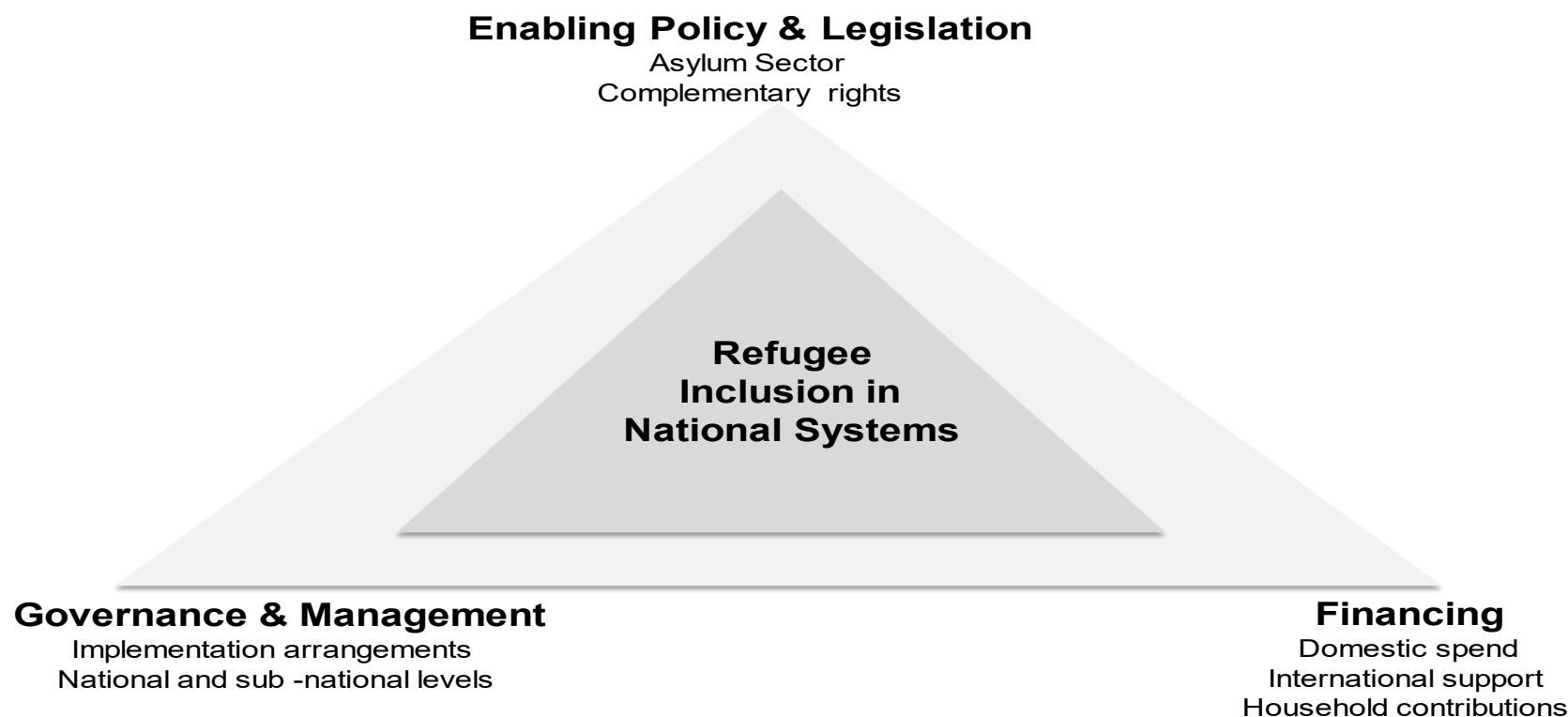


UNHCR Technical Note on Refugee Inclusion in National Systems



This figure emphasises the intersection between three workstreams: 1) law and policy, 2) governance and management, and 3) financing in achieving effective and sustainable refugee inclusion in national systems. UNHCR's work on refugee inclusion cannot be linear and must recognise that some country contexts are more advanced in relation to some workstreams than others. This will result in different timelines to achieving sustainability and require targeted and prioritised technical and financial investments that show proof of concept and underpin organisational change, in turn strengthening continued advocacy efforts. Recognition of their interdependence and proactive and systematic action across each workstream is needed to achieve sustainability. Grounded in the *2024 Evaluation of Progress against the Djibouti Declaration in IGAD Member States*, the figure emphasises UNHCR's role in supporting governments to deliver public services to refugees on par with nationals.

Law and policy refer to the commitments made by governments in relation to refugee rights in a particular country, and how governments address these rights with respect to refugees' recognition, protection, and management, including access to basic service delivery (education, health, and social protection). These are driven by governments but may involve other stakeholders including, international agencies and the private sector. Regional policies may also be in place that can be leveraged to achieve sustainable refugee inclusion in national systems.

Possible interventions may include:

- Advocacy and influencing encompassing actions by UNHCR Senior Management and technical staff members across all levels of government towards an enabling legal and policy environment and explicit inclusion of refugees in national plans and budgets.
- Provision of legal aid and public awareness activities in support of the dissemination of laws and policies across the levels of government and to refugee communities.
- Support for the development of accountability mechanisms monitoring the implementation of laws and policies in protection of refugee rights.
- Advocacy and partnerships work to leverage regional commitments, for example, the East African Community (EAC) and International Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), donors and other stakeholders.

Governance refers to public oversight and leadership. Planning begins at the national or system level, where policy or system goals are defined. These are then translated into viable programmes that can be implemented by sub-national authorities and service providers (including both state and non-state actors). **Management** refers to the process through which these programmes are implemented as defined by the specific policies and procedures of the government authority at the national or sub-national levels. The degree to which the system goals are achieved is influenced by the incentives, performance information, and accountability mechanisms at each level of the service delivery mechanism (e.g., the education system). While refugees may not need to be explicitly referenced in governance and management processes, these processes must facilitate service delivery in refugee settings. For example, in urban contexts, this may require only that refugees are registered in the national identification systems, whereas in camp settings where parallel services are being delivered by a non-state actor, this may require temporary structures or mechanisms to be put in place as a bridge that support the overall transition to government-led systems over time.

Possible interventions may include:

- Establishment of transitional implementation arrangements, including coordination and accountability structures for delivery and financing.

- Provision of accurate and up-to-date data and information on refugee populations and their needs, and during the transition period, according to the specific sector under review. For example, enrolment and completion data for refugee children enrolled in parallel schools.
- Awareness raising or capacity development of national and sub-national authorities and service providers on the unique needs of refugee populations in accessing national services. For example, in education this may include challenges around identify and educational documentation.
- Support for the development of new or transitional mechanisms that respond to the specific needs of refugees to access public services. For example, development or adaptation of national guidelines, configuration of data and/ or recruitment platforms, etc.
- Alignment of parallel service delivery with national regulations and standards. For example, infrastructure, human resources (qualifications and numbers) and procurement processes in preparation for transition of governance and management structures to national or sub-national authorities.
- Transitional support for sub-national authorities to expand and extend their governance and management responsibilities to include refugee schools or health centres, for example. This may include additional equipment and supplies, training of new personnel.
- Support community level governance and management structures by providing training on public and financial management and accountability, national policy and regulations.

Financing is required for public service delivery to be sustained. In LICs and MICs, this is often provided through a combination of domestic and development financing, as well as contribution from households. The Global Compact on Refugees underlines the importance of international responsibility sharing. The source, and consistency of funds, how these funds are channeled, and managed by the service provider is integral to achieving sustainable refugee inclusion in national systems. To achieve refugee inclusion, it is anticipated that, as with governance and management, financing arrangements will evolve over time as national systems are strengthened to expand, and policy and practice supports refugee households to meet their own needs, and to contribute more substantively to the host country economy.

Possible areas of intervention for UNHCR:

- Advocacy and technical support for the inclusion of refugees in national sector plans on par with nationals, and their registration in national identification systems. This is a critical step towards refugee inclusion in the allocation and execution of national budgets.
- Leverage coordination mandate to align humanitarian and development financing for refugee services against national sector plans (or costed sector plans for refugee inclusion).

- Support the establishment of transitional financing mechanisms considering on- and off- budget approaches, in support of a) confidence of responsibility sharing, and b) internal and external accountability (donor confidence).
- Broker long-term financing that explicitly supports refugee inclusion in national education systems from international financial institutions.
- Advocacy and partnerships work to secure refugee livelihoods across the formal and informal sectors, facilitating their self-reliance on the one hand, and ability to contribute to the country of asylum's tax base on the other.