengthen and develop this in early stages of an operation.

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[11] The community development approach builds refugee empowerment to enable them to shape their futures, improve their environment and help overcome limitations in service provision. This approach is applied from the start of operations, and continues through to the implementation of durable solutions. It promotes involvement of refugee representatives in programme planning, assessment, etc., and the use of committees to voice concerns, contribute to targeting and identify durable solutions. The community development approach was adopted by UNHCR through the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme in 2001. See Annex 1.1: References for details of the UNHCR community development manual which is to be published in 2005.

[12] The promotion of durable solutions requires consensus and coordination between agencies, governments, NGOs, refugees and hosting populations, as well as within UNHCR itself. This requires a multi-sectoral approach - mainstreaming policy priorities (such as gender, age and the environment).

[13] See Appendix Two, Annex 2.4: *Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern* (2003), page 4, paragraph 10.

D. When to promote self-reliance

Ideally self-reliance will be promoted in all stages of operations - from an emergency phase through to durable solutions. It is crucial, in particular, in situations of protracted displacement. Phasing-in self-reliance in protracted care and maintenance programmes becomes increasingly difficult with time[14]. Begin the process as early as possible. Start while there is something to build from, in order to:

- avert a dependency mentality among refugees and the local population

- capture refugee initiative and resourcefulness while they are most innovative (before the appearance of complacency and social degradation, and a loss of self-respect)

- build from the refugees' existing skills and knowledge base before it is lost

- retain human capacity and human assets among the refugee population before they are lost, i.e. prevent a 'skills and brain-drain'

- maximise the availability of local natural resources (by addressing their sustainable use/preventing depletion) early in an operation

- build from a positive relationship between host and refugee populations before resentment, suspicion and conflict appear

- influence the interests and priorities of field teams and operational partners when they are most easily moulded

- maximise donor interest - it's usually stronger at the beginning of a refugee crisis, and decreases soon after.

Field experience: East Timorese dispel the myth

Many assume that, in major disasters, victims are traumatised and incapable of making major decisions that affect their recovery. As my experience in East Timor demonstrates - this is a myth.

The outbreak of violence against the East Timorese which started on 5 September 1999 was very sophisticated. Rape was used as a systematic weapon of terror, and with highly targeted burning of houses, was designed to drive away the population. The severity and intensity of the army's aggression over 14 days left 5,000 killed. 270,000 people fled southwards by boat and other means of transport, and 600,000 fled to the relative safety of the mountains. Worst hit was the west side of the island. Trauma was generalised, intense and evenly spread; with pockets of great intensity.

On the 20 September international forces landed and stopped the generalised mayhem, and in their wake came humanitarian agencies that reached and developed a working partnership with the IDPs. By the 8 October the first planning meetings for a shelter programme had been held and IDPs were

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[14] See the *Handbook for Planning and Implementing Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) Programmes* (2005) - Part I, Module 1, Section 2.1 on self-reliance versus care and maintenance. See Annex 1.1: References.

organised into sector groups to address water and sanitation, health, etc. By May 2002 over 35,000 houses had been built using 16,000 tonnes of materials, involving eight partner organisations and spending $23 million.

During the operation relief teams were challenged during the emergency not only by the circumstances but by the determination of the IDPs themselves. The displaced were starving, had lost everything and were traumatised, but they engaged in decision-making from the outset once humanitarian support was available. They decided on the construction materials to be used. They selected the beneficiaries of the operation. They planned who should do what. Despite their circumstances their social organisation (their social self-reliance) provided a very strong basis for their recovery. Furthermore, the people made key critical decisions and designed and implemented what they wanted, to the extent that some agency workers were defending the wishes of IDPs despite their own personal bias. Iron sheets are notoriously uncomfortable in hot lowland areas, but these were used. All relief-effort logic (and the assertions of funding organisations in the donor countries) argued that iron sheets were not suitable, yet the population wanted them. Iron sheets represent status and achievement. By going against the wishes of these communities relief agencies would have undermined local initiative and provided support that, at a later date, would have required further costly- and logistically-demanding interventions. Responding to local needs and wishes, and suppressing the wish to impose external solutions, helped make the operation a success.

Bernard Kerblat,

Chief, Emergency Preparedness and Response Section, UNHCR, Geneva.

E. When to phase out

UNHCR's role is to catalyse the establishment of self-reliance initiatives among operational partners. Once sound programmes are underway the role of UNHCR staff is to monitor their effective implementation, and support approaches to donors and lobby for government support. Direct involvement can be reduced progressively.

F. Self-reliance and urban refugees

Urban assistance tends to be expensive, time consuming (with many individual cases) and may have security-related problems. The task is to protect refugees, and to get to a position where they become part of the existing environment, access national resources, and don't require specific services for themselves beyond legal protection (i.e. to stop refugees "coming back for more"). The issues are the same; the responses are similar; the goal is to develop capacity for self-reliance.

G. Making a case to the host government

One of the biggest barriers to maximising self-reliance opportunities for refugees/returnees and local communities may be the absence of a suitable legislative environment. In addition to identifying opportunities for livelihood development for persons of concern, it may be necessary to present a case to the host government. The argument is not likely to succeed if it focuses narrowly on the rights of refugees[15]. A broader argument will be needed[16]. A case may be built from some the following arguments:

- Supporting government **reviews of laws, policies and regulations** relating to refugee employment, taxation, movement, access to markets, legal support, etc. and identifying opportunities for tangible benefits.

Field experience: The integration of the Guatemalan refugees into the practices of UNHCR

Even in refugee situations we can find positive examples where protection and assistance have been applied in such a way as to exceed the normal expectations of what can be achieved by refugees in exile. Mexico is one of these examples.

First, the protection provided to the Guatemalan refugees was not only of a legal nature but also of a socio-economic and cultural nature. Second, the implementation of more than one durable solution simultaneously had the effect of fusing the merely humanitarian with self-sufficiency and development. In Mexico, refuge was not used as an excuse to negate either local integration or repatriation. Both the integral nature of protection provided and the simultaneous application of durable solutions are what define the Mexico operation as exemplary.

The experiences of the Mexican camps place special emphasis on legal integration, via the definition of a migratory status favourable to all refugees; economic integration derived not only from careful planning of the multi-annual programme but also articulation of development programmes in the states of Campeche and Quintana Roo; and cultural integration as demonstrated by the unique rehabilitation project carried out by the refugees in the Maya ruins of Edzna in Campeche. Another very notable aspect of the integration process in that it was continuously fortified via training of the refugees in the areas of health, education and, above all, gender. The promotion of women deserves full recognition and evolved into a paradigm for the local peasant communities and for UNHCR itself. All of the above constitutes in practice a process of development and education for peace which the refugees have lived and breathed in for nearly two decades of refuge.

All of this has an obvious impact on the type and characteristics of the repatriation and reintegration of the refugees in their country of origin. Indeed, the experience of having access to, and management of, land and various resources, especially in Campeche and Quintana Roo, raised local integration to its highest level and enabled the Permanent Commissions to incorporate it as a central issue in the negotiations for return.

There has been a political and democratic advance in the Guatemala of today expressed with the return of its citizens. The peace process has produced a complete socio-political and cultural diagnostic which indicates the problems still to be resolved. The process has also created

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[15] See arguments in the *Framework for Durable Solutions for Refugees and Persons of Concern* (2003) page 4 - Issues at Stake. The Framework is provided in Appendix Two, Annex 2.4.

[16] Positive examples are provided in Part II, Module 3, Section 2.1 (Initiating Consultations and Building Consensus) in the *Handbook for Planning and Implementing Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR) Programmes* (2005). See Annex 1.1: References.

participatory mechanisms which incorporate all sectors of Guatemalan society. The Technical Commission created by the Agreement on Uprooted Populations is represented by the State, the international community, and the returnees and displaced populations.

The Guatemalan refugees made an undeniable contribution to the pacification and democratization of their country of origin. They began this contribution well before the signature of the Peace Agreements in 1996 with an absolutely peaceful return and a socio-economic reintegration enriched by their high capacity. The refugees not only lived in peace with the very people who occupied their land and accused them of maintaining connections with the insurgent movement, but they also began to relate with the Government of Guatemala in a mature and dynamic fashion.

We cannot pretend that the refugee programme in Mexico can act as a panacea for all of the problems faced in achieving peace, development and democratization. However, from the lessons learned during the Guatemalan refugee experience in Mexico, there were undeniable gains made by both the Mexican and Guatemalan Governments. For instance, they acquired awareness of the causes of forced displacement and ways to confront emergencies and lack of protection in harmony with the interests of the international community and in co-ordination with UNHCR. What we have learned from this experience is that the definitive support of human rights in all aspects of population movements, the view that migrants also bring positive contributions with them, and the strengthening of governmental institutions charged with protecting the undeniable right to asylum, will all lead to avoid new flows of refugees or at least to ensure that they will be managed in the best way possible.

Roberto Rodriguez Casabuenas,

Former Regional Representative, UNHCR, Mexico.

Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados (COMAR) and UNHCR. *Presencia de los Refugiados Guatemaltecos en México* (México, D. F.: COMAR, 1999), page 308.

- Building host-country **capacity for supporting community development** to provide services to both hosting and refugee populations.

- **Capacity-building** in planning at regional and local levels to address the additional challenge of refugees and provide development benefits both to host communities and refugees.

- Providing **institutional strengthening** and technical assistance for schools, health centres and other local institutions in order that they support both host communities and refugees.

Field experience: Capacity building in Uganda

During the operation for displaced Sudanese in northern Uganda, refugees represented up to 42% of the population in the hosting area. One of the most effective humanitarian agency responses was to provide support to government institutions in order to increase and improve local services and resources to cope with the added challenge of providing for refugees and the local population (rather than setting up parallel services and facilities).

There were a number of successful initiatives: SNV (Netherlands Development Organisation) worked to build local government capacity for planning; SNV, with GTZ and UNHCR, also worked with the Department of Education to look at the needs of schools - determining what input was needed for additional students, supporting the local development of the Universal Primary Education programme and building management capacity for accommodating increasing numbers of students; and Save the Children UK worked with Department of Health officers to build the capacity of the line ministry, developed data analysis expertise and supported staff development. Everybody benefited: refugees received good support; the local population received more and better quality services; local and national institutions developed their capacities; UNHCR and its operational partners established sustainable mechanisms; and relationships between local people and the refugee population were strengthened.

Reintegration and Local Settlement Section, UNHCR, Geneva.

- Advocating **donor support to hosting governments** that promote refugees' economic rights and self-reliance.

- Exploring mechanisms **to support refugee production and marketing** without creating detrimental competition in local markets by, for example, opening wider market opportunities that will benefit both refugee and hosting communities.

- Identifying and encouraging commercial production activities among refugees, to **strengthen regional and national economies**.

- Promoting **local businesses** and therefore local economic development.

Field experience: Benefits from bees in Uganda

The national body promoting beekeeping development in Uganda developed market links with Europe but the volume of honey produced was insufficient to meet demand. UNHCR worked with the organisation to establish their support in the refugee hosting area. Both refugees and the local population were involved. The beekeeping organisation wanted to increase national production and improve honey quality to conform to national standards. The agricultural office of the local district was also involved.

UNHCR's involvement was minimal once the linkages had been made. The project started with the identification of carpenters and tailors as well as beekeepers (and potential beekeepers) with whom to work - and then it: ran a training programme; supported the establishment of a local organisation; developed links between the national and local entities; and provided various inputs. The immediate outputs were improved beekeeping skills, the local production of beehives, and local capacity for making beesuits. The initial beekeeping systems promoted were simple, based on basic management, harvesting and processing. Harvested honey was sent to the organisation's Kampala base on public transport, and extracted in conditions that maximised its quality and value; and producers were taught how to process the formerly discarded beeswax for selling locally.

> It was a win-win situation. Refugees and local people generated more income from beekeeping (with higher volumes and better quality honey). The national organisation improved production and had a local body through which to work; UNHCR helped refugees and the local community towards greater self-reliance; and honey-processors, honey-packers and traders gained additional business.
>
> *Myriam Houtart,*
>
> *Former Senior Self-reliance Officer, RLSS/DOS, UNHCR, Geneva.*

- Stimulating, where possible, **skills transfer** between refugees to host populations. (The field experience below is not a particularly relevant example for a host government but it's an interesting case in its own right).

Field experience: Better vegetables in Tanzania

Prior to the influx of refugees, agriculture was not well developed in western Tanzania. The incoming Rwandans changed that pretty quickly. As farmers who had made the most from limited areas of land they knew how to maximise production and productivity. They were not allowed to cultivate plots of their own, but they did work for local Tanzanian farmers. Within a few seasons the diversity, volume and quality of produce in the local markets had increased dramatically. Not only did the standard of living increase (among both local Tanzanians and refugees) but also the economy of the area improved - almost visually. Grass thatch was replaced with iron sheets for roofing in an increasing number of homes.

When the refugees left, the District Commissioner admitted that it was a big blow to the local economy, but improved agricultural skills remained.

Reintegration and Local Settlement Section, UNHCR, Geneva.

H. What to do

The adoption of self-reliance requires a change in mentality among key humanitarian agency actors and (probably) the host government. There must be a shift away from viewing refugees as a captive and passive audience and clientele, towards seeing them as people with a range of ideas, skills and positive coping mechanisms. Recast them as agents of development and their own durable solutions (rather than as idle recipients of humanitarian aid). Reinforce their initial coping mechanisms and encourage their initiatives.

Getting started

Ensure that this Handbook does not sit on a bookshelf. Launch it, and use it. These are initial steps:

A ▶

1. A middle manager should be assigned the responsibility for studying and facilitating the launch of this material.

2. Develop strategies for staff training and orientation on self-reliance and its application, consider which budget-lines to use and assess staff implications. (Dialogue with the Reintegration and Local Settlement Section (RLSS) in the Division of Operational Support (DOS) at UNHCR HQ[17] as necessary for advice on these areas, and details about other avenues in UNHCR for further support - especially to get started).

B ▶

3. The assigned middle manager should facilitate the establishment (or strengthening) of self-reliance in the programme. This is a brainstorming exercise involving a team comprising: programme, technical support and field staff; partners (both humanitarian and development); and government representatives. Link this with the Multifunctional Team as piloted by those involved in mainstreaming gender and age.

4. Discuss the relevance of points raised during the brainstorming exercise, and identify further issues. Prepare (with the team) a simple analysis of the benefits to be gained by the programme and operations from working towards self-reliance, i.e. what programme problems and opportunities might be addressed.

The next step

Once the team is convinced, you may then have to develop a case to argue with the host government. Proceed with these steps:

5. Under the guidance of the assigned middle manager the team should explore further how self-reliance will contribute positively to donor and development actor interest and funding, programme reviews and assessments, Country Operation Plans (COP) etc. Consider how refugees

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A ▶ See Task 1: Launch your self-reliance strategy in **Book 2.**

B ▶ See Task 2: Facilitate the promotion of self-reliance in the country operation in **Book 2.**

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[17] The RLSS mailbox is HQTS02.

are part of a larger population, and how they (may) contribute to that area. Explore partnerships with government, humanitarian agencies and development actors that may promote more integrated area-development approaches to benefit everybody (including refugees/returnees and local communities). (Task 3 in Book 2 also provides guidance on how middle managers may address these issues as well).

6. Develop a statement on added value and an argument - to make a case (to government and donors) for creating a climate in which self-reliance is possible. Determine their concerns and objections; work out what will leverage concessions and exemptions; develop a strategy for informing, influencing and gaining their support[18].

7. Using the outputs from this process, senior managers should be presented with a case for self-reliance to make to government.

8. The same case may be made to local donors.

Maintaining momentum

The main tools for ensuring that self-reliance is fully mainstreamed in a programme are to demand:

- description of self-reliance projects and activities in Country Operation Plans

- submission of specific self-reliance funding applications to donors

- progressive adoption of self-reliance by operational partners

- the use of self-reliance indicators in programme activities

- evaluation of self-reliance activities, and their impact on operating budgets and government collaboration as well as refugee protection, health, education, participation, social stability and conflict

- establishment of partnerships for the promotion of livelihood in refugee hosting and returnee areas.

Book 2: Making self-reliance work clarifies what to do.

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[18] Consider also the need to convince refugees that self-reliance is not a substitute for resettlement. If some refugees believe that self-reliance may impact upon their chances of resettlement to a third country, their commitment to self-reliance activities may be undermined. (New skills and livelihood may even enhance resettlement possibilities). This will be explored further by programme managers. See **Book 2: Making self-reliance work**.

I. It's worth it but challenging

A Things can go wrong - there are risks and constraints. Progression towards self-reliance requires an appropriate social, economic, political, legal and physical environment, good initiatives and effective partners.

Field experience: You man, get out of your car

Driving in a UNHCR vehicle along dirt roads in Zambezia province of Mozambique, a village woman stopped us. "Look" she said" the water pump is broken".

"Yes?" I replied.

"UNHCR installed the pump." She continued.

"But UNHCR has handed it over to you."

"Fine, but there are no spare parts available; and UNHCR showed us how important clean water is, when we were in the refugee camps. We had good water and we had healthy children. It's UNHCR's fault. You taught us the value of clean water and now we are dependant on it. We learned the lesson from you. But we can't install and repair a pump.

What did we do wrong?

Pablo Mateu,

Chief of Section, RLSS/DOS, UNHCR, Geneva.

J. If you want to read more

Dip into **Book 2: Making self-reliance work**. This is also small, but provides links to tools and has references to a considerable amount of primary and secondary information.