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UNHCR Country Strategy Evaluation: Egypt

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UNHCR Evaluation Service

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The UNHCR support for this evaluation has been welcomed, both logistically and more intellectually, through providing a constant sounding board for our questions, findings, conclusions and reflections on UNHCR's operations.

The Evaluation Team Leader, Katie Tong, and Team Member Rula al-Sadi collected the data for this report. Katie Tong is the author of the report. David Fleming (Itad) provided quality assurance.

The evaluation report follows the Annotated Content Guide to draft Quality Evaluation Reports as laid out in UNHCR's Guidance on Evaluation and Related Quality Assurance (pilot version, November 2016). For style the evaluation report follows UNHCR's Evaluation Service's Report Template Blue Cover (2019).

Evaluation information at a glance	
Title of the evaluation:	Independent Evaluation of the UNHCR Country Operation in Egypt
Time frame covered:	2016–2020
Expected duration:	6 months: December 2019 to June 2020
Actual duration	14 months: December 2019 to February 2021 (owing to COVID-19 limitations)
Type of evaluation:	Centralized Country Strategy Evaluation
Countries covered:	Egypt
Evaluation manager / contact in UNHCR:	Nabila Hameed, Senior Evaluation Officer
Support staff:	N/A

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Executive Summary

Evaluation purpose and scope

This is a formative Country Strategy Evaluation (CSE) with the **purpose** of generating evidence, insights and learning to inform the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR's) future operational planning and strategy in Egypt.

The **scope** of the evaluation is UNHCR operations in Egypt from 2016 to 2020 albeit, in keeping with the formative purpose, focusing on 2019 and 2020. The evaluation analyses key results of the country operation, alongside the contributing and constraining contextual factors that have an impact on performance and future strategic direction, including the global direction of refugee management, such as through the UNHCR Strategic Directions and the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR).

The **primary audience** for the evaluation is the UNHCR Egypt Country Operation. Secondary audiences include the UNHCR Regional Bureau, UNHCR Headquarters and other UNHCR country operations (particularly those also working under the Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan – 3RP – framework). Other audiences include other actors and stakeholders in Egypt working with refugees (including the Government of Egypt – GOE).

Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation utilized a mixed-methods approach against an evaluation framework of three areas of inquiry and was carried out between November 2019 and April 2021. The evaluation time frame was initially planned as being between November 2019 (with the inception mission in December 2019) and May 2020, with a planned data collection mission in April 2020. However, because of the COVID-19 situation, the data collection phase was delayed until November 2020, with analysis and reporting taking place after this and the time frame subsequently significantly expanded.

The three Areas of Inquiry (AOIs) specified in the terms of reference (TOR) provided the overall framework for the evaluation and were further developed for the Egypt context. The three AOIs were:

- AOI 1: Results to date: What have been the results across different areas of assistance, protection and solutions as achieved by the UNHCR country operation and what contextual and operational factors and decisions have contributed to or impeded these results?
- AOI 2: Assessing strategic coherence: How strategically has UNHCR been positioned within the country context, and how well aligned is the programme with the changing/evolving needs of persons of concern (POC)? To what extent do the strategy and country operational plan (COP) have coherence and/or alignment with the work of other actors?
- AOI 3: Translating learning into action: How can UNHCR build on results achieved to date and further leverage UNHCR's strategic position and influence within the country, to optimize the potential impact of collective efforts towards protection and solutions for UNHCR persons of concern, and the communities that host them?

Following the development of the evaluation matrix, data collection tools, data recording tools and data collation tools were generated. Primary data collection tools included key informant interview (KII) protocols to

guide interviews in a consistent manner and a focus group discussion (FGD) methodology to guide group discussions in an ethical manner, ensuring the principles of do no harm. Data recording tools included templates for all team members to record and collate evidence in a consistent manner to contribute to a comprehensive and coherent evidence database.

The CSE reviewed 58 documents and held 45 KIIs; there were 102 refugee FGD participants.

Summary of Findings

AOI 1 findings summary: UNHCR Egypt has achieved significant successes with comparatively limited funding with regard to protection; risks and the challenges within the operation can be categorized into components of (a) documentation, or lack thereof, (b) access to durable solutions, (c) detention issues and (d) protection for the most vulnerable. In addition, the operation is widely credited with contributing to progress towards the national asylum law, which is a potentially seminal achievement. With regard to basic needs, UNHCR has a clear and coherent policy framed around meeting immediate needs and working towards ensuring long-term needs are met through inclusion in national systems.

UNHCR has also effectively managed the coordination of refugee assistance through leadership of different coordination mechanisms. This is widely appreciated by all stakeholders and perceived as impactful in terms of both operational/informational factors and increasing the visibility of POC on the development assistance agenda.

Despite multiple feedback mechanisms being in place, refugees continue to highlight difficulties in accessing assistance when they experience challenges. Further, other actors who work with POC report some difficulties in accessing required data, which highlights a potential miscommunication about data sharing protocols. There is no evidence to suggest differing levels of access to feedback based on gender or age although there are differences in perceived access to assistance and feedback from different nationalities.¹

The UNHCR Egypt Representative has dual accreditations with both GOE for leadership of the refugee response in Egypt and with the League of Arab States (LAS), a regional organization covering the Arab region. These are two separate functions that are performed with different modalities, bilateral diplomacy for the former and multilateral diplomacy for the latter. On the latter, UNHCR Egypt has contributed significantly to emerging LAS frameworks that will ultimately have benefits across the region.

AOI 2 findings summary: UNHCR Egypt navigates a complex country context effectively and strategically but there is a delicate balance between ensuring a continuing close relationship with GOE and visibly defending the rights of refugees and other POC. In addition to the specific socioeconomic and policy context of Egypt, there is a unique refugee environment consisting of both a dual protection space – registered asylum seekers and refugees compared with approximately 6 million foreign nationals among whom there are persons in need of international protection – and a dual financing framework for Syrian and non-Syrian refugees. UNHCR has sought pragmatic and balanced solutions well adapted to this context.

With regard to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR has adapted both internally (such as reviewing office working spaces and processes and procedures) and externally, by anticipating the protection impact of delayed processes resulting in expired or absent documentation and advocating with GOE for leniency

¹ There is a unique refugee environment in Egypt consisting of both a dual protection space – registered asylum seekers and refugees compared with approximately 6 million foreign nationals among whom there are persons in need of international protection – and a dual financing framework for Syrian and non-Syrian refugees. UNHCR has sought pragmatic and balanced solutions well adapted to this context.

towards this. Further, UNHCR Cairo instituted regular meetings with implementing partners.² While advocacy with GOE remains a strong solution, feedback from POC themselves is that there is perceived continued restriction to access services without renewed documentation.³

AOI 3 findings summary: The national asylum law presents a significant and seminal opportunity for transferring refugee responsibility to GOE but also, depending on how the law is framed, a potential risk *vis-à-vis* human rights standard.

There are a number of opportunities for UNHCR Egypt to be more catalytic by influencing other actors to provide more for POC in Egypt, and UNHCR has built a solid foundation to increasingly achieve this in the future. Furthermore, there have been some potentially inspiring developments triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic with regard to cash transfers and alignment with national social protection programmes. An opportunity created by UNHCR Egypt within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the idea of including the most vulnerable refugees and migrants in national social safety nets with the financial support of development donors. The United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) in Egypt referred to this new plan as the 'Grand Social Bargain'. This constitutes a rare and propitious opportunity aligned with the letter and the spirit of both the Grand Bargain, the GCR, the Global Compact for Migrants (GCM), the SDGs, and the idea of leave no one behind.

Conclusions

1. UNHCR Egypt has achieved significant successes with comparatively limited funding with regard to protection. In addition, it is widely credited with contributing to progress towards the national asylum law, which is a potentially seminal achievement. This has been accomplished based on a primary pillar within the approach being **maintaining excellent relations with GOE**. However, there is a delicate balance between ensuring a continuing close relationship with GOE and visibly defending the rights of refugees, and this balance may become even more difficult to hold if the new asylum law has challenging components that are not aligned with global standards. The UNHCR modality of working, within which advocacy with GOE is seen as key to achieving results for POC, should not be underestimated and has had some success, but is not without challenges. When outcomes are highlighted as achieved, these are sometimes not actual outcomes for POC but rather outcomes for the advocacy. A notable concern raised by many respondents and refugees – although not necessarily indicative of a trend – is the agreement for extended residency, which has not yet been effected.

2. UNHCR holds a unique role in protection services, whereas there are in fact other actors who can – and should – provide essential sectoral services to meet basic needs. By **further influencing other actors** towards increased investment and accountability, particularly sectoral lead UN agencies, more of UNHCR's budget could be allocated to the protection services that no other agency can provide. This of course requires willingness from other partners to fund and implement, and arrangements for such with the government. Utilizing the strong foundation of UNHCR's participation and leadership in the coordination system but evolving this into a more collaborative and responsibility-sharing platform could influence more actors to provide more for POC. However, this would also require rethinking data sharing protocols which currently do not encourage other actors, particularly development partners, to include POC within their programming without access to the data which justifies that inclusion. Equally, there are opportunities for harmonizing cash-based interventions

² Information provided by UNHCR Egypt.

³ UNHCR Egypt highlight that this is a temporary problem and will be resolved by the end of 2021 or early 2022.

(CBI) across actors and ensuring more multipurpose CBI, and enhanced vulnerability targeting.

3. UNHCR has worked hard to ensure a fair and favourable environment for all refugees and asylum seekers despite the complexities in Egypt of the dual protection space (registered refugees and asylum seekers vs. unregistered migrants and foreigners) and the dual financing instruments. While some non-Syrian refugees still feel a sense of discrimination, many partners and donors applaud UNHCR's efforts to maintain a **One Refugee Approach** within Egypt, despite the complexities. Furthermore, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR, IOM and UNRC have worked together to further reduce the space between refugee, asylum seeker and migrant – something that is in fact a “*mini-revolution*”⁴ within UNHCR and that goes even further than the One Refugee Approach towards operating more fully within the humanitarian–development nexus space.

4. Despite the obvious effort UNHCR Egypt makes towards communicating with communities (CwC)/engaging with communities, there is consistently, a strong feeling among POC – either because expectations are too high or because feedback mechanisms are not as functional as necessary – that their voices are not heard and their challenges are not addressed. This is clear both from this evaluation and from UNHCR annual participatory assessments. UNHCR has historically worked under CwC and AAP concepts globally. Originally, CwC was more of a communication tool than a protection tool, and UNHCR Egypt has situated CwC under external relations for this reason: however, notwithstanding the investment and effort made, CwC is still not functioning optimally and therefore consideration for changing modalities, including the positioning within UNHCR Egypt, is necessary.

5. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been both significant challenges but also windows of opportunities for UNHCR to fast-track and streamline processes. UNHCR itself recognizes that protection activities have suffered because of the enforced suspension of many in-person services because of the pandemic. After adjusting working practices at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, UNHCR adapted plans for remote interviewing for refugee status determination (RSD) and resettlement where possible by June 2020 and then proceeded to purchase hardware for this to happen. Registration was more difficult but UNHCR further adapted modalities to accomplish this. Despite these efforts, there remains a significant backlog for all documentation processes. However, UNHCR has also been quick to recognize potential windows of opportunity for learning from COVID-19, both internally – with regard to considering the new modalities of working as permanently more cost-efficient where possible – and externally by seeking to leverage the potential to integrate non-nationals into the Egyptian social protection scheme, for example.

Recommendations

UNHCR Egypt should consider how to best continue working closely with the Government of Egypt while ensuring both the rights of refugees are protected and other humanitarian and development actors have confidence in UNHCR maintaining that protective authority

UNHCR should develop a plan to become more catalytic and influence greater burden-sharing with other partners

⁴ UNHCR key informant

UNHCR Egypt should consider both a rationalisation of sectors and increased nexus working

UNHCR Egypt should review and revise the CwC/AAP approach

UNHCR should investigate the longer-term costing implications of the remote working model

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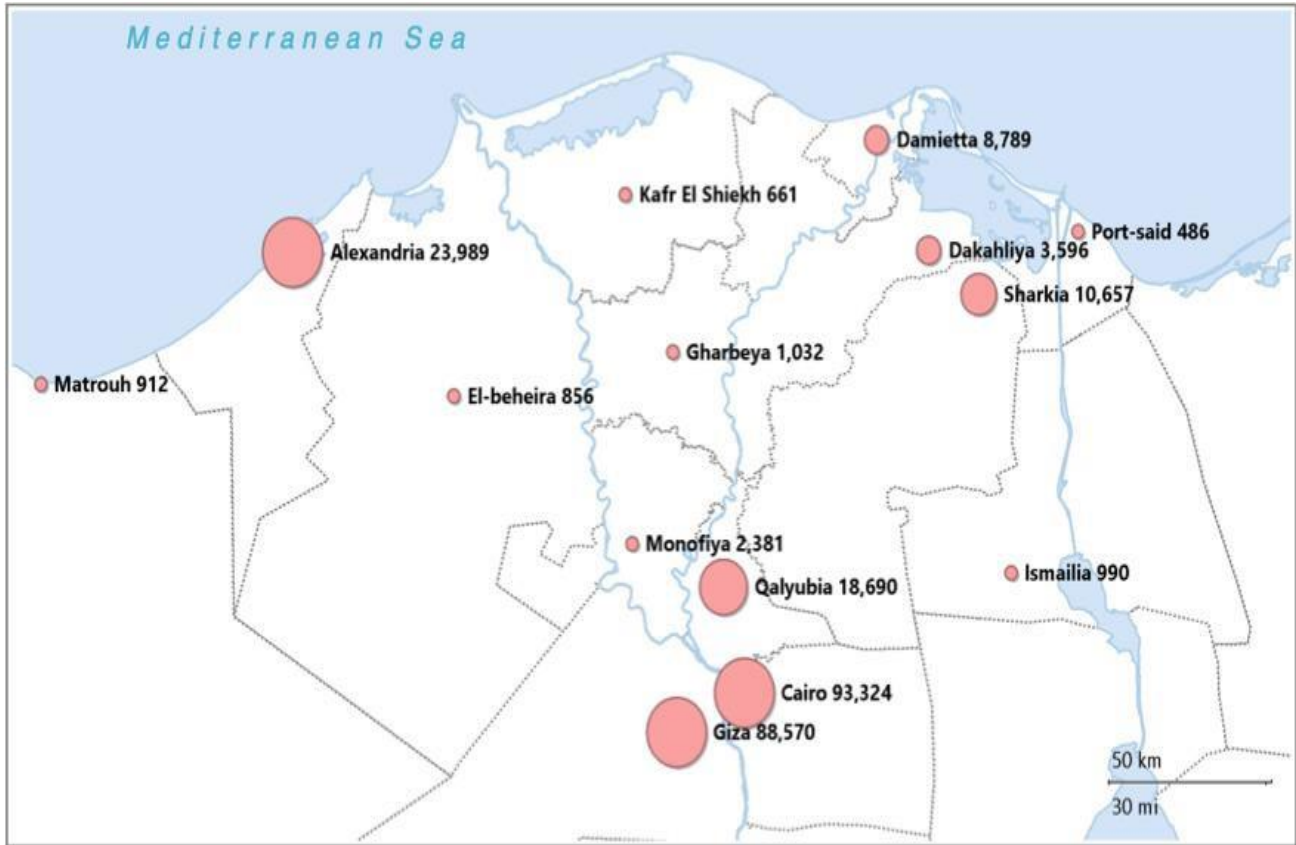
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List of abbreviations

3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan for the Syrian Crisis
AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
AGD	Age, Gender and Diversity
AOI	Area of Inquiry
CAPMAS	Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics
CBI	Cash-Based Interventions
CBP	Community-Based Protection
CO	Country Office
COE	Country Operation Evaluation
COP	Country Operation Plan
CSE	Country Strategy Evaluation
CwC	Communicating with Communities
DER	Division of External Relations
DIP	Division of International Protection
ERP	Egypt Response Plan
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GCR	Global Compact for Refugees
GOE	Government of Egypt
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IAWG	Inter-Agency Working Group
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISWG	Inter-Sector Working Group
JVAP	Joint Valletta Action Plan
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAS	League of Arab States
MMWG	Mixed-Migration Working Group
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCCM	National Council for Children and Motherhood

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
POC	Persons of Concern
RCM	Refugee Coordination Model
RSD	Refugee Status Determination
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
StARS	Strengthening the Capacities of Community-Based Organization Serving Migrants in Egypt
SWG	Sector Working Group
TOR	Terms of Reference
UASC	Unaccompanied and Separated Children
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPDF	United Nations Partnership Development Framework
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
US	United States
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Map of UNHCR operational area in Egypt showing UNHCR Persons of Concern⁵



⁵ UNHCR Monthly Statistical Report September 2020

1. Introduction: evaluation purpose, scope and methodology

1.1. Evaluation purpose and scope

This is a formative Country Strategy Evaluation (CSE) with the **purpose** of generating evidence, insights and learning to inform the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR's) future operational planning and strategy in Egypt. The evaluation seeks to:

- a) Support UNHCR to make evidence-based decisions for future operational planning and strategy;
- b) Inform decisions to strengthen partnership and programme design thereby improving assistance to Persons of Concern (POC);
- c) Assess the effectiveness of UNHCR's plans and activities within the specific country context.

The **scope** of the evaluation is UNHCR operations in Egypt from 2016 to 2020 albeit, in keeping with the formative purpose, focusing on 2019 and 2020. The evaluation analyses key results of the country operation, alongside the contributing and constraining contextual factors that have an impact on performance and future strategic direction, including the global direction of refugee management, such as through the UNHCR Strategic Directions and the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR).

The **primary audience** for the evaluation is the UNHCR Egypt Country Operation. Secondary audiences include the UNHCR Regional Bureau, UNHCR Headquarters and other UNHCR country operations (particularly those also working under the Syria Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan – 3RP – framework). Other audiences include other actors and stakeholders in Egypt working with refugees (including the Government of Egypt – GOE).

1.2. Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation utilized a mixed-methods approach against an evaluation framework of three areas of inquiry and was carried out between November 2019 and April 2021. The evaluation time frame was initially planned as being between November 2019 (with the inception mission in December 2019) and May 2020, with a planned data collection mission in April 2020. However, because of the COVID-19 situation, the data collection phase was delayed until November 2020, with analysis and reporting taking place after this and subsequently, the time frame significantly expanded.

The three Areas of Inquiry (AOIs) specified in the terms of reference (TOR) provided the overall framework for the evaluation and were further developed for the Egypt context. The AOI criteria were used to frame eight key evaluation questions (see Figure 1), alongside indicators, main sources of evidence and linkages to evaluation criteria (see Annex I for the full evaluation matrix). Evaluation questions (EQs) were added or amended to address COVID-19, specifically EQ6 and EQ8.

Figure 1: Overarching Areas of Inquiry and specific Egypt evaluation questions

AOI 1: Results to date: What have been the results across different areas of assistance, protection and solutions as achieved by the UNHCR country operation and what contextual and operational factors and decisions have contributed to or impeded these results?

EQ1. To what extent has UNHCR achieved clear **protection** results?

- EQ1a. To what extent has UNHCR achieved intended protection results and objectives in successive Country Operation Plans (COPs) (2016–2019)?
 - EQ1b. To what extent has UNHCR contributed to movement towards an effective and comprehensive national asylum framework?
 - EQ1c. To what extent has UNHCR achieved effective registration, Refugee Status Determination (RSD) and resettlement?
-

EQ2. In what ways and to what extent has UNHCR contributed to meeting basic needs of all asylum seekers and refugees (including women, men, boys and girls and all marginalized groups)?

EQ3. To what extent has UNHCR achieved effective **leadership and coordination** for refugees and asylum seekers (ensuring inclusion of women, men, boys and girls and all marginalized groups)?

AOI 2: Assessing strategic coherence: How strategically has UNHCR been positioned within the country context, and how well aligned is the programme with the changing/evolving needs of POC? To what extent do the strategy and COP have coherence and/or alignment with the work of other actors?

EQ4. To what extent has UNHCR adapted its role under the 1954 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to the changing national political and socioeconomic context of Egypt?

EQ5. To what extent has UNHCR adapted its refugee response to the specific factors defining the asylum and refugee context in Egypt?

EQ6. To what extent has UNHCR successfully adapted operations to the COVID-19 pandemic?

AOI 3: Translating learning into action: How can UNHCR build on results achieved to date and further leverage UNHCR's strategic position and influence within the country, to optimize the potential impact of collective efforts towards protection and solutions for UNHCR persons of concern, and the communities that host them?

EQ7. What are the future opportunities and risks for strengthening the protection environment of refugees and asylum seekers through enhanced national legislative frameworks, and moving towards a 'one refugee' approach?

EQ8. What are the future opportunities and risks for UNHCR taking an increasingly catalytic approach and influencing the interventions of other actors through a more strategic use of its limited resources, including the risks and opportunities presented by COVID-19?

Following the development of the evaluation matrix, data collection tools, data recording tools and data collation tools were generated. Primary data collection tools included key informant interview (KII) protocols to guide interviews in a consistent manner and a focus group discussion (FGD) methodology to guide group discussions in an ethical manner, ensuring the principles of do no harm. Data recording tools included templates for all team members to record and collate evidence in a consistent manner to contribute to a comprehensive and coherent evidence database.

The evaluation utilized a mixed-methods approach including:

- a) **Document review.** A review of existing literature, documents and data was conducted focusing on substantive programmatic, management and internal and external coordination aspects characterizing the country portfolio. Key sources of documents and databases are presented in Annex I with an indication of how the documents and databases will serve the CSE (see Annex III for a list of documents reviewed);
- b) **KIIs.** Interviews with key internal and external stakeholders were conducted to assess general perceptions on the relevance, coverage, effectiveness, connectedness, coordination, and sustainability of the country operation as well as UNHCR's role in general as the key protection actor in Egypt (see Annex II for a list of stakeholders interviewed);
- c) **FGDs.** Ensuring age, gender and diversity mainstreaming, the CSE undertook a number of FGDs with refugees, asylum seekers and host populations to ensure the voice of women, men, boys and girls, including those most marginalized, and across Syrian and non-Syrian refugee populations, were included within the CSE;
- d) **Emerging findings/validation workshop.** This validation workshop was held at the end of the data collection period with the Egypt Country Operation (CO) senior management team specifically for discussion and validation of emerging findings.

The CSE reviewed **58 documents** and held **45 KIIs**; there were **102 refugee participants in FGDs**.

Figure 2: Evidence sources

Evidence source	Total	Disaggregation	
Document review	58	n/a	
KIIS	45	Gender: Female – 18 Male – 27	Type: Donor – 10 Government – 1 Non-governmental organization – 9 Other – 1 UN – 9 UNHCR – 15
FGDS	102	Gender and age group: Female adult – 34 Female youth – 29 Male adult – 17 Male youth – 22	Nationality: Syrian – 39 Sudanese – 17 South Sudanese – 18 Eritrean – 12 Ethiopian – 6 Iraqi – 4 Yemeni – 5 Somali – 1

The evidence database formed the basis of development, validation and verification of the findings as they emerged backed by the evidence. The value of the Evidence Assessment Framework is in providing a rigorous approach to data recording and data analysis.

Limitations: Several limitations were identified both within the original inception phase and then due to the COVID-19 situation and mitigation measures were put in place as below.

Figure 3: Limitations and mitigation measures

Limitations	Mitigation Measures and Impact
<p>COVID-19: The primary limitation for this evaluation is the global COVID-19 pandemic. Overarching UN COVID-19 guidance highlights the fact that in times of crisis, evaluation and assessment become even more important. This is both because crisis amplifies exclusion issues which need to be accounted for in adapted programming to ensure continued rights-based, equity-focused and gender responsive interventions but also because in times of crisis and constricted humanitarian funding, proving impact of interventions is crucial.</p>	<p>The data collection phase was redesigned as a hybrid remote/country presence evaluation. The evaluation team leader worked remotely and conducted multiple remote interviews in addition to an in-depth document review. The evaluation team member was working in-country and conducted a combination of remote interviews, face-to-face interviews, and face-to-face focus group discussions, in both Cairo and Alexandria.</p>
<p>Lack of counterfactuals: The nature of a country operation evaluation does not allow for inclusion of counterfactuals</p>	<p>Consistent use of the evidence database and comprehensive triangulation of evidence and validation of findings ensured a robust process without counterfactuals.</p>
<p>Potential for key stakeholders (such as donors and government counterparts) not being available for interviews with the evaluation team.</p>	<p>In practice, the adaptation of the data collection to a hybrid remote/face-to-face model negated this potential limitation, as the data collection phase was not limited to a specific two-week period and all relevant stakeholders were engaged and interviewed.</p>
<p>Potential for data bias – data that does not properly capture all variables of the situation or where evaluation team members lean towards data highlighting specific directions. When meeting with UNHCR implementing partners, UNHCR donors, and persons of concern supported by UNHCR, there is the potential for data bias.</p>	<p>The evaluation team met with a wide range of actors within Egypt including both implementing partners, operational partners, and other UN agencies to ensure different perspectives were gathered to reduce the potential of data bias.</p>

Evaluation principles and ethics: The evaluation team was guided by internationally recognized ethical practices and codes of conduct for evaluators, principally those stated in the United Nations Evaluation Group – UNEG – standards of evaluation,⁶ including impartiality, independence of the evaluation process, participation of stakeholders, utilization and adherence to do no harm principles.

⁶ <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/2866>

COVID-19: The original inception report, finalized in February 2020, was revised in November 2020 just before data collection to include COVID-19 considerations in both the evaluation matrix (as highlighted above) and the methodology.

In terms of the methodology, COVID-19 resulted in an adapted methodology of the Evaluation Team Lead working remotely rather than in Egypt as initially planned. The evaluation team member was still able to work in Egypt.

KIIs were predominantly conducted remotely. The FGD methodology was adapted to ensure that the safety of all participants was considered, and all reasonable COVID-19 mitigation methods were employed (see inception report for further details).

2. Operating context and UNHCR operations in Egypt

2.1. Egypt context with regard to UNHCR POC

Figure 4: Egypt key indicators⁷

Indicator	Egypt	Regional mean	Global mean
Population – estimated mid-2018	97 million	-	-
Population – estimated mid-2030	120.8 million	-	-
Population – estimated mid-2050	166.5 million	-	-
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births	15	23	31
Total fertility rate	3.3	3.2	2.4
Gross national income per capita	\$12,080	\$10,966	\$17,904
% population living in urban areas	43%	52%	54%
Life expectancy (M/F)	71M/74F	71M/74F	70M/75F
Population under 15	34%	33%	26%

Following the Arab Spring, which started with protests in Tunisia sparked by the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi in December 2010,⁸ protests erupted across Northern Africa and the Arab States, including in Egypt. Egyptian protests led to the resignation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in February 2011. Following this, in January 2012, Egypt lifted the state of emergency that had been introduced in 1957. In June 2012, Hosni Mubarak was sentenced to life imprisonment and Egypt elected Mohammed Morsi as President, who was then deposed in June 2013 paving the way for the current President, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who became President in June 2014.

This has led to a level of political stabilization and, since July 2014, GOE has been implementing a “*bold and transformational reforms programme, aimed at spurring the economy, enhancing the country’s business environment and staging a balanced and inclusive growth.*”⁹ Egypt’s Vision 2030, launched in 2016, has followed the sustainable development principle as a general framework for improving the quality of lives and welfare for all Egyptian nationals living in Egypt with three main dimensions focusing on economic, social and environmental aspects.¹⁰

The Arab Republic of Egypt is a destination and transit country for refugees and asylum seekers from more than 60 countries. Difficult socioeconomic conditions, with high inflation levels and increased costs of living across the past few years, have had impacts on the lives of both Egyptians and refugees and asylum seekers. This has been compounded by limited livelihood opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers, who, because of obstacles in obtaining work permits, depend on employment in the informal sector. Students of nationalities who have not been granted access to public education have continued to rely on informal education

⁷ <https://www.prb.org/international/geography/egypt>

⁸ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2011/03/369902-ban-pledges-full-un-help-tunisias-transition-democracy>

⁹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/egypt/overview>

¹⁰ 3RP, Egypt Chapter, 2017–2018

institutions or more expensive private schools, which many cannot afford.¹¹ All of this was compounded in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of 31 October 2020, there was a total registered asylum seeker and refugee population of 258,882, 50% Syrian and 50% non-Syrian.

It is important to note that UNHCR Egypt works with asylum seekers and refugees only – not stateless or internally displaced person populations, with budgeting and planning based on Pillar 1 population groups only.¹²

Figure 5. UNHCR POC in Egypt¹³



In addition to this registered population, Egypt hosts additional migrants:

*Egypt hosts around 6 million migrants and refugees. This figure, representing about 6 per cent of the total population, includes some 260,000 refugees and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR, and it may include persons in need of international protection but not registered with UNHCR, and other foreign nationals such as migrants from Arab countries who fled wars and instability in their countries of origin and have been living in Egypt for decades.*¹⁴

Protection and livelihood gaps for migrants are not systematically addressed at the national and local levels and migrants face many challenges related to meeting basic needs (i.e. housing, health care and education), protection (psychosocial and legal support) and livelihood opportunities.¹⁵ Limited data exist on the demographics of this population and there is an understanding that there is a correlative relationship between these two groups, with any improvement in the standard of treatment of refugees potentially creating a “pull” factor for some of those additional migrants.¹⁶ Furthermore, this population is impacted by the Valletta Plan and associated decisions and funding streams. The Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP) on Migration, adopted by governments across Europe and North Africa in 2015, has provided a framework for migration agreements and actions *vis-à-vis* onward migration to Europe and has advanced the Rabat and Khartoum processes and the African Union Horn of Africa Initiative.^{17 18}

¹¹ This relates to students of nationalities who are unable to access public approximately 43,000 refugee students of specific nationalities were admitted into public schools – see findings for more details.

¹² In the past, UNHCR has worked with stateless persons. The recognition by GOE of UNHCR’s role in support of Palestine refugees remained unresolved, nevertheless, the Office is providing Palestine refugees from Syria with medical and cash assistance through a partnership with UNRWA and the Egyptian Red Crescent.

¹³ www.unhcr.org/eg/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2020/11/October-2020-UNHCR-Egypt-Monthly-Statistical-Report-External.pdf

¹⁴ UNRC, UNHCR, IOM : Draft Concept Note: Towards the establishment of a Joint Platform for Migrants and Refugees in Egypt. 2021.

¹⁵ TOR for consultancy for StARS project Strengthening the Capacities of Community-Based Organizations Serving Migrants in Egypt 2019

¹⁶ Key informants, Inception Mission

¹⁷ JVAP Senior Officials’ Meeting, Addis Ababa, 14–15 November 2018

¹⁸ The Rabat Process is a regional migration dialogue between Europe and Africa (<http://www.rabat-process.org/en/about>). The Khartoum Process is a platform for political cooperation with regard to the migration route between the Horn of Africa and Europe (<https://www.khartoumprocess.net/>).

COVID-19: As of 28 December 2020, Egypt has reported 132,541 cases, with 7,405 deaths. This gives a rate of 72 deaths per million population, ranking Egypt in this regard (ratio of deaths by population) 114th in the world. The Egyptian authorities' response to the coronavirus is reported as "evolving" but has stopped short of lockdowns witnessed in other countries. There are curfews on public transport from midnight until 4am.

There are also restrictions on schools, universities, cafes, bars, clubs, hotels and tourist locations, which are operating at a reduced capacity. The wearing of face masks is mandatory in closed public spaces, including government buildings, private offices, malls, retail outlets and public transport, including private taxis. Legal penalties could be applied for non-compliance. However, few people abide by this and it is rarely enforced.

2.2. Policy and institutional environment vis-à-vis UNHCR's POC

Egypt is a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, as well as the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention governing specific aspects of refugee issues in Africa. Egypt made multiple pledges at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in December 2019:

- a) Continued provision of access to education for refugee children; commitment to ensuring access to education for refugee children within the national education system in line with the national education strategy for 2030; new national asylum law to consolidate a framework for the provision of education for refugees;
- b) Noting the example of Egypt's integration of Syrian refugee children in its public education systems, requests for financial commitment;
- c) Cooperating with international partners to provide resources for capacity-building for refugees and their host communities, thereby facilitating their chances in finding employment and increasing self-reliance;
- d) Enhanced opportunities in education; high-quality education system for all, but inclusion puts increased pressure;
- e) Finding durable solutions for refugees in the region, in conjunction with the search for a political solution; strengthened social cohesion, improving the welfare of people living in Egypt as part of the country Sustainable Development Goals strategy;
- f) Assistance for health, with universal coverage for all, adopting a National Law and by-laws stipulating access to health within existing coverage systems.¹⁹

In 2019, Egypt chaired the African Union, during "*the year of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons*". Egypt's concern for forced displacement in Africa was reflected in the Conclusions of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development held in December 2019. In the High-Level Segment on Statelessness at the seventieth Session of the Executive Committee of High Commissioner's Programme²⁰ in June 2020, Egypt emphasized the "*centrality of more equitable burden and responsibility sharing*", highlighting that this remains representative of the core principles of the GCR.²¹

Egypt grants access to public education to refugees and asylum seekers of certain nationalities, and to national health care services for Syrians. At the end of 2016, access to national health care services was extended to all asylum seekers and refugees based on status not on nationality. The lack of some

¹⁹ <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/channel/pledges-contributions>

²⁰ <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/executive-committee.html>

²¹ Egypt Statement at 70th Session of EXCOM and the High-Level Segment on Statelessness 2020

specialized health services and the limited capacity of public schools to absorb refugee children remained of concern. The granting of resident permits and standard civil status documentation for asylum seekers and refugees remained in the hands and control of the government and was centralized in Cairo.²²

At the time of this evaluation, there is no comprehensive national legislative framework for refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt. A draft asylum law is in the process of being developed but the future of this law remains unknown. Until now, however, GOE has delegated responsibility for registration, RSD assistance, resettlement and voluntary repatriation for refugee and asylum-seeking populations to UNHCR under a 1954 MOU.²³

Since then, GOE has passed a number of regulations and decrees in response to different refugee populations. In 2012, it passed a presidential decree that “*equated the treatment of Syrians refugees in Egypt with the treatment of Egyptian citizens with regard to health services and education*”.²⁴ That treatment has since expanded to include Sudanese, South Sudanese, Yemeni and certain Palestinian refugee children having access to Egyptian public schools.²⁵ Sudanese nationals (not those who apply for international protection as a refugee) are benefiting from the Four Freedoms Agreement from 2004, which grants the freedoms of movement, residence, work and property ownership to Sudanese nationals in Egypt.²⁶ However, access to education remains unequal based on nationality of origin, while access to health care is based on registration with UNHCR. Both refugees and asylum seekers have access to the formal jobs sector in Egypt. Since the related legislations and regulations are rather restrictive, the vast majority of persons registered with UNHCR are relying on informal jobs like most Egyptians.

2.2.1. The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan

The Syria crisis remains the largest displacement crisis in the world, with over 5.6 million registered refugees and over 6 million people displaced within Syria. The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) is the framework for harmonizing the response to the Syria crisis in the region, in terms of both the provision of protection and assistance to refugees and recognizing the impact on host communities and providing for increased investment in resilience within these host communities. The 3RP comprises one regional plan, with five stand-alone country chapters covering Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

The Egypt Chapter has successively highlighted the need to strengthen support and protection for both Syrian refugees and host communities in the most impacted governorates in Giza, Greater Cairo, Alexandria, Damietta and Qalioubia using “*social-spatial analysis of hosting areas*” to ensure effective targeting.²⁷

²² <https://reporting.unhcr.org/egypt>

²³ <https://www.unhcr.org/eg/what-we-do>

²⁴ 3RP 2017–2018

²⁵ Key informants, Inception Mission

²⁶ <http://citizenshiprightsafrika.org/egypt-sudan-four-freedoms-agreement/>

²⁷ 3RP 2015–2016 Egypt Chapter

Figure 6. 3RP population figures 2019 and 2020²⁸

Population Group		2019		2020	
		Population In Need	Target Population	Population In Need	Target Population
Syrians Refugees	Men	43,600	43,600	43,900	43,900
	Women	40,300	40,300	40,600	40,600
	Boys	31,000	31,000	31,200	31,200
	Girls	29,100	29,100	29,300	29,300
Sub Total		144,000	144,000	145,000	145,000
Members of Affected Communities	Men	609,110	99,300	609,110	99,300
	Women	604,015	99,500	604,015	99,500
	Boys	750,000	63,000	721,380	63,000
	Girls	691,350	69,600	664,950	69,600
Sub Total		2,654,475	331,400	2,599,455	331,400
Grand Total		2,798,475	475,400	2,744,455	476,400

Successive Egypt plans have highlighted dual refugee and resilience components that include:

A refugee component:

- Syrian refugees who access the territory mainly from Sudan in an irregular manner seek asylum and have basic rights respected;
- Durable solutions exist for Syrian refugees with specific protection needs and vulnerabilities.
- Provision of assistance targets the most vulnerable;
- Syrian refugee girls and boys access equitable education and child protection services;
- Syrian refugees access health care.

A resilience component:

- Support to primary health care in most impacted districts;
- Support to the Ministry of Education (MOE) in the most impacted governorates;
- Support to GOE for sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) prevention and response;
- Support to strengthening child protection systems;
- Area-based approach to employment and livelihoods.

2.2.2. The Egypt Response Plan

The ERP was first introduced in 2018 and repeated in 2019 and 2020. It highlights that “UNHCR is committed to ensuring equal access to protection, services and humanitarian assistance for Syrians as well as Sub-Saharan Africans, Iraqis and Yemenis registered with UNHCR.”²⁹ Funding has been unequal between the 3RP

²⁸ 3RP 2019–2020 Egypt Chapter

²⁹ 3RP 2019–2020 Egypt Chapter

for Syrian refugees and other refugee populations and the ERP, with the 2018 ERP only 22% funded,³⁰ compared with the Egypt Chapter of the 3RP, which was 54% funded in 2018.^{31,32}

*This inequality in assistance is an issue of concern for the GOE as it puts strains on the ability of the groups of refugees and asylum seekers to survive and creates grudges and tensions inside the community of refugees and asylum seekers. The GOE affirms the need to address the needs of all refugees equally under the principle of “One Refugee Approach”.*³³

In addition to differences in funding, there are also reported differences in vulnerabilities, with sub-Saharan African communities being seen as more vulnerable than Syrian communities and arriving in higher numbers from significantly traumatizing contexts. Despite constant evolution in the political situation across the region and the Eritrea–Ethiopia peace summit of July 2018, there has been a steady increase in the total number of refugees from sub-Saharan Africa, and this has been further affected by the escalating violence in Ethiopia in 2020. With conflict in East and the Horn of Africa, numbers of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) are also increasing.

2.3. UNHCR role and key actions

In 1954, UNHCR and GOE signed an MOU to delegate functional responsibilities for refugee management within Egypt to UNHCR. This includes all aspects of registration, documentation and RSD. Originally working primarily with stateless individuals from Armenia and of European origins, in more recent decades UNHCR in Egypt has supported a large influx of African, Iraqi and Syrian refugees.³⁴

The major initiatives that the CSE will assess within the context of having both registered refugees and other foreigners potentially living in a refugee-like situation,³⁵ together with the nationality-based response framed by the 3RP for Syrian refugees and the ERP for non-Syrian refugee and asylum-seeking populations, are as follows:

Protection:

- Advocacy for the national asylum framework;
- Registration and RSD under both individual and group RSD, merged processes, processes for diversified caseloads;
- Resettlement and voluntary repatriation (as durable solutions).³⁶

Programmes/operations:

- Health, education and livelihoods programming:
 - Integration into national structures;
 - Cash-based interventions (CBI);
- Data management;
- Communicating with communities' initiatives.

Coordination:

- Coordinating the refugee response under the overarching framework of the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) and contextualized, through a pyramid approach of (a) technical Sector Working Groups (SWGs);

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ 3RP Annual Report 2018

³² It is however, important to recall while reading these figures that the 3RP has both resilience and refugee pillars while the ERP is only for direct assistance, so resilience activities such as capacity building and others are not duplicated. The number of appealing agencies under each response plan is also an important element to be taken into account because not all of them have the authorization to engage with all refugee groups. Finally, the funding gap between both appeals has been shrinking significantly over recent years. In 2020, The 3RP and ERP were funded at 38.5% and 42.6% respectively.

³³ 3RP 2019–2020 Egypt Chapter

³⁴ <https://www.unhcr.org/eg/what-we-do>

³⁵ UNHCR has been trying to draw attention to persons living in a refugee-like situation but not registered with UNHCR in the context of a Mixed-Migration Working Group (MMWG) co-chaired by UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) established in 2017 under the United Nations Country Team. After adoption of the GCR in 2018, the MMWG made substantial progress in 2019 in terms of identification of the target population and the initial plan of action.

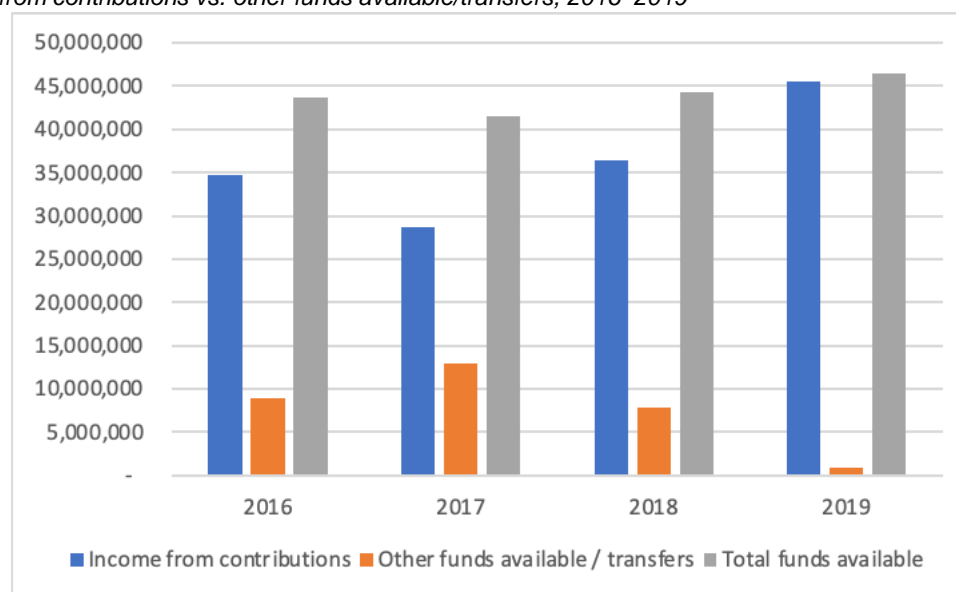
³⁶ Note that resettlement and voluntary repatriation are the two durable solutions recognized by GOE.

(b) the technical Inter-Sector Working Group (ISWG), to resolve common operational challenges; and (c) the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG), to resolve strategic challenges and deciding strategic direction.

2.4. UNHCR funding overview 2016–2019 ³⁷

Overall funding for UNHCR Egypt increased steadily and incrementally between 2016 and 2019. There was a sharp increase in income from contributions in 2019 compared with previous years but this was offset by a sharp decrease in other funds available.³⁸

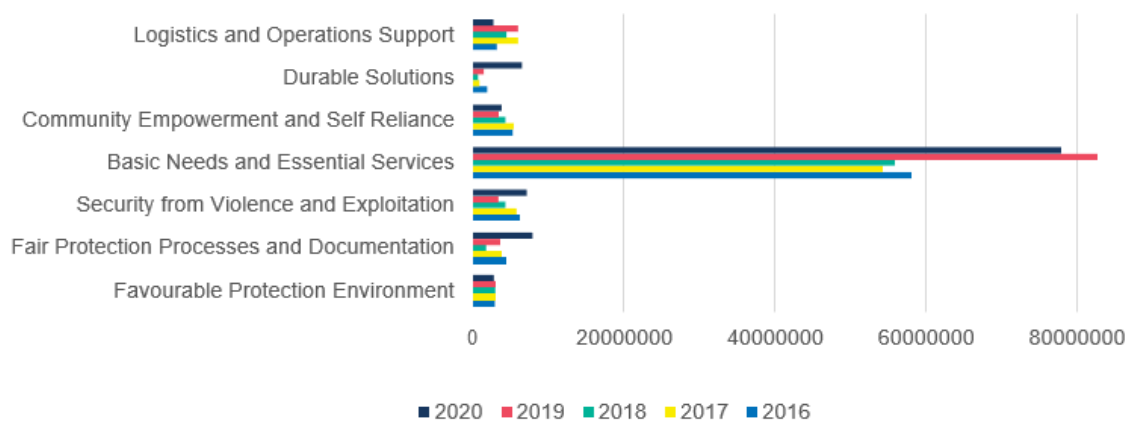
Figure 7. Income from contributions vs. other funds available/transfers, 2016–2019



The EU, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, and the United States of America (USA) have remained constant and significant contributors over the years. Canada was a significant contributor until 2018. In 2019, UNHCR Egypt significantly expanded private contributions from a range of different countries, albeit in relatively small amounts. UNHCR Egypt income has consistently been less than 60% of budget since 2016.

Basic needs and essential services have consistently remained the largest budget category, comprising between 69% and 80% of the overall budget.

Figure 8. Budget 2014–2019 across different budget categories.



³⁷ All data are from UNHCR Global Focus (no information for 2020) (<https://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2540> accessed 22 December 2020).

³⁸ The terminology of contributions and other funds available / transfers is the terminology used in UNHCR published financial data – see <https://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2540?y=2017#year>

In general, *expenditure* as a proportion of the budget³⁹ has remained relatively consistent across the years with notable exceptions being:

- a) A significantly increased expenditure on fair protection processes and documentation in 2018 (148% of the original budget);
- b) Increased expenditure on security from violence and exploitation in 2019 (101% of the original budget).

³⁹ Note, not related to the above graph which is budget across different budget categories.

3. Findings

3.1. Area of Inquiry 1: Results to Date

Overarching Evaluation Question: What have been the results across different areas of assistance, protection and solutions as achieved by the UNHCR country operation and what contextual and operational factors and decisions have contributed to or impeded these results?

Specific Egypt-context Evaluation Questions:

- EQ1a. To what extent has UNHCR achieved intended results and objectives in successive COPs (2016–2019)?
- EQ1b. To what extent has UNHCR contributed to movement towards an effective and comprehensive national asylum framework?
- EQ1c. To what extent has UNHCR achieved effective registration, RSD and resettlement?
- EQ2. In what ways and to what extent has UNHCR contributed to meeting basic needs of all asylum seekers and refugees (including women, men, boys and girls and all marginalized groups) through programming?
- EQ3. To what extent has UNHCR achieved effective leadership and coordination for refugees and asylum seekers (ensuring inclusion of women, men, boys and girls and all marginalized groups)?

AOI 1 findings summary

UNHCR Egypt has achieved significant successes with comparatively limited funding with regard to protection; risks and the challenges within the operation can be categorized into components of (a) documentation, or lack thereof, (b) access to durable solutions, (c) detention issues and (d) protection for the most vulnerable. In addition, the operation is widely credited with contributing to progress towards the national asylum law, which is a potentially seminal achievement. With regard to basic needs, UNHCR has a clear and coherent policy framed around meeting immediate needs and working towards ensuring long-term needs are met through inclusion in national systems.

UNHCR has also effectively managed the coordination of refugee assistance through leadership of different coordination mechanisms. This is widely appreciated by all stakeholders and perceived as impactful in terms of both operational/informational factors and increasing the visibility of POC on the development assistance agenda.

Despite multiple feedback mechanisms being in place, refugees continue to highlight difficulties in accessing assistance when they experience challenges. Further, other actors who work with POC report some difficulties in accessing required data, which highlights a potential miscommunication about data sharing protocols. There is no evidence to suggest differing levels of access to feedback based on gender or age although there are differences in perceived access to assistance and feedback from different nationalities⁴⁰.

The UNHCR Egypt Representative has dual accreditations with both GOE for leadership of the refugee response in Egypt and with the League of Arab States (LAS), a regional organization covering the Arab region. These are two separate functions that are performed with different modalities, bilateral diplomacy for the former and

⁴⁰ There is a unique refugee environment in Egypt consisting of both a dual protection space – registered asylum seekers and refugees compared with approximately 6 million foreign nationals among whom there are persons in need of international protection – and a dual financing framework for Syrian and non-Syrian refugees. UNHCR has sought pragmatic and balanced solutions well adapted to this context.

multilateral diplomacy for the latter. On the latter, UNHCR Egypt has contributed significantly to emerging LAS frameworks that will ultimately have benefits across the region.

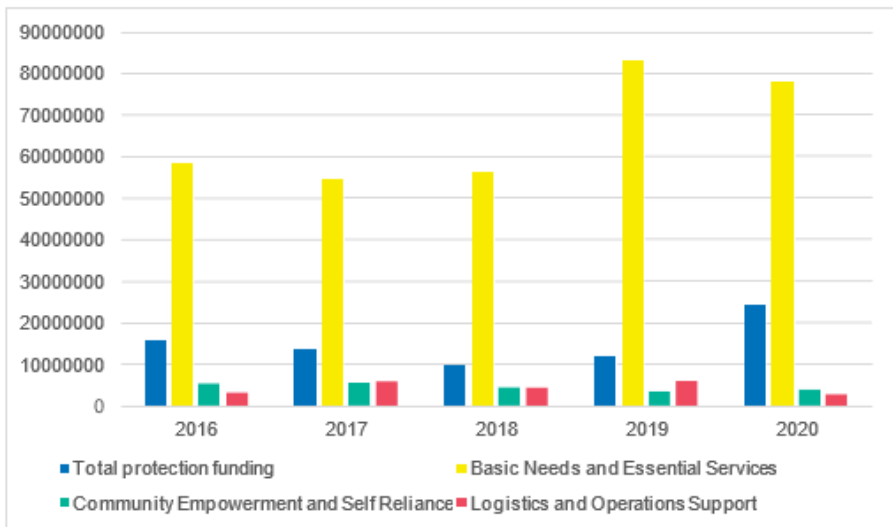
FINDING 1. With regard to protection, UNHCR Egypt has achieved significant success with limited funding. However, there are risks and these risks and the challenges surrounding them can be categorized into components of (a) documentation, or lack thereof, (b) access to durable solutions, (c) detention issues and (d) protection for the most vulnerable.

UNHCR protection achievements, although affected by COVID-19 (see further below), are evident and this has been despite comparatively modest protection funding compared with the caseload, amounting to between \$28 and \$40 per individual per year between 2016 and 2019.⁴¹

The operation in Egypt is extremely protection-focused by design, although both planned and actual allocation of funds reflect a more complex situation based on the clear interdependencies between protection and operations but with most of the funding each year seemingly budgeted for and provided to operations/basic needs.⁴²

Over 2016–2020, total protection budget lines (favourable protection environment, fair protection processes and documentation, durable solutions, and security from violence and exploitation) made up only between 11% (2019) and 22% (2020) of the overall budget, with basic needs being 69% and 80% of overall budgets.

Figure 9. Budget lines

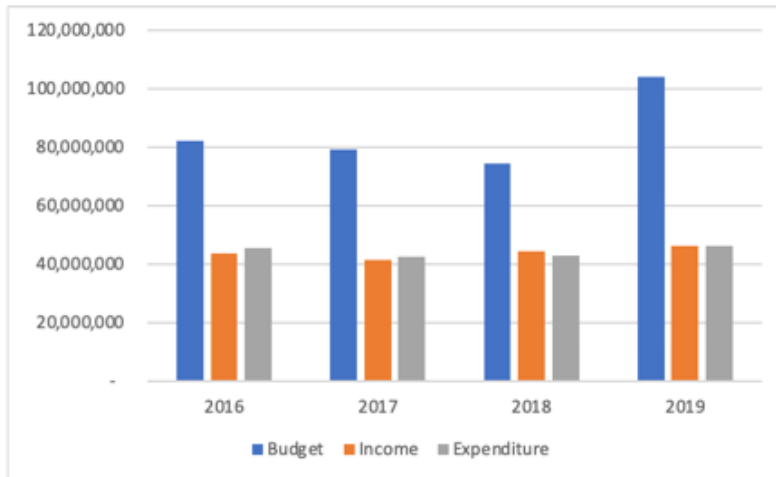


In addition, the UNHCR Egypt COP has been consistently 60% funded since 2016.

⁴¹ This is based on four protection funding lines – durable solutions; favourable protection environment; fair protection processes and documentation; and security from violence and exploitation – and caseload figures for UNHCR-registered refugees and asylum seekers taken from Global Focus: <https://reporting.unhcr.org/egypt>

⁴² It is noted that multipurpose cash assistance has a protective element even though it is considered a basic need: this finding refers to protection as related to the activities under protection within Egypt CO: registration, RSD, resettlement, legal, CBP, data protection.

Figure 10. Budget vs. Income vs. Expenditure, 2016–2019



The evaluation notes the strong linkages between protection and operations and that between 2016 and 2020, UNHCR Egypt received substantial earmarked budget for winterisation between USD 3.5 million and USD 5.1 million which affects the ratio between protection and operations.⁴³ It is noted that multipurpose cash assistance has a protective element even though it is considered a basic need.⁴⁴ Further, some protection *activities* are recorded under Global Focus⁴⁵ under persons with specific needs (PSN) and community empowerment objectives, therefore recorded as operations spending but actually under protection.

In 2020 protection posts made up 69% of all staffing positions (200 out of 289).⁴⁶ Therefore regardless of Global Focus financial data, the UNHCR Egypt has invested in both the protection dimension and the operations dimension, one not being exclusive of the other.

For UNHCR Egypt, there has been a strong focus on leveraging excellent relationships with GOE aimed at ensuring continued and sustainable protection results through the use of quiet diplomacy, and in many ways, this has been a successful strategy. It has allowed UNHCR space to operate and to manage processes to date, which is the foundational success of the operation. However, delays in RSD and registration even prior to COVID-19, exacerbated by the pandemic, and areas of specific challenges such as access to those in detention, have resulted in continuing protection risks for POC.

UNHCR respondents themselves highlighted that the Egypt operation has historically been one where provision of assistance – basic needs and essential services – has not always been closely tied to strategic protection approaches. Current management has tried to move towards a more holistic approach where protection is fully mainstreamed throughout operations.⁴⁷ While this has been successful to a degree, with examples of child protection and SGBV factors across sectors, and while basic needs are critical and immediate concerns for POC, protection risks remain for a large proportion of the POC population.

⁴³ Information provided by UNHCR Egypt.

⁴⁴ The graphs in this finding are based on global focus data (for the sake of consistency of data recording) and refers generally to protection as related to the activities under protection within Egypt CO: registration, RSD, resettlement, legal, CBP, data protection. It is acknowledged that there is an interdependency between protection and basic needs within all UNHCR operations.

⁴⁵ <https://reporting.unhcr.org/egypt>

⁴⁶ Information provided by UNHCR Egypt.

⁴⁷ UNHCR key informants.

These risks and the challenges surrounding them can be categorized into components of (a) documentation, or lack thereof, (b) access to durable solutions, (c) detention issues and (d) protection for the most vulnerable.

Sub-Finding 1: Documentation remains a challenge for refugees and impacts on their ability to manage day-to-day life in Egypt.^{48,49} There are three types of documentation based on status: the blue card, the yellow card, and the white paper.⁵⁰ A blue card is valid for 36 months, a yellow card for 18 months and a white paper only for 6 months with no associated right of legal residence. The blue and yellow cards allow holders to apply for residency permits, which are valid for only six months, and generally take three to four months to process. The residence permits are necessary for access to services. While UNHCR has been advocating strongly for residency permits to be extended to one year, and indeed GOE confirmed at the end of 2019 that this would become the case, at the time of this evaluation permits were still valid for only six months. This has serious consequences for refugees and asylum seekers, and delays have a significant impact on day-to-day life including access to cash assistance, education and health.

Sub-Finding 2: Access to durable solutions is still extremely limited for refugees within Egypt. In Egypt, there is no pathway to citizenship. Egyptian citizenship is granted based on descent only.⁵¹ Therefore, all activities aimed at integration fall short of genuine and permanent integration. The 1954 MOU explicitly references voluntary repatriation and resettlement as the preferred durable solutions. While Egypt is the fourth largest resettlement operation worldwide,⁵² resettlement options – as everywhere – are both limited and decreasing. In 2020, 944 refugees were resettled, out of a total of 79,173 registered refugees – or 1.19%. Voluntary repatriation is not an acceptable solution for most refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt.⁵³ This therefore means there is no real workable and likely durable solution for any refugee in Egypt, and this fact increases frustrations and protection risks.

Sub-Finding 3: Detention issues are sensitive to manage but have a significant impact on those refugees that are affected. This aspect of refugee management is always very sensitive, particularly in countries such as Egypt where there is a focus on security aspects of refugee management by the Government. This means UNHCR must tread a fine line between working in cooperation with the Egyptian authorities, including the security forces, and advocating for the rights of refugees. This is a challenging balance to maintain.

UNHCR Egypt has been allowed informal access to a limited number of detained asylum seekers or migrants, but this is an *ad hoc* arrangement. Despite a number of communications to GOE from UNHCR requesting more formalized clarification⁵⁴ of this, the process remains tenuous. Some partners raised concerns that not enough was being done to provide protection to those in detention, particularly those trafficked across the border from Sudan.⁵⁵ There was also concern from stakeholders and from refugees themselves that an increasing number of refugees and asylum seekers have been arrested because of expired documentation since the COVID-19 pandemic began and UNHCR has not been able to gain access to all these individuals.⁵⁶

⁴⁸ It is noted that there is a difference between ID cards issued by UNHCR and then residence permits issued by the Government of Egypt.

⁴⁹ UNHCR Egypt confirm that documentation issues will be resolved by the end of 2021 or early 2022.

⁵⁰ The most powerful in terms of being a protection tool is the blue card, which is a refugee certificate, issued to those with successfully completed RSD. This is what provides access to all services, a likelihood of not being harassed by police or other authorities and pathways to resettlement or residency. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic there was a backlog with RSD processes, with refugees in FGDs highlighting a waiting period for blue cards of more than two years. Prior to receiving the blue card after successful RSD, a yellow card is issued to asylum-seekers. This in principle provides the same protections as the blue card but it is reported that in practice it does not. In addition, UNHCR has introduced a white paper for those individuals who do not have the identity documentation to allow for application for a yellow card. The white paper reportedly has very limited protection value.

⁵¹ Tufts Feinstein International Center, *Getting by on the Margins: Sudanese and Somali Refugees. A Case Report of Refugees in Towns*. Cairo, 2018

⁵² UNHCR key informants

⁵³ The Evaluation Team was unable to find numbers of refugees/asylum seekers repatriated in 2016–2020

⁵⁴ UNHCR key informants

⁵⁵ Partner key informants

⁵⁶ Partner key informants and FGDs

However, UNHCR Egypt confirm that assurances were given to UNHCR by the GOE that no refugee will be arrested for expired document and report that only a small proportion of refugees holding expired refugee cards were arrested and that UNHCR automatically intervenes and request release whenever detention is brought to its attention.⁵⁷

Sub-Finding 4: Prioritizing the most vulnerable is an ongoing process of refinement within

UNHCR: In recent years, there has been an increase in UASC, predominantly from sub-Saharan Africa. By the end of September 2020, 4,129 UASC were registered with UNHCR Egypt.⁵⁸ This poses a significant challenge as “*numbers are high, vulnerabilities are acute and services are limited*”.⁵⁹

UNHCR has been working to engage in processes to determine the best interest of the child, for unaccompanied refugee children. A task force including the National Council for Children and Motherhood (NCCM), UNHCR, IOM and UNICEF developed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for children on the move. Under Article 3 of law 82/2016, NCCM is the legal representative of the families of unaccompanied children, whose families or legal representatives cannot be identified within the efforts to combat illegal migration and smuggling of migrants. In 2020 UNHCR developed a Plan of Action for the task force, for which implementation has been delayed due to COVID-19 but which will be moving forward in 2021.⁶⁰

In relation to age, gender, and diversity factors within POC, the overriding difference is nationality, and this has overshadowed gender and age considerations. While UNHCR implements SGBV programming, further systematic and in-depth mainstreaming of gender is missing from both programme documentation and stakeholder responses to this evaluation. This is despite the fact that Egypt is a particularly harsh environment vis à vis gender inequality both for Egyptian women and girls and then by extension for refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls.⁶¹

However, even in FGDs (disaggregated by sex, age, and nationality – *please see Section 1 Figure 2*) there were no discernible differences emerging between male and female FGDs. There was, however, significant difference between Syrian FGDs of both sexes and FGDs of other nationalities, who were much less satisfied with access to services, access to feedback, and protection solutions.⁶²

There are good but disparate interventions of gendered interventions: for example, UNHCR has supported other interventions, such as working with the National Council of Women to ensure refugee GBV survivors can access the national services.⁶³ However, again, the focus of highlighted diversity and discrimination manifests in relation to nationality rather than gender and age within the refugee population although gender and age are also important factors to access protection.

In addition to UASC, partners raised the issue of survivors of trafficking and LGBTIQ⁶⁴ individuals – particularly from Sudan and Ethiopia – as being extremely vulnerable and struggling to find the right protection services, with limited specific support from UNHCR.⁶⁵ The numbers and vulnerability of the most vulnerable outstrip the capacity of UNHCR to provide the necessary protection and services.

⁵⁷ Information provided by UNHCR Egypt.

⁵⁸ <https://reporting.unhcr.org/egypt>

⁵⁹ UNHCR key informants

⁶⁰ <https://reporting.unhcr.org/egypt> and UNHCR key informants

⁶¹ UNHCR key informants

⁶² Responses from FGDs

⁶³ UNHCR key informants

⁶⁴ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer

⁶⁵ Partner key informants

FINDING 2. UNHCR is widely credited with contributing to progress towards a national asylum law, which is a potentially seminal achievement.

In 2019, GOE highlighted plans to draft and implement a national asylum law. Since that point, UNHCR has encouraged these efforts by supporting training on advanced refugee and international law and providing examples of national asylum laws from other countries.

UNHCR is widely credited with contributing to the progress of this national framework, which has the potential to be a seminal achievement: currently, the 1954 MOU devolves all responsibility for registration, RSD, resettlement processes and protection for refugees and asylum seekers to UNHCR. Under a new national policy framework, it is expected that GOE will begin to assume these responsibilities.

However, GOE has made it clear that the asylum law process is exclusively nationally led and therefore neither UNHCR nor other stakeholders, such as development partners, have seen the draft law. This has raised concerns across many partners *vis-à-vis* its adherence to global human rights standards. This may be exacerbated by the fact that (a) stakeholders are aware that GOE views the refugee situation through a security lens, (b) there is limited capacity across many state institutions for management of refugee process and (c) the fact that many stakeholders – international and national partners – have previously raised concerns on how fully GOE adheres to global human rights standards.

Some stakeholders are less concerned and feel confident that correct processes will be put in place:

We have been working with UNHCR for a year, they have good positive inroads with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MOFA] and there is a long-time plan in place to look at transfer of ownership of registration to government and UNHCR are doing that well and responsibly.⁶⁶

However, other stakeholders expressed concern, largely based around two areas. First is the question of the capacity of GOE to take over processes under a national framework. The existing challenges facing UNHCR – the ongoing struggle renewing documentation for all refugees, the lack of access to durable solutions, detention issues for a minority, and prioritising the most vulnerable – highlight the complexities of the process. Many international stakeholder respondents commented that experience from other countries had shown that transfer of responsibility for these processes must be slow and linked to building the capacity of national institutions for efficient management.⁶⁷

Second, there is a concern – fuelled by the fact that the draft asylum framework has not yet been shared with stakeholders – that not all aspects of the law will be comprehensively aligned with global human rights standards. While GOE has been remarkably hospitable to both registered refugees and the estimated 5 million foreigners in refugee-like situations, it is evident that it views refugees, asylum seekers and migrants through a strongly security-focused lens which is at odds with a human rights-based approach.

FINDING 3. UNHCR has a clear, coherent and rational policy with regard to basic needs, which is framed around meeting immediate needs and ensuring long-term needs are met through inclusion in national systems,⁶⁸ although there remain a number of challenges, including (a) the nationality-based rights to access of services and (b) the rising cost of living and the decreasing availability of funding.

As highlighted in Section 2, basic needs and essential services have consistently remained the largest budget category, comprising between 69% and 80% of the overall budget. Taken together with the community

⁶⁶ Donor key informant

⁶⁷ Multiple key informants

⁶⁸ Note that a more in-depth discussion of national systems is covered under AOI2.

empowerment and self-reliance budget line, this becomes between 75% and 81% of the planned budget for 2016–2020 and between 75% and 77% of 2016–2019 expenditure. This equates in real terms to between \$59 million and \$82 million budgeted over the years, and between \$32 million and \$35 million spent.

UNHCR has clear sectoral areas of focus for basic needs and essential services across education, health, and livelihoods, with an additional focus on cross-cutting modalities of multipurpose CBI. Basic needs results for 2019, counted against a refugee and asylum-seeking caseload of approximately 258,000, included:⁶⁹

- 66,100 individuals provided with monthly multipurpose cash grants for basic needs;
- 3,300 USAC receiving additional financial assistance;
- 59,300 primary health care consultations/visits supported with UNHCR assistance;
- 48,400 children receiving UNHCR education grants (UNHCR estimate approximately 37% of the total refugee and asylum-seeker caseload – 258,000 – are children therefore a total child caseload (including those of pre-school age) of approximately 95,000).

Within education, UNHCR's strategy has been three-pronged: (a) to provide educational grants; (b) to support children attending community schools (albeit reluctantly, as this is the opposite approach of the overall mainstreaming approach in Egypt) and (c) to support MOE.

There is division based on nationality (partially linked to language) in access to public education. In principle, MOE has suggested all registered refugee children can access public education but in reality, this is not yet the case, and formally signed annual instructions include only Syrian, Sudanese, South Sudanese, Yemeni and Iraqi children. Furthermore, even Arabic-speaking refugee children have unequal access to education. For example, it is reported that, in practice Iraqi children do not have the same access as Yemeni children.⁷⁰ In education, the challenges are as follows:

- For non-Arabic speaking children, language is a clear barrier;
- For sub-Saharan African children, discrimination and stigma represent a barrier;
- The overall level of education in Egypt is not considered high quality by many refugee parents (in addition to, of course, many Egyptian parents);
- The educational grant provided by UNHCR is not enough to cover all educational costs and currently is a blanket approach to all refugee children.

Given the above barriers, many refugee parents (particularly those from sub-Saharan, non-Arabic-speaking Africa but also including Sudanese parents) prefer "community schools" to enrolment in the public education system. Community schools are, as the name suggests, run by the community, often out of a private residence with non-qualified teachers, with no oversight by UNHCR (which does not have any authority for this) nor by MOE.

Increasingly therefore, the strategy is to focus on (a) educational grants and (b) support to MOE, because the community school system is not aligned with a mainstreaming approach. In addition to this, and alongside the issue of quality, there are significant safeguarding issues in community schools and there is almost no accountability. While many partner organizations feel frustrated at the level of risk children are exposed to in community schools and would like UNHCR to do more, UNHCR has no line of authority over community schools.⁷¹ Therefore, a policy of identifying and addressing the barriers (nationality, cost, discrimination,

⁶⁹ The last available consolidated annual results: <https://reporting.unhcr.org/egypt>

⁷⁰ UNHCR key informants

⁷¹ The community schools continue to be supported by both NGOs and other UN agencies – i.e. UNICEF – but there is no line of accountability over the community schools by either the Government or any single development organization.

language, etc.), of accessing public education with a two-fold approach of support to MOE to reduce top-down barriers and of support to refugee families to reduce bottom-up barriers is a rational approach.

Access to health is status-based – that is, all registered refugees should theoretically be able to access the public health system in Egypt. The acknowledgement by GOE that refugees and asylum seekers can access health is a noteworthy advocacy achievement by UNHCR and should be recognized and credited.⁷² However, much like in education, in practice, refugees face numerous barriers to health care access – the poor state of the system, intolerance, language, etc. – resulting in many refugees having to pay for private care.⁷³ However, the UNHCR health sector budget has not received funding in line with levels of increasing registration and the increasing associated costs of accessing health care, which outstrip UNHCR health cash grants.

More recently, UNHCR has been considering a move away from sector-specific (education or health) grants towards a more comprehensive approach of multipurpose cash.⁷⁴ This is considered the way forward, leveraging efficiencies of scale and reducing bureaucratic costs, while providing increased choice and agency to refugee families to make choices best suited to their own needs. This also aligns with the general movement of CBI globally towards more multipurpose modalities. For 2019, \$14 million was allocated for cash, which included \$5 million for health, \$5 million for education, \$500,000 for livelihoods and the rest for either winterization or multipurpose use:⁷⁵ in 2020, it was estimated that the amount of multipurpose cash would increase. In 2020, 42% of CBI was provided to female-headed households,⁷⁶ and 21% to households headed by older people, although it is unclear how much of a gender or age lens was included within the vulnerability analysis.

For livelihoods, UNHCR has limited but successful interventions, including innovative global approaches such as MADE51,⁷⁷ which provides a marketplace for merchandise made by refugees. While the opportunities in Egypt for refugees and asylum seekers are limited by the lack of right to work in the formal sector, the informal sector in Egypt represents 54% of Egypt's non-agricultural employment,⁷⁸ which presents enormous opportunities for refugees. UNHCR Egypt indicators and targets for livelihoods are modest: for example, for 2020 the target was to increase the percentage of POC earning minimum wage within the last six months from 32.5% to 35%, with targets for accessing job placement services, receiving livelihood start-up cash grants being between 70 and 600 individuals; and guidance on labour market opportunities being provided for up to 1,800 individuals.⁷⁹

FINDING 4. UNHCR's strong leadership of coordination platforms is widely appreciated across all stakeholders and seen as impactful in terms of both operational/informational factors and increasing the visibility of POC on the development assistance agenda.

Stakeholders expressed clear approval of UNHCR coordination management in terms of chairing coordination platforms among UN and non-governmental organization (NGO) actors; coordination across the humanitarian and development communities; ensuring POC are included in planning within both spheres; and coordination between the humanitarian and development community and GOE.

⁷² In October 2017 the UNHCR Representative met with the GOE Minister of Health and Population to discuss the inclusion of refugees within Universal Health Coverage: The Universal Health insurance law 2/2018 and its by-laws 909/2019 and Article 68 subsequently stated that refugees can access the Egypt Universal Health Insurance. UNHCR key informant.

⁷³ POC in FGDs in Cairo and Alexandria

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ UNHCR key informants

⁷⁷ MADE51 stimulates local economies and is designed to be a joint effort; the technical expertise of key industry leaders is essential for MADE51 to be a success. A business toolkit, coupled with customized business development coaching, gives enterprises the acumen and resources they need to effectively set up and manage their MADE51 product line. Introducing standardized business practices protects refugee artisans and the supporting social enterprises. <https://www.made51.org>

⁷⁸ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.ISV.IFRM.ZS>

⁷⁹ <https://reporting.unhcr.org/node/26196>

For coordination platforms within development and humanitarian actors, UNHCR chairs the IAWG, the ISWG and six specific Sector Working Groups (SWGs) on education, protection, health, livelihoods, cash and basic needs, and CwC.

The IAWG is the top of the “pyramid” and has the function of strategic direction for all issues related to refugee and asylum seekers. The ISWG is then the technical level, linking the different sub-sector technical groups to ensure that discussion of common themes across different sectors can take place and that sectors are not working in silos. The sector groups then are themselves the technical sector-specific forums for discussion and coordination. Donors attend the IAWG but not the ISWG or the SWGs.⁸⁰

These structures have been significantly strengthened in recent years and this has had a noticeable effect on efficiencies of programming. For example, one adjustment made in recent years was the additional establishment of the ISWG. Previously, there were the six separate SWGs and then the IAWG intended more for strategic discussions. Missing the in-between level resulted in technical issues bleeding into IAWG discussions and detracting from strategic decision-making.

Partners report the SWGs meetings to be regular, well chaired, and worthwhile for information-sharing and referral pathways, but criticisms from some partners are that they should be less about announcements and information provided by UNHCR and more collaborative in nature; and collaboration with co-chairs should be improved.⁸¹

An overall impression from partners was that, if working group meetings became less about UNHCR sharing information and more about joint decision-making and problem-solving, UNHCR could share the burden more. This is something recognized even within UNHCR:

When assisting refugees, UNHCR sometimes has the perception that we do this alone. We sometimes forget there are other agencies.⁸²

Many respondents to the evaluation working for organizations who have not been invited to attend the ISWG, report the ISWG to be detrimentally limited i.e. in relation to those who can attend⁸³. Although the evaluation team notes that the inter-sector technical coordination mechanism necessarily requires limited participation for optimal functionality and the ISWG is reported to include 30-40 partners, which should be considered an upper limit for such a coordination mechanism.⁸⁴ Further, the ISWG should not serve as a duplicate venue for issues which are discussed at the level of the sectoral working groups.

The IAWG is reported to be a useful forum, although some stakeholders questioned the existence of both the IAWG and the Mixed-Migration Working Group (MMWG) (see below).⁸⁵ The MMWG is a function of the development-oriented aspect of the Egypt UN and NGO community and as such provides the specific function of increasing engagement by development actors in refugee issues: however, UNHCR report that currently only UN agencies attend the MMWG.⁸⁶

In terms of external frameworks, Egypt has the United Nations Partnership Development Framework (UNPDF, currently 2018–2022); the Egypt Chapter of the 3RP for Syrian refugees; and since 2018, the ERP for non-Syrian refugees. UNHCR contributes to the first and is lead agency for the latter two. It is unusual for UNHCR to be highly involved in an UNPDF (often the United Nations Development Assistance Framework or the

⁸⁰ This was reported by donors: UNHCR report that some donors do periodically attend the SWGs.

⁸¹ Multiple partner key informants

⁸² UNHCR key informant

⁸³ Partner key informants

⁸⁴ UNHCR key informants

⁸⁵ Multiple donor key informants

⁸⁶ UNHCR key informants

United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) in other contexts) as, while UNHCR is a protection agency rather than a humanitarian agency, refugee management is generally considered within a humanitarian framing. However, in Egypt, UNHCR is involved as joint co-chair (with IOM) of the MMWG, which, as highlighted above, has promoted cooperation across the humanitarian–development continuum.⁸⁷ Indeed, the various strategies of UNHCR in Egypt – an overall development context – can be highlighted as good practice in coordination in a non-humanitarian country, and cooperation with the United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC)'s Office, IOM, development actors and especially GOE is at the heart of the UNHCR Egypt country strategy.

Donors and other stakeholders commented on the success of UNHCR in promoting refugee issues within the UNCT/UNRC Office agenda – again, an unusual accomplishment for such a context. This, then, became a solid foundation for further promoting integration across the nexus within the COVID-19 pandemic, recognizing a window of opportunity to integrate refugees and asylum seekers more into national social protection systems – again a unique and innovative approach (see AOI 3 for further information).

FINDING 5. Despite feedback systems being in place, refugees highlight the difficulty in accessing UNHCR when they experience challenges.

UNHCR Egypt has invested heavily in accountability and feedback mechanisms. Within UNHCR Egypt, the dedicated CwC staff member is under External Relations working in a cross-unit arrangement as a shared responsibility between Protection and External Relations under the overall authority of the Representative.⁸⁸ The evaluation notes that this somewhat differs from the global UNHCR approach where AAP still sits under community-based protection within the Division of International Protection (DIP) but with clear linkages to the Division of External Relations (DER) which manages a number of CwC initiatives: thus, recognising the need to focus on both the *modality* of transmitting the message (DER) and the *substance* of the message, the *feedback* to that message, and the *resultant adaptation of programming* (DIP).⁸⁹

Within UNHCR Egypt, the outputs of CwC work includes briefings and posters and running a Facebook page (in English, Arabic, Amharic, Somali, etc.). Whenever messaging is developed for communities, it is reportedly tested in FGDs first.⁹⁰

Evidence of the clear investment in modality of messaging includes the UNHCR Infoline, which comes in addition to physical reception centres (during non-pandemic times), which is normally the first point of contact for UNHCR. Within the Community-Based Protection (CBP) team there are monthly community meetings and systematic post-distribution monitoring (PDM) is in place. In 2020, UNHCR reported receiving over 160,000 calls to Infoline and registration hotline numbers.⁹¹

Further evidence of the investment in AAP includes the participatory assessments (mandatory within UNHCR annual planning processes) which UNHCR Egypt has undertaken to ensure voices of POC are heard. However, despite the fact that COP exercises are based on the participatory assessments,⁹² it is less clear how much interventions have been able to adapt based on this feedback; the concerns raised in FGDs within this evaluation echo those concerns previously raised in the participatory assessments and reflect the challenges raised in the previous findings.

⁸⁷ Multiple key informants

⁸⁸ Information provided by UNHCR Egypt.

⁸⁹ This evaluation notes and fully respects that the Representative has the authority to manage CwC and AAP within a country operation and is simply highlighting the global approach within UNHCR compared to the Egypt operations approach, vis à vis the unit under which CwC / AAP is located.

⁹⁰ UNHCR key informants

⁹¹ UNHCR key informants

⁹² UNHCR key informants

The participatory assessment, conducted in 2019, included 56 FGDs comprising 501 participants in total. Through these community FGDs, UNHCR collected information about challenges for POC, including in:

- Education (inadequate information about education grants, absence of support systems to facilitate access to services, insufficient grant amounts, lengthy registration processes and repeated requests for documentation from countries of origin, limited education or vocational opportunities for youth);
- Basic needs (inadequacy of cash grant to meet basic needs, inadequate information about criteria, methodology and reasons for delayed or suspended assistance);
- RSD (delayed processes, restricted access to services, difficulties with RSD website and sending SMS for information, a misconception that RSD automatically leads to resettlement, concerns about exclusion from RSD processes); and,
- Registration (delayed processes, non-recognition of UNHCR white paper by authorities, delayed renewal of documents, restricted access to registration facilities).⁹³

POC also provided significant feedback during the 2019 participatory assessment about the lack of functional feedback and complaints mechanisms:

- Delayed or difficult physical access, including language barriers for non-Arabic speaking POC, as guards speak only Arabic;
- Limited privacy and confidentiality during interviews;
- Limited information about services, policies and procedures;
- Difficult to access Infoline/lack of response from Infoline;
- Limited clarity on role of UNHCR's partners;
- Limited knowledge of complaints mechanisms.⁹⁴

This highlights that, despite the obvious effort UNHCR Egypt makes in CwC/engaging with communities, POC consistently feel strongly – either because expectations are too high or because feedback mechanisms are not as functional as necessary – that their voices are not heard and their challenges are not addressed. During this evaluation, FGDs with POC in Cairo and Alexandria reiterated many of the challenges UNHCR had already understood through the participatory assessment methodology. While it is not possible, based on the evidence from this evaluation, to clearly determine the balance between expectations and the functionality of systems, it is clear that challenges remain for POC in terms of reaching UNHCR and having satisfactory responses. Therefore changes to the current processes are necessary.

Evaluation FGD participant comments

“My brother was killed in detention and we asked for help from UNHCR and there was no response. We get zero protection from UNHCR.”

“It has been two years waiting for the result of my RSD.”

“I have expired UNHCR card, and no one responds to renew his card.” “UNHCR should answer our calls at least to protect us.”

“I cannot reach UNHCR window because there is a huge line.” “No residency because the office never answers my call.”

“To take appointment to renew cards no one is responding.”

“For renewing the yellow cards, we cannot take an appointment through the phone because we cannot reach out to UNHCR staff.”

⁹³ UNHCR, *Participatory Assessment 2019, Summary of Findings Cairo & Alexandria. 2019*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

“There is a long period time to take an appointment for renewing the cards.” “There is no communication between refugees and UNHCR.”

“No response from UNHCR. No response from the Infoline when I was detained. Those who want a photocopy of UNHCR card to issue the residency, they email the office, and they call all the numbers published on Facebook, but they get no response.”

“Since 2014, the complaints do not reach UNHCR.”

“UNHCR conducts meetings every year and listen to our concerns but does nothing with this information.”

FINDING 6. Stakeholders and partners struggle with access to UNHCR data with no comprehensive clarity provided on data sharing protocols.

While it is imperative UNHCR ensure that data confidentiality protocols protect refugees, a key component of coordination and collaboration involves the sharing of information and data where safe and possible to do so, to allow other actors access to the information needed to plan and implement complementary programmes.

UNHCR has had a global organizational Data Protection Policy since 2015,⁹⁵ and this frames the overall consideration within UNHCR that data protection is an inherent and integral component of refugee protection. POC are almost always in a vulnerable position, and their information is highly sensitive. Based on this, a strong data protection culture has emerged within UNHCR, based on a clear desire to protect POC, which resists any pressure to compromise on data protection principles.⁹⁶ Together with this, a strong sense of leadership around data and the ownership of that data has emerged.⁹⁷ However, at the same time, data protection is not supposed to restrict POC access to other services, and other agencies and partners are, rationally, less able to provide services without planning figures. It is critical to note that the UNHCR policy applies to *personal* data held by UNHCR, not aggregated or anonymized data, which is the information other agencies and partners have an interest in, in order to plan and design interventions.

UNHCR shares data with GOE for procedural purposes where necessary, with some data shared on a regular basis and some on a more *ad hoc* basis. For other UN agencies and partner NGOs (implementing and operational partners), a key frustration emerging from this evaluation is one of strong data protection from UNHCR. Even in relation to aggregated and anonymized data, sharing is not something widely provided by UNHCR but rather based on providing the minimum level necessary. This is not conducive to other actors' planning for interventions with the POC population. An example provided by a partner related to a request for the number of different nationalities reaching cash grants – aggregated data, not personalized data covered by the data protection protocol – but UNHCR did not share this information. Other partners also raised the issue that they could provide data to UNHCR but did not have access to do their own analysis for fundraising and programme planning purposes.⁹⁸

UNHCR has a new global Data Transformation Strategy 2020–2025,⁹⁹ with a vision to be, by 2025, a *“trusted leader on data and information related to refugees and other affected populations, thereby enabling actions that protect, include and empower”*. This strategy clearly highlights that:

Increasingly, UNHCR's approach to strengthen data and information systems is based on collaboration, collective efforts and joint engagement with partners and stakeholders, as the

⁹⁵ UNHCR, *Policy on the Protection of Personal Data of Persons of Concern to UNHCR 2015*, <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/55643c1d4.pdf>

⁹⁶ <https://www.unhcr.org/blogs/data-protection-part-parcel-refugee-protection/>

⁹⁷ Multiple key informants

⁹⁸ Partner key informants

⁹⁹ UNHCR, *Data Transformation Strategy 2020–2025: Supporting Protection and Solutions*

optimal way to both ensure the effective use of resources and to achieve outcomes for those affected by forced displacement.

The fact that it is highlighted that the approach is increasingly based on joint engagement implies recognition that in previous years UNHCR may have been more unilateral in its approach to data management and that this is not aligned with the best interests of POC. Indeed, the Data Transformation Strategy was recommended by a 2019 evaluation, which highlighted that:

An increasing number of players are actively working in humanitarian-development settings. In order for UNHCR to lead as the authority on refugees and other populations affected by forced displacement, it is important to take an inclusive partnership approach. The evaluation already recommended that UNHCR develop a data transformation strategy. The strategy should acknowledge the importance of partnership and describe how UNHCR plans to engage with a wide range of stakeholders in carrying out its future data work.¹⁰⁰

FINDING 7. UNHCR has contributed significantly to emerging League of Arab States frameworks that will ultimately benefit multiple refugee, asylum seeker and migrant populations across the region.

LAS is the oldest regional organization in the Middle East and North Africa. Founded in March 1945, LAS (or the Arab League) is a confederation of 22 Arab nations, including Palestine, whose mission is to improve coordination among its members on matters of common interest.¹⁰¹ The UNHCR Egypt Representative has dual accreditation, as Representative to GOE and Representative to the LAS. UNHCR Egypt has been cooperating with LAS for many years; during the past two years, there has been “*intensive cooperation*”.¹⁰² The cooperation is well appreciated by LAS: “*UNHCR have been the Harvard of all organizations for quality and quantity.*”¹⁰³

This has included drafting a regional strategy for the protection of refugee children, which is currently being circulated to LAS member states for review.¹⁰⁴

The strategy aims at establishing the basis of a safe environment for refugee children, that meets their needs through determining the best interests of the child, their access to educational opportunities, and their engagement with host communities and families to provide child protection from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, while protecting them from early marriage, child labour and recruitment by parties of the conflict.¹⁰⁵

In addition to this, other initiatives include an Arab strategy on access to public health services in asylum and displacement contexts which was adopted by the Council of Arab Ministers for Health in 2019 and an Arab strategy on protection from gender-based violence in asylum and displacement contexts, especially sexual violence against women adopted by the Council of Arab Foreign Affairs Ministers in March 2021.¹⁰⁶ UNHCR is unique among UN agencies in developing more than one strategy with the LAS.¹⁰⁷

3.2. Area of Inquiry 2: Strategic Coherence

¹⁰⁰ UNHCR, *Evaluation of UNHCR's Data Use and Information Management Approaches, Evaluation Report, 2019*

¹⁰¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/eg/what-we-do/las-cooperation>

¹⁰² Another key informant

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Another key informant. Note that UNHCR report that the strategy was adopted by the Arab Summit at the level of heads of States in Beirut in 2019: there is no final strategy available for review from the LAS.

¹⁰⁵ <https://www.unhcr.org/eg/13535-unhcr-league-of-arab-states-launch-the-arab-strategy-for-the-protection-of-children-in-asylum-context-in-the-arab-region.html>

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.unhcr.org/eg/what-we-do/las-cooperation>, UNHCR key informant.

¹⁰⁷ UNHCR key informant.

Overarching Evaluation Question: How strategically has UNHCR been positioned within the country context, and how well aligned is the programme with the changing/evolving needs of POC? To what extent do the strategy and COP have coherence and/or alignment with the work of other actors?

Specific Egypt-context Evaluation Questions:

- EQ4. To what extent has UNHCR adapted its role under the 1954 MOU to the changing national political and socioeconomic context of Egypt?
- EQ5. To what extent has UNHCR adapted its refugee response to the specific factors defining the asylum and refugee context in Egypt?
- EQ6. To what extent has UNHCR successfully adapted operations to the COVID-19 pandemic while retaining quality services to POC?

AOI 2 findings summary

UNHCR Egypt navigates a complex country context effectively and strategically but there is a delicate balance between ensuring a continuing close relationship with GOE including the quiet diplomacy used to achieve protection results, and *visibly* defending the rights of refugees and other POC. In addition to the specific socioeconomic and policy context of Egypt, there is a unique refugee environment consisting of both a dual protection space – registered asylum seekers and refugees compared with approximately 6 million foreign nationals among whom there are persons in need of international protection¹⁰⁸ – and a dual financing framework for Syrian and non-Syrian refugees. UNHCR has sought pragmatic and balanced solutions well adapted to this context.

Regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR has adapted both internally (such as reviewing office working spaces and processes and procedures) and externally, by anticipating the protection impact of delayed processes resulting in expired or absent documentation and advocating with GOE for leniency towards this. While advocacy with GOE remains as a strong solution, feedback from POC themselves is that there is continued restriction to access services without renewed documentation.

FINDING 8. UNHCR Egypt navigates a complex country context strategically with the conviction that the best way to defend refugee rights is through diplomatic channels, but not all stakeholders are confident that UNHCR always achieves the delicate balance between ensuring a continuing close relationship with GOE including the quiet diplomacy used to achieve protection results and *visibly* defending the rights of refugees and other POC.

Since 2014, GOE has been implementing a “*bold and transformational reforms programme, aimed at spurring the economy, enhancing the country’s business environment and staging a balanced and inclusive growth.*”¹⁰⁹ Egypt’s Vision 2030 was then launched in 2016, and has followed the sustainable development principle as a general framework.¹¹⁰ Egypt is both a destination and a transit country for refugees and asylum seekers from more than 60 countries. Difficult socioeconomic conditions, with high inflation levels and increased costs of living over the past few years have affected the lives of both Egyptians and refugees and asylum seekers. This has been worsened by limited livelihood opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers, and, of course, further compounded in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹⁰⁸ Note that previous UNHCR language referenced foreigners living in potentially refugee-like situations: following a statement by H.E. President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi before the 75th Session of the UN General Assembly in September 2020 the terminology relating to the other foreign nationals residing in Egypt now references foreign nationals, among whom are persons in need of international protection.

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/egypt/overview>

¹¹⁰ 3RP Egypt Chapter 2017–2018

Within this context, Egypt is a key player within the JVAP, adopted by African and European countries in 2015 to address Africa to Europe Migration Issues. Egypt has also made several pledges to the GCR relating to education, cooperation with international partners, strengthened social cohesion and finding durable solutions.¹¹¹

Despite these positive trends, Egypt continues to experience challenges with basic services even for Egyptian nationals. Health and education systems struggle with demand; there are many challenges with regard to gender equality and SGBV; and the judicial system can be slow and difficult to navigate.¹¹² While a policy of integrating refugees and asylum seekers into existing services is the most sustainable and reasonable approach to take, the fact that these services are lacking in quality cannot be ignored and UNHCR has tried to balance the current approach with advocating for and supporting improved quality within existing services. In this regard, for example, the inclusion of support to MOE as part of the UNHCR education approach is vital, as is recognizing that the improvement to education overall in Egypt cannot, and should not, be the responsibility of one agency.

In addition to challenges with national structures, GOE works in a particularly centralized manner, which means that UNHCR works predominantly with Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). While UNHCR has built solid relationships with multiple government entities and can directly speak with the MOE or the Ministry of Health (MOH) for example, GOE itself operates in a very centralized manner for decision-making and formal coordination is achieved through MOFA only.¹¹³

The robust relationship between UNHCR and GOE is a remarkable achievement and has allowed UNHCR to discharge its global responsibilities towards providing protection and defending the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. The close relationship also allowed UNHCR to provide external support when GOE decided to embark on the journey to create a new asylum framework, potentially leading to transitioning of refugee management to GOE – a long-term goal of UNHCR in all countries.

However, other stakeholders – other UN agencies, donors and partners – voiced concern about the closeness of the relationship between GOE and UNHCR and how this might affect the protection mandate of UNHCR. The GOE record on human rights has not been without criticism. The 2020 Human Rights Watch Global Report highlights various concerns, including a move towards authoritarian rule, an undermining of judiciary independence, the expansion of military power and significant abuses by the security forces. Egypt is a dangerous place to be a woman and a draft law potentially criminalizing domestic violence was rejected in Parliament.¹¹⁴ Many respondents to this evaluation highlighted how the protection space was increasingly shrinking in Egypt.¹¹⁵

Many stakeholders are uneasy with the lack of public advocacy from UNHCR *vis-à-vis* either general human rights abuses or those specifically against refugees and asylum seekers. While there is a clear understanding among all stakeholders that maintaining good relations with GOE is critical to operating in Egypt, many also feel the balance UNHCR sustains is not in keeping with the protection mandate of UNHCR and that this has changed in the past few years. This is a perspective from across other UN agencies, donors and partners.

Before this last couple of years, we had a UNHCR office that looked strongly at this responsibility to be an advocate for refugees, that was its primary function, but since then UNHCR has taken a turn, they are supporting the government, and constantly telling everybody about how wonderful the

¹¹¹ <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/channel/pledges-contributions>

¹¹² Multiple key informants

¹¹³ GOE key informants

¹¹⁴ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2020, Events of 2019*, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/egypt>

¹¹⁵ Multiple key informants

government is in supporting refugees and how generous they are, but this doesn't offer the strength of advocacy that refugees need.¹¹⁶

They try to balance keeping operations ongoing and a good relationship with GOE and then protection mandate. We talk to them about how to maintain their core protection mandate and keep relations with GOE. They do this on a case-by-case basis but how to do it on more strategic and leadership level and to be more vocal? They are very positive about GOE but there are reasons to speak up and voice protection concerns, and this is the role of leadership, is important and UNHCR is mandated to bring these things up.¹¹⁷

I don't think UNHCR has done a particularly good job with representing vulnerable refugees in that conversation and many people would see UNHCR being far too cosy and close to government institutions and not doing their job in providing proper protection.¹¹⁸

Maintaining excellent relations with GOE is critical to UNHCR's operations in Egypt, but equally so is providing *visible* leadership in the protection space, as the mandate and responsibility of UNHCR. This delicate and extremely difficult balance requires further consideration.

FINDING 9. UNHCR has sought pragmatic and balanced solutions to address the two distinct and specific challenges of (a) a dual protection space between registered refugees and other foreign nationals among whom there are persons in need of international protection and (b) a dual financing framework for registered refugees.

In addition to the above socioeconomic and political context, Egypt has two distinct and unique contextual factors specifically *vis-à-vis* the refugee and migrant situation.

Firstly, there are **dual protection spaces** in Egypt. There is the 'humanitarian space, within which there exists, currently, 258,882 refugees and asylum seekers, all of whom are registered with UNHCR. In parallel, there are approximately 6 million foreigners registered directly with the Ministry of Interior (MOI), which has increasingly become a second humanitarian space, but under different conditions. Those registered with MOI are not defined as comprehensively needing international protection and therefore do not enjoy the same level of international protection as registered refugees and asylum seekers do, but both the GOE and UNHCR and other actors recognise that this group contains some who may need protection. The two protection spaces do not exist in complete vacuums, with each having an impact on the other. For example, with the ongoing advocacy to extend residency cards based on UNHCR registration to one year (which was agreed to in principle by GOE in 2019 but has yet to be implemented), a concern continually raised by GOE is how much of a pull factor this may represent in encouraging others to come and register as asylum seekers.¹¹⁹

Within the second humanitarian space of the 6 million foreign nationals among whom there are those in need of international protection, there are various inequalities based on nationality. For example, Sudanese and South Sudanese nationals are covered in the 2004 Four Freedoms Agreement with Sudan, which provides freedoms of movement, residence, work and property ownership between the two nations.¹²⁰

Palestinian and Palestine refugees are considered in a more complex manner based on the GOE interpretation of both the UNHCR and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) mandates (noting that Egypt itself is technically outside of the UNRWA regional mandate). In 2019, UNRWA requested UNHCR assistance

¹¹⁶ Another UN agency informant

¹¹⁷ Donor key informant

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ UNHCR key informants

¹²⁰ <http://citizenshiprightsafrika.org/egypt-sudan-four-freedoms-agreement/>

and for the first time an MOU was signed between UNHCR and UNRWA, with full GOE approval, to assist Syrian Palestinian refugees.¹²¹ Syrian Palestinian refugees are now considered under the 3RP.

UNHCR has balanced this situation carefully and pragmatically, and, together with IOM and the UNRC, recognized that, particularly within Egypt, the GCR and the parallel Global Compact for Migration (GCM) interlink across these two humanitarian spaces. It is therefore incumbent to develop a strategy that allows for a focus on vulnerability rather than just status alone – something contradictory to the usual UNHCR approach but more in keeping with both the contextual realities and the overall movement in development and humanitarian spheres *vis-à-vis* the Agenda for Humanity and “leave no one behind”.¹²²

An additional factor in Egypt is the lack of camps: refugees and asylum seekers, and migrants, all live within host communities and, given the socioeconomic status of Egypt, many others within these host communities are also extremely vulnerable. Therefore, addressing the needs of POC while recognizing the needs of others and issues of social cohesion is critical, and UNHCR Egypt has worked successfully in partnership with IOM and UNRC to address this by ensuring coherence across communication of vulnerabilities of UNHCR POC and IOM POC.¹²³

Second, in addition to the dual protection space, there is a **dual financing arrangement**. The 3RP, in which the Egypt Chapter is less well funded than those of other countries, but which is better funded than the ERP, covers Syrian refugees only. The ERP was launched in 2018 by UNHCR to address the imbalance and covers all other nationalities. Unlike other 3RP countries, Egypt hosts a significant number of other refugees.

In 2019, the 3RP Egypt Chapter requested \$162 million and was granted 39% funding, i.e. \$63 million. Conversely, the ERP requested \$53.7 million in funding and was granted 42.9%, i.e. \$23 million. 2019 planning figures estimated 254,726 asylum seekers and refugees (not including Palestinian refugees) by the end of 2019, 51% of whom were Syrian (and covered under the 3RP total of \$63 million) and 49% were other nationalities, covered under the ERP total of \$23 million).¹²⁴

In addition to the financial imbalance, there is also a general imbalance in terms of vulnerability: many of the registered Syrian refugees are quite economically successful, having left Syria early on with assets and settled in Egypt with business and trade connections.¹²⁵

Unlike in other contexts, the 3RP has not brought development and humanitarian actors together in Egypt as intended in the design, based on several factors. These include limited engagement by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is responsible for the resilience part of the 3RP, and the fact that Egypt is not a predominantly humanitarian space, with much more focus on development.¹²⁶

However, from the humanitarian perspective, UNHCR and other stakeholders, including GOE, have been keen to maintain a “One Refugee Approach” and to work in such a way that vulnerable refugees are assisted based not on nationality but based on need. This has been a challenge because of the financial constraints and the fact that different nationalities do indeed have different vulnerabilities. In particular, for those from sub-Saharan Africa, language is an issue and being non-Arab also results in more discrimination against them. UASC are

¹²¹ UNHCR key informants

¹²² UNHCR key informants and other UN key informants

¹²³ Other UN agency key informants

¹²⁴ 3RP 2019 Annual Report; ERP 2019; UNHCR Global Focus, <https://reporting.unhcr.org/node/2540?y=2019#year>

¹²⁵ It is noted that there are also many Syrian refugees who are also extremely vulnerable.

¹²⁶ Multiple stakeholders

more numerous from sub-Saharan Africa and SGBV is also more of an issue for African women. Detention also adversely affects non-Syrian populations.¹²⁷

UNHCR delivers assistance across all nationality populations. However, despite all the efforts, there is still a perspective within refugee communities that Syrians are treated better: interestingly, this was much more prominent in Alexandria FGDs than in Cairo FGDs:

¹²⁷ UNHCR key informants

FGD participant comments

“There’s discrimination from UNHCR side between Syrians and other nationalities such as Iraqi and Yemeni. The Syrians are receiving most of the services such as the financial assistances and winterization grants.” “For Iraqi we haven’t received any kind of assistances either winterization or financial assistance. Some Iraqis have great security concerns in Iraq. Accordingly, they will not be able to return to home countries and we have great challenges to be integrated here in Egypt. Also, there’s difficulty to be resettled to third country.”

“We were suffering during corona time and we haven’t received the expected support from UNHCR in terms of the hygiene items. Only Syrians received the hygiene items.”

“Discrimination in the assistance’s distribution between Syrian and other nationalities such as winterization and food vouchers.”

FINDING 10. UNHCR has made pragmatic and rational adaptations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to try to address the continuing protection challenges. However, success with these strategies has been inconsistent.

UNHCR has consistently adapted processes in the past few years to try and mitigate the delays in registration and RSD and the resulting protection challenges for POC. For example, even before the pandemic hit in 2020, UNHCR improved and standardized fast-track registration and strengthened dedicated child protection staff for determining the best interest of the child for unaccompanied refugee children. Another change was the development of merged registration and RSD processes to reflect both global change in this area and the contextual specificities of Egypt. This resulted in selective separate registration and RSD where necessary and merged fast-track processes where possible within the “*spirit of strategic use of RSD*”.¹²⁸ Even in 2019, pre-pandemic, UNHCR was considering trialling online registration.

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been both significant challenges but also windows of opportunities for UNHCR to fast-track streamlining processes.

For UNHCR, the priority when the pandemic started was to find ways to try and continue protection operations. A business continuity plan was developed in mid-March 2020 and UNHCR also engaged with the first COVID-19 focused UNCT meeting in March 2020. UNHCR Egypt confirm that offices remained open throughout the pandemic period; However, within this evaluation both POC themselves and implementing partners reported that UNHCR offices were closed with resulting consequent protection challenges faced by refugees with expired documentation. The evaluation fully acknowledges that this is a difference in perception, but one upon which it is the responsibility for UNHCR to address – if refugees believe the office to be closed even when it was in fact open, there was a miscommunication around this for refugees. The primary strategic approach assumed by UNHCR was to address this challenge at the source and advocate with GOE to allow continued access to services for registered refugees and asylum seekers during these unprecedented times. This was an eminently rational and considered strategy, and one to which the GOE fully agreed: however, refugees and different partners interviewed for this evaluation during November 2020 reported that refugees were still unable to access crucial services – including telephone services and accessing cash assistance and cash remittances from abroad through post offices – because of expired documentation.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ UNHCR key informant

¹²⁹ Multiple partner key informants

UNHCR itself recognizes that protection activities have suffered because of the enforced suspension because of the pandemic. After adjusting working practices at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, UNHCR adapted plans for remote interviewing where possible by June 2020 and then proceeded to purchase hardware for this to happen, with the requirements of having two open calls at the same time, one with the refugee and one with the translator. This worked for RSD (for some cases) and resettlement interviews.¹³⁰

However, adaptation for registration proved more difficult as it requires an iris scan. Eventually, UNHCR adopted a process where interviews for registration were conducted remotely, but the iris scan and changing old ID cards for new ID cards was subsequently done on site: this did not limit the number of people needing to access the UNHCR office, but it did significantly limit the amount of time each person spent in the office. This was implemented from August onwards, but despite this, UNHCR estimated it would still take two to four years to clear the backlog. Therefore, another adjustment was required: in November 2020, UNHCR started doing registration renewal without interview but on the basis of an application form: if no substantive changes have occurred (death in the family, a new baby, marriage, divorce, etc.) then registration is renewed without interview.

In November 2020 an approved resumption plan was announced, specifically to sequentially expand registration activities, including introducing a two-shift working model and extending the working hours. In this adjusted workplan, UNHCR estimate the backlog will be cleared by the end of 2021 or early 2022.¹³¹

Another option to clear the backlog being considered is using external facilities to conduct registration. However, all options need to be considered within the remit of UNHCR obligations to GOE under the 1954 MOU. UNHCR recognizes the opportunity and cost-effectiveness of future remote processing work even after the pandemic is over:

There are many modalities and lessons to be learned. When it comes to working remotely, it has proven with modern technology that many staff don't need to come to this office. We pay almost 1 million a year for four buildings – do we need this?... We can be more efficient and there are a lot of lessons to be learned and funding and costs we can save and all needs to be analysed we need to reorganize ourselves not just UNHCR Egypt but UNHCR as an institution we can do much more and [be] much more effective.¹³²

FGD participant comments¹³³

“We have many problems related to registration and renewal of cards, and this problem was exacerbated during the period of COVID-19, as the UNHCR closed its doors completely and did not respond to our calls.” “Registering in a school is halted due to not renewing the card.”

“I could not receive the food assistance because my UNHCR card is expired since UNHCR closed during COVID-19.”

“During COVID-19, UNHCR closed and we did not have any channel to voice our concerns.”

“During corona, there was insufficient assistance. UNHCR should have provided more masks, more food assistance, financial assistance.”

“UNHCR should focus on renewing the cards.”

¹³⁰ UNHCR key informants

¹³¹ Information provided by UNHCR Egypt.

¹³² UNHCR key informant

¹³³ UNHCR Egypt has confirmed that it assisted all cases where difficulties with registration were reported to UNHCR. Further, the views of the refugees participating within the FGDs do not necessarily represent the views of all refugees but they were the strong and widespread views of those refugees participating in the FGDs for this evaluation.

“UNHCR should have communicated more with people during COVID-19. Eight phone numbers are provided to reach UNHCR however, there is no response.”

“Delay in the appointments for cards renewal, as result we are facing difficulty to receive the financial assistance from the post offices because they requested [an] up-to-date cards.”

“We used to call UNHCR several times without any response from their side.”

3.3. Area of Inquiry 3: Translating Learning into Action

Overarching Evaluation Question: How can UNHCR build on results achieved to date and further leverage UNHCR’s strategic position and influence within the country, to optimize the potential impact of collective efforts towards protection and solutions for UNHCR POC, and the communities that host them?

Specific Egypt-context Evaluation Questions:

- EQ7. What are the future opportunities (and risks) for strengthening the protection environment of refugees and asylum seekers?
- EQ8. What are the future opportunities (and risks) for UNHCR taking an increasingly catalytic approach and influencing the interventions of other actors through a more strategic use of its limited resources?

AOI 3 findings summary

The national asylum law presents a significant and seminal opportunity for transferring refugee responsibility to GOE but also, depending on how the law is framed, a potential risk *vis-à-vis* human rights standard.

There are a number of opportunities for UNHCR Egypt to be more catalytic by influencing other actors to provide more for POC in Egypt, and UNHCR has built a solid foundation to increasingly achieve this in the future. Furthermore, there have been some potentially inspiring developments triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic regarding cash transfers and alignment with national social protection programmes. An opportunity created by UNHCR Egypt within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the idea of integrating registered POC into Egypt social protection systems. UNRC in Egypt referred to this new plan as the ‘Grand Social Bargain’. This constitutes a rare and propitious opportunity aligned with the letter and the spirit of both the Grand Bargain and the GCR.

FINDING 11. The national asylum law presents a significant opportunity for transferring refugee responsibility to the nation state but also, depending on how the law is framed, a potential risk to both POC and UNHCR reputation *vis-à-vis* human rights standards.

UNHCR should be prepared to (a) support implementation of the asylum framework and further GOE implementation of commitments to the GCR or (b) engage in further advocacy, with other actors, to ensure the law fully reflects global standards and principles as reflected in the GCR.

In terms of opportunities, the new national asylum framework provides numerous positive possibilities. First, it is a core objective of UNHCR globally to support states to fulfil their obligations to POC under various international frameworks, including the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its associated 1967 protocol, and regional frameworks.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ UNHCR Global Report, *International Protection*, 2008

Egypt is a signatory to the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol, as well as the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention governing specific aspects of refugee issues in Africa. Egypt made six pledges at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019, related to education for refugee children, capacity-building for both refugees and their host communities, cooperation to find durable solutions and strengthened social cohesion in line with the country's SDG strategy.¹³⁵

In 2019, Egypt chaired the African Union, during the Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons. Egypt's concern for forced displacement in Africa was reflected in the Conclusions of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development held in December 2019. In the High-Level Segment on Statelessness at the 70th Session of the Executive Committee of High Commissioner's Programme¹³⁶ in June 2020, Egypt emphasized the "*centrality of more equitable burden and responsibility sharing*", highlighting that this remains representative of the core principles of the GCR.¹³⁷

Egypt is also a leading member state in LAS and, LAS, together with UNHCR support, has developed a number of strategies with regard to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants (see Finding 7).

In many respects, Egypt is a welcoming and hospitable environment for refugees, and this provides a solid foundation to build the new asylum framework upon. Developments in other contexts, such as the Jordan Compact, have highlighted to GOE the potential benefit of providing even more opportunity and protection to refugee communities.¹³⁸

In addition to this, the excellent relationship UNHCR maintains with GOE places UNHCR in a unique position to provide support and potentially influence the new asylum law, while of course respecting the fact that it is a fully national process. This highlights the opportunity and hope that the new asylum law will be fully aligned with international human rights standards.

*I think GOE values very much work that HCR does and they are the entity to hear from: this is the strength of UNHCR. However, I don't think UNHCR is capitalizing on this. I would like to see more of fruitful impact results on policies noting how well established the partnership between UNHCR and the Egyptian government is. I am sure there are a lot of elements, but they could push more firmly, and they have the strength to do so.*¹³⁹

While the opportunities for the new asylum law are numerous and promising, there still exists some risk to both refugees and asylum seekers and to UNHCR as an agency. For refugees and asylum seekers, the risks of the law not being fully aligned with global human rights standards, and therefore reducing the current protection space, are clear. GOE has not been without criticism of its record on human rights, with the 2020 Human Rights Watch Global Report reporting various concerns¹⁴⁰ (as highlighted above, in Finding 8).

The risk to UNHCR as an agency is less clear. By admission, UNHCR has built the strengths and successes of the current programme in Egypt on the foundational pillar of excellent relations with GOE.¹⁴¹ This means, in terms of communication – quite appropriately – no public confrontation or approbation.¹⁴² However, if there are problematic components within the new asylum law, there will be an expectation and a responsibility for UNHCR, with its protection mandate, to publicly defend the rights of POC. This will mean a clear deviation from

¹³⁵ <https://globalcompactrefugees.org/channel/pledges-contributions>

¹³⁶ <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/executive-committee.html>

¹³⁷ Egypt Statement at 70th Session of EXCOM and the High-Level Segment on Statelessness 2020

¹³⁸ In February 2016, a new approach to dealing with protracted displacement was signed: the Jordan Compact. In return for billions of dollars in grants and loans and preferential trade agreements with the EU, Jordan committed to improving access to education and legal employment for its Syrian refugees. ODI Policy Briefing, The Jordan Compact. Lessons Learnt and Implications for Future Refugee Compacts, 2018

¹³⁹ Donor key informant

¹⁴⁰ As highlighted in Finding 8.

¹⁴¹ UNHCR key informants

¹⁴² UNHCR key informants

the approach taken to date. Should a law have questionable elements, silence from UNHCR would be detrimental to its position as a protection leader and would have consequences across partnerships with donors and other humanitarian and development actors. Therefore, the new asylum law, until it is launched, remains a risk as well as an opportunity.¹⁴³

FINDING 12. There are a number of opportunities for UNHCR Egypt to be increasingly more catalytic by influencing other actors to provide more for POC in Egypt, and UNHCR has built a solid foundation to increasingly achieve this in the future.

As highlighted in Finding 4, UNHCR's strong leadership of coordination platforms is widely appreciated across all stakeholders and seen as impactful in terms of both operational/informational factors and increasing the visibility of POC on the development assistance agenda. However, there are opportunities to be increasingly catalytic, and these opportunities rely heavily on (a) reviewing data sharing protocols and working on the assumption of sharing as much aggregated and anonymized data as possible to allow other actors to provide more for POC and (b) working with other actors to ensure quality targeting and interventions based increasingly on vulnerability rather than status.

While UNHCR has a unique role in protection, protection budget lines together constitute only between 11% and 22% of the overall UNHCR annual budgets for 2016–2020. Basic needs and essential services represent a higher overall cost, with cash grants for education, health, livelihoods programming and general CBI, which is why the majority of the UNHCR budget sits under operations. However again, UNHCR holds a unique role in protection services, whereas there are in fact other actors who can – and *should* – provide sectoral basic needs services. With increased investment and accountability from other actors, particularly sectoral lead UN agencies, more of UNHCR's budget could be allocated to the protection services that no other agency can provide. However, currently the provision of services and assistance to refugees is strongly coordinated and controlled through UNHCR. Therefore, stakeholders report that there is limited opportunity for other actors to genuinely take on the accountability and responsibility of ensuring refugee populations are included in the provision of essential sectoral services under their respective remits.¹⁴⁴

UNHCR has already built a strong foundation for this through the IAWG, ISWG and SWG coordination platforms. The investment UNHCR has allocated to this (primarily in terms of human resources, with a structural arrangement with the Assistant Representative (Operations) having direct management oversight of the coordination mechanisms), has been worthwhile in terms of creating a well-respected, well-managed and impactful coordination environment.¹⁴⁵ However, many respondents commented that it was still more informational and instructional than collaborative and collective in decision-making.

While UNHCR-led coordination mechanisms are not United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)-led clusters, there is some learning from the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) cluster model with regard to coordination mechanisms, in particular the evolving ladder of purpose.

In 2015, ALNAP¹⁴⁶ produced a report on cluster coordination,¹⁴⁷ which identified three main levels of coordination ranging from “communication” (one step removed from complete independence), through to “alignment” and then “collaboration” (one step removed from complete merger).

Figure 11. ALNAP coordination scale

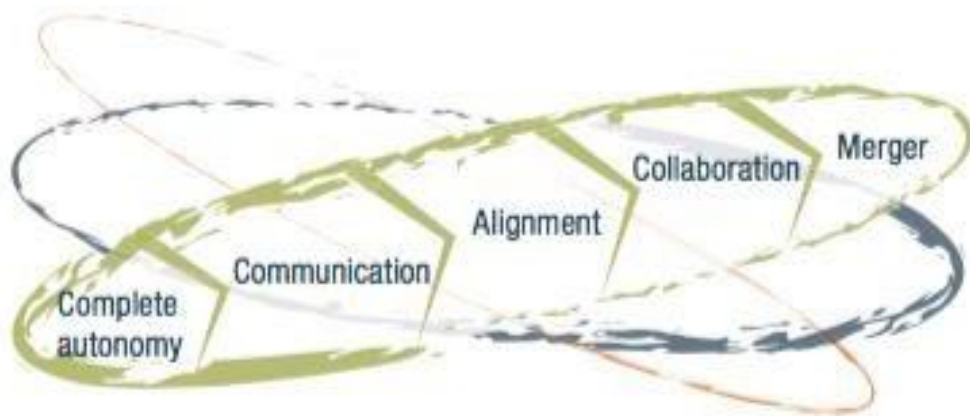
¹⁴³ Noting that data collection for this evaluation was completed in December 2020, the evaluation notes that in February 2021 UNHCR organised a roundtable with the institutions drafting the asylum law and developed a note on protection concepts and mechanisms that was subsequently discussed.

¹⁴⁴ This does not mean no opportunities at all; for example, UNHCR report that WFP manage the entire food component of the 3RP and the ERP.

¹⁴⁵ The Assistant Representative leads the ISWG and each sector WG is lead by the sector heads. The Senior Protection Officer leads the Protection working group and protection sector leads chair the SGBV, child protection, and durable solutions working groups.

¹⁴⁶ ALNAP is the Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance for humanitarian action and is considered a global leading resource on all aspects of humanitarianism. <https://www.alnap.org/>

¹⁴⁷ ALNAP Exploring Coordination in Humanitarian Clusters, 2015



Respondents to this evaluation highlighted that the coordination mechanisms were currently useful and impactful but primarily at the communication level: UNHCR provides information to partners within the SWG meetings. There is some level of alignment but less in terms of more genuine collaboration. For UNHCR to be catalytic in influencing other actors to take a more proactive role in providing services to POC, there must be more genuine collaboration and responsibility-sharing with both the co-chairs and the members of the groups.

This is not something that always comes easily to UNHCR, which is strongly committed to its guardianship role for POC. However, UNICEF has a global mandate for education and child protection, which should include refugee children. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has a global mandate for SGBV, which includes POC. The same goes for the World Health Organization (WHO) for health, the World Food Programme (WFP) for food, UNDP for development, etc. Therefore, being catalytic in influencing others to share the sectoral burden of basic needs would free up UNHCR to focus more on the protection aspect of its role, both in terms of current responsibility for registration, RSD, resettlement, accessing those in detention, etc. *and* in terms of supporting the gradual transition of these processes to GOE under the new asylum law.

In addition to working towards a fairer sharing of sectoral responsibility across different actors, there also exist opportunities within the new CBI strategy in UNHCR; particularly harmonizing CBI with regard to both further alignment towards GOE social protection systems (see below) and multipurpose cash rather than sector-specific grants. For this second point, this means both within UNHCR current granting mechanisms but also in collaboration with others such as WFP.¹⁴⁸ A strong foundation for this already exists and can be capitalized on for further benefit. Realistically, this will need to be based increasingly on robust targeting of the most vulnerable, with the understanding that resources across the board are being stretched, and alignment towards the GOE social protection thresholds.¹⁴⁹

Finding 13. There have been some potentially inspiring developments triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic with regard to cash transfers and alignment with national social protection programmes.

COVID-19 has illuminated several opportunities, in terms of restructuring processes and procedures but also – more interestingly – possibilities of enhancing mainstreaming and promoting inclusion to a much larger extent. The most unique opportunity recognized – or even, created – by UNHCR Egypt within the pandemic has been the idea of integrating registered POC into Egypt social protection systems. Egypt’s Vision 2030 was launched in 2016, and has followed the sustainable development principle as a general framework for improving the quality of lives and welfare of all Egyptian nationals within Egypt, with three main dimensions focusing on economic, social and environmental aspects.¹⁵⁰ The ambitious economic reform within this strategy has

¹⁴⁸ UNHCR and other key informants

¹⁴⁹ Multiple key informants

¹⁵⁰ 3RP Egypt Chapter 2017–2018

focused on investment in human capital development and one of the results of this reform has been the development of a national social protection scheme, supported by the World Bank.¹⁵¹

Takaful (meaning Solidarity) is a conditional cash transfer programme for Egyptian nationals, which provides income support to families living below the poverty line and with children under 18 years of age. Assistance under Takaful starts from approximately \$20 per household per month and increases depending on factors including number of children and educational levels. Karama (meaning Dignity) is an unconditional cash programme for Egyptian poor older persons (aged 65 years and above), orphans and persons with severe disabilities. Within Karama, assistance is provided on an individual level at approximately \$28 per month.¹⁵²

Based on knowledge of this, when the COVID-19 pandemic started, UNHCR, UNRC and IOM collaborated to:

- Put to one side definitions of refugee, asylum-seeker, or migrant – already a unique development for UNHCR and for IOM – and focus on non-Egyptian nationals within Egypt, registered or unregistered, based on vulnerability rather than status; and
- Align donor-funded cash subsidies already provided by UNHCR with the Egyptian national social protection system with a view to integrating non-Egyptian nationals into this system, with additional donor support to GOE for this.

It is worthwhile to note that UNHCR, UNRC and IOM in Egypt drafted a proposal for this in March 2020; in May 2020, the global Grand Bargain Sub-Group on Linking Humanitarian Cash and Social Protection produced a briefing paper that recommended exactly this:

- *To effectively mitigate the socioeconomic impacts of COVID-19, action to realise the Grand Bargain commitments to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response and “leave no one behind” is vital;*
- *Scale up the use of cash where appropriate, in both the humanitarian and social protection response, to meet the needs of people affected by COVID-19;*
- *Deliver humanitarian cash by using, linking or aligning with local and national social protection systems, where possible and appropriate;*
- *Rapidly undertake coordinated preparedness and planning to ensure cash can be used to best effect;*
- *Partner with local and national organisations and reinforce capacities as needed, to support effective and timely implementation of a humanitarian cash response linked with social protection systems.*¹⁵³

UNRC in Egypt referred to this new plan as the “*Grand Social Bargain*”.¹⁵⁴ UNHCR then reached out to the development advisor in UNHCR headquarters for further support with this plan. This constitutes a rare and propitious opportunity aligned with the letter and the spirit of both the Grand Bargain and the GCR.

¹⁵¹ UN Egypt Quick Project Proposal Responding to the Social and Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Refugees, Migrants, and Persons in a Refugee-Like Situation in Egypt, 2020

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Grand Bargain: Sub-Group on Linking Humanitarian Cash and Social Protection, Linking Humanitarian Cash and Social Protection for an Effective Cash Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, 2020

¹⁵⁴ UNHCR key informant

4. Conclusions

1. UNHCR Egypt has achieved significant successes with comparatively limited funding with regard to protection. In addition, it is widely credited with contributing to progress towards the national asylum law, which is a potentially seminal achievement. This has been accomplished based on a primary pillar within the approach i.e. **maintaining excellent relations with GOE**. However, there is a delicate balance between ensuring a continuing close relationship with GOE and *visibly* defending the rights of refugees, and this balance may become even more difficult to hold if the new asylum law has challenging components that are not aligned with global standards.

The UNHCR modality of working, within which advocacy with GOE is seen as key to achieving results for POC, should not be underestimated and has had some success, but is not without challenges. When outcomes are highlighted as achieved, these are sometimes not actual outcomes for POC but rather outcomes for the advocacy. A notable concern raised by many respondents and refugees – although not necessarily indicative of a trend -is the agreement for extended residency, which has not yet been effected.

(Links to findings 1,2,8,10)

2. UNHCR holds a unique role in protection services, whereas there are in fact other actors who can – and should – provide essential sectoral services to meet basic needs. By **further influencing other actors** towards increased investment and accountability, particularly sectoral lead UN agencies, more of UNHCR's budget could be allocated to the protection services that no other agency can provide. This of course requires willingness from other partners to fund and implement, and arrangements for such with the government. Utilizing the strong foundation of UNHCR's participation and leadership in the coordination system but evolving this into a more collaborative and responsibility-sharing platform could influence more actors to provide more for POC. However, this would also require rethinking data sharing protocols¹⁵⁵ which currently do not encourage other actors, particularly development partners, to include POC within their programming without access to the data which justifies that inclusion. Equally, there are opportunities for harmonizing CBI across actors and ensuring more multipurpose CBI, and enhanced vulnerability targeting.

(Links to findings 3,4,6,12)

3. UNHCR has worked hard to ensure a fair and favourable environment for all refugees and asylum seekers despite the complexities in Egypt of the dual protection space (registered refugees and asylum seekers vs. unregistered migrants and foreigners) and the dual financing instruments. While some non-Syrian refugees still feel a sense of discrimination, many partners and donors applaud UNHCR's efforts to maintain a **One Refugee Approach** within Egypt, despite the complexities. Furthermore, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR, IOM and UNRC have worked together to further reduce the space between refugee, asylum seeker and migrant – something that is in fact a "*mini-revolution*"¹⁵⁶ within UNHCR and that goes even further than the One Refugee Approach towards operating more fully within the humanitarian–development nexus space.

(Links to findings 9,12)

¹⁵⁵ Noting that policy for data sharing protocols is the responsibility of UNHCR HQ.

¹⁵⁶ UNHCR key informant

4. Despite the obvious effort UNHCR Egypt makes towards CwC/engaging with communities, consistently, POC strongly feel – either because expectations are too high or because feedback mechanisms are not as functional as necessary – that their voices are not heard and their challenges are not addressed. This is clear both from this evaluation and from UNHCR annual participatory assessments. UNHCR has historically worked under CwC and AAP concepts globally. Originally, CwC was more of a communication tool than a protection tool, and UNHCR Egypt has situated CwC under external relations for this reason. However, notwithstanding the investment and effort made, CwC is still not functioning optimally and therefore consideration for changing modalities, including the positioning within UNHCR Egypt, is necessary.

(Links to finding 5)

5. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been both significant challenges but also windows of opportunities for UNHCR to fast-track and streamline processes. UNHCR itself recognizes that protection activities have suffered because of the enforced suspension of many in-person services because of the pandemic. After adjusting working practices at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, UNHCR adapted plans for remote interviewing for RSD and resettlement where possible by June 2020 and then proceeded to purchase hardware for this to happen. Registration was more difficult but UNHCR adapted modalities further to accomplish this. Despite these efforts, there remains a significant backlog for all documentation processes.

However, UNHCR has also been quick to recognize potential windows of opportunity for learning from COVID-19, both internally – with regard to considering the new modalities of working as permanently more cost-efficient where possible, and externally – seeking to leverage potential for integrating non-nationals into the Egyptian social protection scheme, for example.

(Links to findings 10,13)

5. Recommendations

UNHCR Egypt should consider how to best continue working closely with the Government of Egypt while ensuring both the rights of refugees are protected and other humanitarian and development actors have confidence in UNHCR maintaining that protective authority

- Develop an internal confidential briefing paper for a UNHCR Egypt strategy for working with the government, including scenario planning for the new asylum law and different scenarios based on the human rights' elements of the law. Ensure this plan allows for UNHCR to maintain a visible leadership role in protection where other actors, including donors, other UN agencies and all NGO partners, can see that UNHCR is executing its duty of protecting POC, while also being able to continue with the current rational and pragmatic approach of maintaining excellent relationships with the donor. *Note this will be useful for continuity when senior management at UNHCR Egypt transition but may also be interesting more widely for UNHCR in other contexts.*
- Recognize the limitations of working with GOE and ensure planning within UNHCR is aimed at when GOE *implements* promises (i.e. residency permits for one year rather than six months, or POC with expired documentation being able to access services) rather than when GOE agrees to it.

UNHCR should develop a plan to become more catalytic and influence greater burden-sharing with other partners

- Develop a plan to ensure SWGs become more collaborative and jointly managed over the next year;
- For those with current SWG co-chairs, plan how the co-chair can become more responsible both for coordination and for sector-wide interventions, including reaching the most vulnerable, which in this case include POC – i.e. UNICEF taking more responsibility for UASC and children on the move generally (noting that UNICEF has strong regional and global programmes in this area and a defined mandate responsibility);
- For those SWGs without current co-chairs, seek co-chairs to work and gradually share responsibility with;
- Work with partners at SWG level to see how meetings can become more collaborative and lead to other actors sharing responsibility;
- Seek support from HQ/the regional bureau with regard to the new 2020 Data Transformation Strategy to develop a country-specific data sharing strategy that positions UNHCR as a leader while also enabling the sharing of population planning figures as much as allows for other actors to plan programming, in the best interests of POC;
- Develop a longer-term plan to shift the focus from operations to protection, for which UNHCR has a unique role. This plan should be based on the foundation of becoming more catalytic in working and influencing other actors to take more responsibility for specific operational sectors such as education and health

UNHCR Egypt should consider both a rationalisation of sectors and increased nexus working

- Document clearly the rationale for the mainstreaming approach across different sectors;
- Continue to invest in multipurpose CBI and link this with an extraction from sectors where it is possible to be catalytic and influence other actors to take over sector responsibilities; have a longer-term plan to rationalize UNHCR support into CBI provided to the most vulnerable;
- Continue to develop the plan to integrate POC into national protection systems and document this process and the interim and final outcomes (which would be interesting more widely for UNHCR in middle-income countries).

UNHCR Egypt should review and revise the CwC/AAP approach

- Recognize that, despite the investment and effort, CwC is not working optimally;
- Consider repositioning CwC under protection;
- Work with the regional bureau for support, looking to CwC/AAP processes in other contexts;
- Build on the participatory annual assessments to ensure a cycle of acting on the feedback: invest in using the assessments to plan a timetable of activities to respond to feedback and monitor progress at 6- and 12- monthly limits, ensuring that each annual assessment then shows improvement over the last (noting that many things may be about reframing information for POC – such as the realistic likelihood of resettlement);
- Ensure AGD (particularly gender and moving beyond diversity as nationality) is a clear lens through which participatory assessments are conducted.

UNHCR should investigate the longer-term costing implications of the remote working model

Commission an assessment of the longer-term cost-efficiencies of the remote working model implemented for COVID-19 and plan to more permanently implement those components that prove better value for money and still work effectively.

Annex I: Evaluation matrix

AOI 1: Results to date: What have been the results across different areas of assistance, protection and solutions as achieved by the UNHCR country operation and what contextual and operational factors and decisions have contributed to or impeded these results?

Sub-question	OECD criteria	Indicators	Sources of information
EQ1. To what extent has UNHCR achieved clear protection results?	Relevance, Effectiveness,	% key results against targets and against caseloads:	KIIs; FGDs with POC;
EQ1a. To what extent has UNHCR achieved intended results and objectives in successive COPs (2016–2019) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for resettlement realized; • Improvement of access to quality status determination procedures for POC; • Improvement of access to legal assistance and legal remedies for POC; • Strengthened and expanded community mobilization; • Strengthened civil registration and civil status documentation for POC; • Improvement of identification of statelessness; • Improvement of public attitude towards POC; • Reduction of risk related to detention and restrictions on freedom of movement for POC. 	Coverage	Indicators from COPs; Indicators from project documentation; Evidence of AGD being implemented and results monitored against AGD targets.	Programme documentation – proposals, strategies, evaluations, reviews; Programme monitoring data reports; Country strategy documents – COPs; Country reports – monthly and annual results reporting; Country and regional frameworks – 3RP and ERP.
EQ1b. To what extent has UNHCR contributed to movement towards an effective and comprehensive national asylum framework?			

EQ1c. To what extent has UNHCR achieved effective registration, RSD and resettlement including through:

- Merged registration and RSD processes;
- Management of results against a highly diversified caseload;
- Integration of age, gender and diversity (AGD) considerations within protection processes.

<p>EQ2. In what ways and to what extent has UNHCR contributed to meeting basic needs of all asylum seekers and refugees (including women, men, boys and girls and all marginalized groups) through programming including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of refugees in public services; • Improvement of health status of POC; • Improvement of self-reliance and livelihoods of POC; • Achievement of optimal access to education for POC; • Sufficient basic and domestic items for POC; • Use of cash as a modality to deliver results; • Vulnerability targeting and scoring; • Ensuring cohesion across sectors; • Data management; • CwC and community engagement mechanisms. 	<p>Relevance, Effectiveness, Coverage</p>	<p>% key results against targets and against caseloads: Indicators from COPs; Indicators from project documentation; Data evidencing access to basic services for refugees and asylum-seekers; Evidence of AGD being implemented and results monitored against AGD targets.</p>	<p>KIIs; FGDs with POC; Programme documentation – proposals, strategies, evaluations, reviews; Programme monitoring data reports; Country strategy documents – COPs; Country reports – monthly and annual results reporting; Country and regional frameworks – 3RP and ERP.</p>
<p>EQ3. To what extent has UNHCR achieved effective leadership and coordination for refugees and asylum seekers (ensuring inclusion of women, men, boys and girls and all marginalized groups) through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IAWG, ISWG and SWGs coordination model; 	<p>Effectiveness, Coverage, Coordination</p>	<p>At SWG level: Results at sector level against targets and overall population caseload data;</p>	<p>KIIs; Coordination documentation – TOR for SWGs, ISWG, IAWG, meeting minutes, strategies, objectives, targets,</p>

- The MMWG within the development/UNPDF;
- Engagement with LAS.

At ISWG level: Evidence of ISWG providing solutions for technical issues arising from SWGs;
 At IAWG level: evidence of IAWG providing strategic solutions to common challenges;
 At MMWG level: Evidence of strategic solutions for mixed migration issues;
 Across all: Evidence of AGD being implemented and results monitored against AGD targets.

monitoring reports and dashboards;
 Country and regional frameworks – 3RP and ERP.

AOI 2: Assessing strategic coherence: How strategically has UNHCR been positioned within the country context, and how well aligned is the programme with the changing/evolving needs of POC? To what extent do the strategy and country operation plan have coherence and/or alignment with the work of other actors?

Sub-question	OECD criteria	Indicators	Sources of information
EQ4. To what extent has UNHCR adapted its role under the 1954 MOU to the changing national political and socio-economic context of Egypt including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic reforms and socioeconomic situation of Egyptian nationals; • Lack of national asylum legislative frameworks; • Low capacity of national institutions. 	Relevance, Coherence	Evidence of contextualization of UNHCR global policies to the Egypt context.	KIIs; FGDs with POC; Programme documentation – proposals, strategies, evaluations, reviews; Programme monitoring data reports; Country strategy documents – COPs; Country reports – monthly and annual results reporting.

<p>EQ5. To what extent has UNHCR adapted its refugee response to the specific factors defining the asylum and refugee context in Egypt including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The specific non-camp (urban) context of Egypt where all registered refugees live within communities in Greater Cairo, Alexandria and Damietta; • The dual protection space with 252,000 registered refugees and an estimated further 5 million foreigners potentially living in refugee-like situations; • The dual response frameworks of the 3RP and the ERP providing different objectives and funding levels for Syrian refugees compared with non-Syrian POC. 	<p>Relevance, Coherence</p>	<p>Evidence of contextualization of UNHCR global policies to an urban environment; Comparison of support provided to Syrian refugee populations with non-Syrian refugee populations and evidence of mitigation measures to equalize this.</p>	<p>KIIs; FGDs with POC; Programme documentation – proposals, strategies, evaluations, reviews; Programme monitoring data reports; Country strategy documents – COPs; Country reports – monthly and annual results reporting; Country and regional frameworks – 3RP and ERP.</p>
<p>EQ6. To what extent has UNHCR successfully adapted operations to the COVID-19 pandemic while retaining quality services to populations of concern, in light of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egyptian national/localized regulations and requirements; • UNHCR/UN guidelines; • Basic humanitarian standards and principles of do no harm. 	<p>Relevance, Effectiveness, Coherence</p>	<p>Plans for COVID-19 adaptation, aligned with GOE guidelines and restrictions; UNHCR and broader UN guidance; and humanitarian standards; Evidence of continual learning and adaptation of COVID-19 response Evidence that POC are still receiving protection and basic service Assistance.</p>	<p>KIIs; FGDs; UNHCR emergency planning documentation</p>

AOI 3: Translating learning into action: How can UNHCR build on results achieved to date and further leverage its strategic position and influence within the country, to optimize the potential impact of collective efforts towards protection and solutions for UNHCR POC, and the communities that host them?

Sub-question	OECD criteria	Indicators	Sources of information
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EQ7. What are the future opportunities (and risks) for strengthening the protection environment of refugees and asylum seekers through:

- Enhanced national legislative frameworks;
- Moving towards a realistic “one refugee approach” (ensuring refugees in Egypt are treated equally based on status and not nationality – Syrian or non-Syrian – as per the stated aims of UNHCR and GOE)?

Effectiveness,
Coverage,
Connectedness,

Evidence of support to developing a country and regionally appropriate national legislative framework;
Use of lessons learnt documentation and needs assessment;
Use of participatory approaches with all partners and stakeholders in Egypt.

KIIs;
FGDs with POC;
Country strategy documents – COPs;
Country and regional frameworks – 3RP and ERP.

EQ8. What are the future opportunities (and risks) for UNHCR taking an increasingly catalytic approach and influencing the interventions of other actors through a more strategic use of its limited resources, including:

- Within the existing refugee response coordination structure;
- Across the development–humanitarian nexus, with engagement with development actors and integration of refugees into national systems and structures;
- Within the framework of the GCR;
- The risks and opportunities presented by COVID-19?

Effectiveness,
Coverage,
Connectedness

Use of lessons learnt documentation and needs assessment;
Use of participatory approaches with all partners and stakeholders in Egypt.

KIIs;
Country strategy documents – COPs;
Country reports – monthly and annual results reporting;
Country and regional frameworks – 3RP and ERP.

Annex II: Stakeholders interviewed

Name	Position	Organisation
Sandra Azmy	Women's Rights Program Director	Care International
Silvia Doss	Project Manager	Care International
Soheir Fawzy	Programme Director	Caritas
Art Kirby	Country Representative	CRS
Tala Maruf	Country Representative	Egyptian Red Cross
H.E. George Stillfried	Ambassador	Embassy of Austria
Sara Gottfredsen	Deputy Head of Mission	Embassy of Denmark
Anika Jafar	Refugees Department, Regional Coordinator for North Africa on refugee and migration issues	Embassy of Germany
Eugenia Boutylkova		Embassy of Netherlands
Rita Abboud	Head of Migration and Protection	Embassy of Switzerland
Edward Barney	Head of Inclusive Growth	Embassy of the United Kingdom
Yasmin Ragab	Programme Manager, Migration	Embassy of the United Kingdom
Graziella Rizza	Head of Governance Section	EU
Rasha MATI	Head of Agency	Fard Foundation
Amir Obied	Country Program Manager	ILO
Laurent De Boeck	Country Representative	IOM
Dina Douay	Women, Family and Childhood Directorate, Minister Plenipotentiary	League of Arab States
Amr El Sherbini	Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Refugees, Migration, and Anti Human Trafficking	MoFA
Nancy Baron	Head of Agency	PSTIC
Tamer Kirolos	Country Representative	Save the Children
Chris Eades	Head of Agency	StARS
Germaine Haddad	Assistant Country Representative	UNFPA
Maha Abdel Wanis	RH Specialist	UNFPA
Nourhand Abdelaziz	Programme Assistant	UNFPA
Sally Zohney	GBV Specialist	UNFPA
Aliaa Rashwan	Assistant CBI Officer	UNHCR
Alma Dozic	Head of Unit, CBI	UNHCR
Dejan Kladarin	Head of Unit, Protection	UNHCR
Heba Salem	Community-Based Protection Officer	UNHCR
Hervé de Villeroché	Special Adviser on Development to the High Commissioner	UNHCR
Jessica Anderson	Protection Officer	UNHCR
John Solecki	Assistant Representative	UNHCR
Karim Atassi	Country Representative	UNHCR
Masaki Miyoshi	Protection Officer	UNHCR
Mohamed Shawki	Head of Education	UNHCR
Nermeen Abdelaziz	Head of Unit, Livelihoods	UNHCR
Rasha El Shehawy	Associate Protection Officer	UNHCR
Yasmin Taufik	Assistant Programme Officer	UNHCR
Zinia Sultana	Head of Health	UNHCR
Richard Dictus	UNRC	United Nations
Minta Brodzinski	Refugees Programme Officer	US Embassy
Tabari Dossett	Regional Refugee Coordinator	US Embassy
Sherifa Said	Programme Manager	WFP
Omar Abouelata	Surveillance Preparedness and Response Officer	WHO

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