



**CREATING DIGITAL TOOLKITS TAILORED  
TO REGIONAL CONTEXTS TO PROMOTE  
THE MOBILIZATION AND ENGAGEMENT  
OF COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY  
FORCED DISPLACEMENT**

**A Promising Practice  
in Community Engagement  
in West and Central Africa**



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**Cover photograph:** Chad. Refugee students teaching COVID-19 awareness in urban communities.

**Photo credit:** © UNHCR/ Simplicie Kpandji

**Title:** Three digital toolkits tailored to regional contexts.

**Programme objective:** To foster communication with and within communities as part of the regional C4C (Connectivity for Communication with Communities, Community Engagement and Consultative Processes) initiative.

**Dates:** October 2020 to March 2021.

**Population groups:** Refugees, displaced people, asylum-seekers, stateless people, migrants and host communities.

**Partners:** Multiple (including United Nations agencies, international non-governmental organizations [NGOs], and volunteers from the region) and specific to each platform.

## PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa (WCA) has created three online platforms: the CoronaWestAfrica.info community engagement tools platform,<sup>1</sup> the community mobilization and engagement platform,<sup>2</sup> and the gender-based violence (GBV) awareness and community engagement platform.<sup>3</sup> The platforms seek to foster communication with and within communities in the region, including forcibly displaced, migrant and host communities. These platforms are simple websites containing resources (video, audio and written) that are easy to use, interesting, and fully tailored to local contexts in both their form and content. UNHCR and its partners are already using these resources to better communicate with communities and strengthen their accountability to these communities.

## CONTEXT

Three considerations led to the creation of these three platforms.

**1. In the WCA region, there are several major challenges to accessing forcibly displaced and stateless persons to UNHCR:**

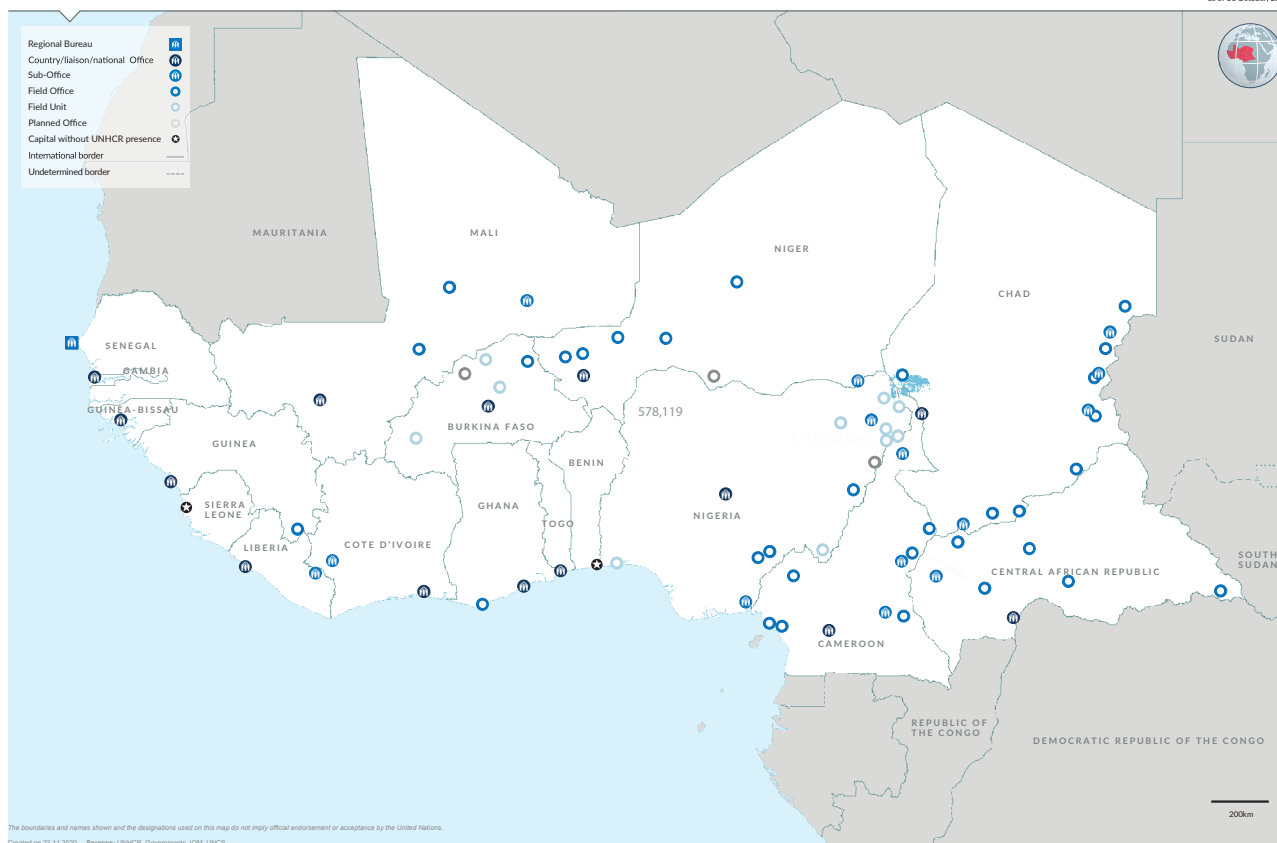
- armed conflicts and insecurity;
- lack of infrastructure;
- vast territories;
- mixed population movements (migration and forced displacement) via inaccessible routes;
- issues with the representativeness of community leaders and community outreach workers;
- restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://coronawestafrica.info/>.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.cwc.westafrica.exposed/>.

<sup>3</sup> See <https://gbv.westafrica.exposed/>.



2. UNHCR's Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) Policy<sup>4</sup> prioritizes accountability to populations affected by forced displacement. However, **it is not easy to communicate and discuss effectively with communities**. The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted:

- **The absence or inadequacy of communication contextualization and adaptation to target audiences**, and in particular to the profiles, representations, needs and aspirations of these audiences.
- **Information overload**. UNHCR has produced and disseminated a number of standard operating procedures, including COVID-19

manuals, notes and guidelines. Despite the undeniable usefulness of these documents, many people in WCA, both within UNHCR and among the affected populations, have been overwhelmed by their sheer number. This situation highlights the need to summarize this information and make it concrete and usable.

3. There is an **urgent need to diversify the communication tools of humanitarian and local actors and to improve their accessibility**. This was highlighted by a UNHCR study<sup>5</sup> on connectivity for forcibly displaced and stateless persons and their communication needs, which was conducted following the launch of the C4C initiative in July 2020.



## RESOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

UNHCR's Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa has **chosen different partnership modalities for each platform**.

Several agencies initiated and implemented the CoronaWestAfrica platform. UNHCR, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Doctors Without Borders led this project for the first six months, with support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The latter then took over, and has since been providing regular updates. At present, the platform belongs to the group for risk communication and community engagement (RCCE)<sup>6</sup> in the fight against Coronavirus in WCA, which brings together United Nations agencies and international NGOs. The initiative is also partnered with the European Union, which has funded the online promotion of the platform, as well as many artists, whose works are used on the platform.

In the same vein, UNHCR's Regional Bureau launched the platforms on GBV and on community mobilization and engagement in contexts of forced displacement, and then formed a group of other willing and relevant organizations and agencies.

These three platforms are now consulted and maintained by UNHCR, other agencies such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and national and international NGOs.

Under the C4C initiative, **the three online platforms are joining and evolving into a broader set of face-to-face and remote (digital and analogue) interventions**.

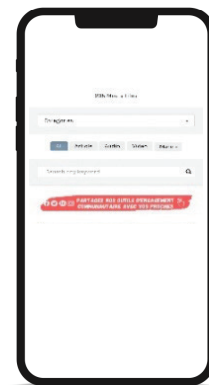
<sup>4</sup> See <https://www.unhcr.org/5aa13c0c7.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.unhcr.org/handbooks/aap/documents/WCA-Digital-Access-Communication-Needs-Report-eng.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> See <https://coronawestafrica.info/general/>.



*Nigeria. An organization led by Cameroonian refugees is making an important contribution to the fight against COVID-19 and protection from it. Christine Egbe, a Cameroonian refugee and GSI (Great Step Initiative) volunteer, trains other GSI volunteers on COVID-19 prevention measures in Adagom camp, Ogoja Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria.*



## PROCESSES AND ACTIVITIES

### 1 CORONAWESTAFRICA.INFO

The UNHCR Regional Bureau, the IOM and Doctors Without Borders, with support from UNICEF, have set up the **CoronaWestAfrica.info**<sup>7</sup> (COVID-19 West and Central Africa) platform. To make this digital library truly useful, they chose to make it a **free, simplified, and easy-to-use public website, offering a centralized and tailored selection of the best contextualized community engagement tools related to COVID-19.**

The platform offers written content in the form of articles, and it also puts a lot of **emphasis on audio and video resources, as well as images and visuals. All the content comes from community initiatives** in countries in the region.

It is available in French<sup>8</sup> and English,<sup>9</sup> as well as eight other local languages. Its key sections are:

- an **overview** of the organizations and individuals associated with the site<sup>10</sup> and with RCCE;<sup>11</sup>
- **country-specific resources** for 24 WCA countries (see, for example, the resources for the Democratic Republic of the Congo<sup>12</sup>), as well as useful resources for all countries;<sup>13</sup>
- **resources by language**,<sup>14</sup> with a total of 10 languages available. The site also features **a variety of age, gender and diversity community engagement tools**, including resources in local sign languages and tools for children;
- a **free online course on RCCE**, in French<sup>15</sup> and English.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See <https://coronawestafrika.info/general/>.

<sup>8</sup> See <https://coronawestafrika.info/general/>.

<sup>9</sup> See <https://coronawestafrika.info/category/language/english/>.

<sup>10</sup> See <https://coronawestafrika.info/general/>.

<sup>11</sup> See <https://coronawestafrika.info/engagement-communautaire/>.

<sup>12</sup> See <https://coronawestafrika.info/category/countries/drc/>.

<sup>13</sup> See <https://coronawestafrika.info/category/countries/>.

<sup>14</sup> See <https://coronawestafrika.info/category/language/>.

<sup>15</sup> See <https://coronawestafrika.info/cours-introductif-sur-la-communication-des-risques-et-lengagement-communautaire/>.

<sup>16</sup> See <https://coronawestafrika.info/we-offer-you-this-free-online-course-on-risk-communications-and-community-engagement/>.

The platform also lets users search for content related to the major themes of RCCE, such as inclusion, rumours and false information, or even music. To improve community outreach, it targets two types of audiences: NGO and United Nations professionals in WCA, and local association members and community mobilizers.

**The process of creating and promoting the platform was quick, inexpensive, and used simple technologies.** The idea was born in March 2020, when the regional RCCE working group was formed. At the time, there was an urgent and crucial need to regularly communicate to the general public what was known about COVID-19, what was not known, and what was being done. From a few initial ideas shared in the group, a subgroup of three or four people with a total budget of just US\$ 2,000 managed to create this simple, easy-to-use, and very visual and arts-oriented site.

The platform went live one month later, in April 2020. It was promoted in three ways: through a social media campaign by a local start-up in August 2020; in a weekly newsletter by the UNICEF-led RCCE Working Group; and through Facebook promotion of art and cultural events related to the platform, such as UNHCR's first digital exhibition<sup>17</sup> of refugee-created art.

Regarding the technical aspects, UNHCR teams developed the site on WordPress and on a private server, with a domain name simply purchased from Google by a member of the IOM IT team. Crucially, the site has intuitive search functions that allow users to find the tool best suited to their context and to use it straight away.

**Generating and updating content was also simple.** The original team reviewed 5,000 tools, and selected 350 to put online. They then updated the content twice a week, searching for relevant resources and reviewing proposals submitted by partners.

However, **the most significant investment was the time spent by the people involved.** The entire project (website, social media campaign, newsletter and online training) was completed internally. The UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF and Doctors Without Borders staff involved invested a great deal of their time, effort and creativity in bringing it to fruition, particularly during lockdown in the early months of the crisis. Subsequently, in August 2020, after the peak of the COVID-19 crisis, three RCCE specialists joined the team full-time. They have been helping maintain and improve the platform ever since.

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<sup>17</sup> See <https://www.artsteps.com/view/5f59e3ab58d20f2627a01b9a>.



## 2

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PLATFORM

UNHCR's Regional Bureau for WCA has set up a community awareness, mobilization and training platform on **GBV<sup>18</sup> in West Africa**. It is used throughout the year, in particular during the annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign. It is available in French and English.

Its key sections are:

- Testimonies,<sup>19</sup> both written<sup>20</sup> and on video,<sup>21</sup> from survivors of gender-based violence under UNHCR's mandate in 11 WCA countries.

- Articles and videos from female and male activists<sup>22</sup> tackling GBV in eight WCA countries and elsewhere in the world, and a link to the annual global campaign<sup>23</sup> 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.
- Tools<sup>24</sup>, in the form of a library of awareness-raising and community engagement resources on GBV in WCA. This offers not only a selection of the most relevant standards and tools from international humanitarian aid agencies, but also tools on GBV and COVID-19, and videos and resources for the annual 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence global campaign, among others.

<sup>18</sup> See <https://gbv.westafrica.exposed/>.

<sup>19</sup> See <https://gbv.westafrica.exposed/en/testimonies/>.

<sup>20</sup> See <https://gbv.westafrica.exposed/en/testimonies/#testiecrit>.

<sup>21</sup> See <https://gbv.westafrica.exposed/en/testimonies/#testivideos>.

<sup>22</sup> See <https://gbv.westafrica.exposed/en/activists/>.

<sup>23</sup> See <https://gbv.westafrica.exposed/en/activists/#milicent>.

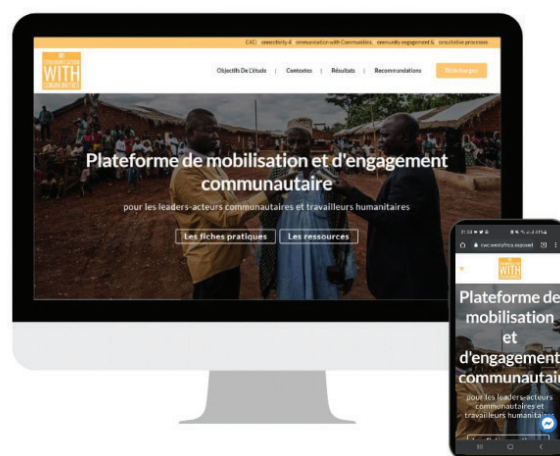
<sup>24</sup> See <https://gbv.westafrica.exposed/en/tools/>.



# La plateforme [cwc.westafrica.exposed](https://www.cwc.westafrica.exposed)

## Objectifs

- Soutenir les relais/mobilisateurs communautaires et travailleurs humanitaires dans leurs activités de protection ;
- Outiller les acteurs qui s'engagent pour le bien-être des communautés affectées.



## 3

## COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

The Regional Bureau has set up the **community mobilization and engagement platform**<sup>25</sup> for community outreach and humanitarian workers working with people in situations of forced displacement.

The platform, which is a digital library, has two main goals:

- **Support protection and community engagement activities** carried out by community outreach workers, community mobilizers and humanitarian workers, by facilitating two-way communication strategies between these actors and communities;
- **Equip the actors** engaged in the well-being of the affected communities with practical sheets, tutorials, tools and useful advice on communicating with these communities and encouraging their cooperation.

Its key sections are:

- Practical sheets<sup>26</sup> to help the target stakeholders in their daily work (tutorials, advice, working methods, posters, visual aids and videos), for example organizing an activity.

- Resources<sup>27</sup> to facilitate two-way communication and inclusive engagement with affected populations (notes, guides, recommendations, reports on accountability to affected populations, community-based protection, diversity and inclusion, etc.). These documents address:

- ➔ accountability (especially accountability to affected people, AAP), communication with communities and feedback;
- ➔ community participation, mobilization and protection;
- ➔ age, gender and diversity;
- ➔ COVID-19.

- Multimedia content<sup>28</sup> to inform, educate, and foster active and inclusive community discussions and engagement. This section is full of diverse, high-impact, easy-to-use content: videos and cartoons, illustrations and books, kits, digital applications, podcasts and role-playing games.

<sup>25</sup> See <https://www.cwc.westafrica.exposed/>.

<sup>26</sup> See <https://www.cwc.westafrica.exposed/outils/>.

<sup>27</sup> See <https://www.cwc.westafrica.exposed/ressources-pratiques/>.

<sup>28</sup> See <https://www.cwc.westafrica.exposed/multimedia/>.

To make this platform truly useful, the Regional Bureau chose to make it a **simple, easy-to-use website offering community engagement tools that are:**

- **handpicked** – for their thematic and regional relevance, practicality, clarity, and conciseness;
- **contextualized** – tailored to the local area: translated into French, English and the most commonly spoken local languages of the region, available in audio formats, and with content focused on local situations, experiences and examples;
- **practical** – thanks to the selection of easy-to-use tools;

- **proven** – through the inclusion of protection studies and evaluations.

In connection with the GBV platform, UNHCR has produced a comprehensive and already tested **resource kit in French for a multimedia campaign on GBV<sup>29</sup> and child protection in schools**. This kit comprises content intended for a communication and community engagement campaign that is understandable and accessible to the greatest number of people possible. It was developed and launched in December 2020 jointly by the Regional Bureau and UNHCR operations in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger, notably by specialists from both these entities in community protection, GBV and education.

<sup>29</sup> See <https://www.cwc.westafrica.exposed/medias/campagne-de-communication-gbv/>.



*These illustrations come from UNHCR's work with Senegalese artist Seydina Issa Sow.*

## ACHIEVEMENTS AND RESULTS

All three platforms have **rapidly expanded their content while maintaining their contextualization**. By 1 October 2021, 337 tools or media files had been uploaded to CoronaWestAfrica. Fifty-seven per cent of the content is in English,<sup>30</sup> 29 per cent in French,<sup>31</sup> and 14 per cent in other locally spoken languages: Arabic,<sup>32</sup> Spanish,<sup>33</sup> Portuguese,<sup>34</sup> Bambara,<sup>35</sup> Fula,<sup>36</sup> Hausa<sup>37</sup> and Pidgin<sup>38</sup>. Qualitative feedback on all three platforms shows that displaced and stateless people to UNHCR **appreciate the simple visual identity and local adaptation** of the three platforms.

**Quantitative analytical indicators on online usage and user groups are very positive** for all three platforms.<sup>39</sup>

Between 1 April and 1 October 2021, the CoronaWestAfrica platform recorded over 30,000 unique visitors (31,161). The indicators also show real navigation on the site (on average three pages per visitor), **regular use** (10,660 regular users) and many return visits (with 63.94 per cent of users returning to the platform). In 74 per cent of cases visitors come directly to the site, as the name "CoronaWestAfrica.info" is easy to remember; 21 per cent come via a link from another site, 9 per cent come via social networks, and 5 per cent come from an online search engine.

In addition, the platform **is reaching its target audiences: Internet users of all genders, ages and backgrounds**. Sixty per cent of visits are from the WCA region. Fifty-nine per cent of visits are from women and girls, and 41 per cent from men and boys. The majority of visitors are under the age of 44.

The community engagement and mobilization platform was an immediate success. In the first month after it went live, its **practical sheets page received more than 1,300 visits, without being publicized**; this was higher than the number of visits to the UNHCR headquarters page. It had 2,476 unique users and 15,634 views in the first six months. Aided by a partnership with Google for better referencing of keywords from the WCA region, the site exceeded 30,000 unique visitors in six months (71 per cent of whom were from the region) by 15 December 2021. In addition, 39.9 per cent of users return to the platform, with nearly 3,000 regular users. The majority of visitors come from countries in the region (Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Cameroon, among others). Most users discover the site via Facebook or Google.

Feedback on the GBV platform shows that local actors have **already used some of the content for community mobilization, both remotely and in person**. For example, the audio recordings available on the site have been played on radio and television programmes and used in face-to-face community discussions. The platform had 3,300 unique users and 10,990 page views in the first six months. Twenty-two per cent of users return to the platform. The majority of visitors come from the United States, Senegal, Cameroon, Mali and Burkina Faso. They discover the site mainly through Facebook or organically via Google.

<sup>30</sup> See <https://coronawestafrica.info/category/language/english/>.

<sup>31</sup> See <https://coronawestafrica.info/category/language/french/>.

<sup>32</sup> See <https://coronawestafrica.info/category/language/arabic/>.

<sup>33</sup> See <https://coronawestafrica.info/category/language/spanish/>.

<sup>34</sup> See <https://coronawestafrica.info/category/language/portuguese/>.

<sup>35</sup> See <https://coronawestafrica.info/category/language/bambara/>.

<sup>36</sup> See <https://coronawestafrica.info/category/language/fula/>.

<sup>37</sup> See <https://coronawestafrica.info/category/language/hausa/>.

<sup>38</sup> See <https://coronawestafrica.info/category/language/pidgin/>.

<sup>39</sup> For the following indicators, unless otherwise specified, the figures are for the period between the respective launch of each platform and October 2021.



## LESSONS LEARNED



### FAVOURABLE FACTORS

- The success of these platforms is based on a combination of three qualities: **their usability, their pragmatism, and their alignment with UNHCR's core principles**, including those on age, gender and diversity.
  - **Creativity, speed, and bold (yet responsible) decision-making** are essential, both in setting up and implementing platforms and in designing and choosing materials, content and form. In some respects, it may be difficult to obtain all the necessary safeguards or information quickly. This should not stall the project. Instead, we should responsibly and scientifically test hypotheses and routes, choosing to move forward gradually while listening and making adjustments along the way.
  - We need to **constantly work with communities, not just for them**: listening is crucial.
- The involvement of **small community organizations and local voices and talents** must be the starting point for the platforms, and then become their focus. The initiators of the platforms must build strong, multifaceted partnerships with these actors.
- **Creating simple, concise and interesting content requires hard work simplifying and producing or selecting content (especially visual and artistic)** to ensure its relevance, attractiveness and usefulness to actors in the field. This requires time and expertise.
  - It is **not necessary** for generalists leading platform projects **to become specialists** in information and communication technology. They just need to get to know the basics, and then learn via self-teaching and with instructors.



*These illustrations come from UNHCR's work with Senegalese artist Seydina Issa Sow.*





*Nigeria. A Cameroonian refugee organization protects the community from COVID-19. Rene Fombelle (centre), a 32-year-old refugee from Cameroon, stands with other Great Step Initiative volunteers outside a building in Adagom refugee camp in Ogoja Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria.*

- **The use of pilot projects and project monitoring** allows ideas and elements to be tested before being calibrated.
- For collaborations with other international agencies, pragmatic and principled partnerships are the key to success. **The various partners have thus established genuine collaborations based on the values of equality, trust, synergy, reciprocity, transparency, attention to results, and humility.** This was reflected in the decision not to feature organizational logos prominently on the platforms, either by not displaying any logos or by discreetly including them at the bottom of the page. This positive climate stands out in a context too often divided by competing agencies.
- **Digital is only one route (albeit certainly useful when well designed); it does not replace face-to-face contact and does not solve everything.** A follow-up study on CoronaWestAfrica, for example, showed that the combination of digital and analogue played a key role in the positive feedback (92 per cent of responses) on messages about COVID-19. In order to have a positive impact, digital technology must therefore be part of a framework that:
  - offers multimedia content over multiple years;
  - ensures state ownership;
  - makes necessary linguistic and cultural adaptations (e.g. in the visuals, as well as in the choice of objects or people with whom audiences are expected to be able to identify).



## LIMITING FACTORS

- **A truly cross-sectoral and cross-functional process that puts affected populations in the driver's seat inevitably poses many challenges.** Success requires time, a detailed analysis of the context, expertise, participants taking a step away from their own organization, and humility. These challenges do not mean that these approaches should be abandoned, but they must be anticipated and addressed through multifunctional, multidisciplinary arrangements and strong partnerships.
- **For effective monitoring and evaluation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of digital tools is attractive, but has limitations.** Some activities are unavoidable (including interviews with key people, meetings and household surveys). Such activities using digital tools still require protective equipment and physical distancing measures. Moreover, these tools are not a cure-all in contexts of insecurity or volatility. For example, in conflict zones, improving the connectivity of sites for forcibly displaced people can make them a target for enemies seeking modern technologies, and thus pose risks to the people involved.
- There is a need for **more knowledge and data disaggregated by age, gender and diversity to be generated on forcibly displaced people's access to mobile and digital technologies, their usage and the obstacles they encounter.**

The objectives are as follows:

- ➔ Consider inequalities in terms of age, gender and diversity, and prevent the digital route of humanitarian assistance from reinforcing these inequalities.
- ➔ Maximize benefits and seize opportunities, including not underestimating informal and indirect dissemination of information. For example, even though only a small minority of people in WCA own a smartphone, they share information, music and other content with each other and with those around them.
- ➔ In fact, for digital to be effective in digital humanitarian aid schemes, the digital ecosystem (services and infrastructure) involved must have reached a certain maturity. This involves:
  - wide distribution of identity documents that comply with national criteria for registering for a SIM card and to access mobile financial services;
  - robust technological networks to ensure connectivity;
  - high levels of literacy and digital literacy.



*Mali. Solar radios allow education to continue despite COVID-19 restrictions. A young Malian girl displaced to the Sarema school listens to lessons on her solar-powered radio, donated by UNHCR to support distance-learning.*



# ADVICE FOR REPLICATING OR EXPANDING PRACTICES



## ADVICE ON GENERAL DESIGN

- Communication issues **must be understood not only as communication issues, but also as protection issues**. This includes issues of language, literacy, access to media and mobile technologies, and barriers to digital access.
- All aspects of the platforms **must be considered and adapted with regard to:**
  - ➔ **different environments** (e.g. urban, hard-to-reach or remote environments);
  - ➔ **rights and access issues;**
  - ➔ **security risks.**
- All digital communication must happen **in conjunction with analogue communication channels and with protection efforts**.
- Platforms must adapt to the context to **meet the needs of specific age, gender and diversity groups**.
- To **communicate effectively with communities**, the following principles should be combined:
- **Use clear, simple language and adopt multiple communication channels** (including social networks) to reach different groups.
- ➔ **Present messages in a responsive, empathetic, transparent and consistent manner, in local languages, through communication channels that are already trusted by the population**, by reaching out to key community networks and influencers and by building the capacity of local entities. This is essential to instil confidence and establish a degree of authority.
- ➔ **Integrate mental health and psychosocial support**, based primarily on local arts, customs and beliefs. In practice, recognize and normalize feelings of confusion, anxiety and stress during exchanges, whether with displaced and stateless people to UNHCR or with colleagues, partner teams and other stakeholders.
- ➔ **Conduct activities using participatory approaches that have been shaped by community feedback and optimized to detect and respond to concerns, rumours and misinformation.**



Niger. Nigerian hip-hop artist Danny Lee mobilizes the COVID-19 prevention campaign. The Raised Fists collective records a video for the song *Protect Your Life*.



## ADVICE ON ORGANIZATION AND PROCESS

- **The communities served must be actively involved in the whole process**, as they know their environment and needs much better than international humanitarian actors.
- The implementation of contextualized platforms **should be regarded as a collective learning process for all stakeholders, both internal and external to UNHCR**. This type of initiative takes time, but is well worth it.
  - ➔ Stakeholders must be able to listen to each other, consider each other's expertise and listen to beneficiaries.
- ➔ In particular, there are significant differences in perspectives, codes, work cultures, language and social representations between those working on human rights, protection, and communication and technology.
- **Regional offices are well placed to act as intermediaries and "translators" between the field and headquarters**. Headquarters create content that is interesting but sometimes too long or in languages that are not locally relevant.



## ADVICE ON INTER-AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

- **When determining how to cooperate with other agencies, a principled pragmatic approach should be taken, with decisions made on a case-by-case basis**. Depending on the context, it should be decided whether UNHCR should first develop a platform on its own and then invite other partners to join, whether it should establish formal inter-agency collaboration from the outset, or whether it should adopt a hybrid approach of informal collaboration. This decision requires an analysis of the capacities and arrangements of other agencies on the matter and in the region concerned. As the WCA experience shows, it is possible and even essential to aim for effective implementation and to decide accordingly on the best ways for organizations to collaborate. Any collaboration must ensure:
  - ➔ **low costs**;
  - ➔ **simple and sustainable technologies** ("*low tech*" not "*high tech*") ;
  - ➔ **reasonably short time frames** (weeks or months, not years);
  - ➔ **multi-stakeholder processes that are open, inclusive, collaborative and interactive** (without necessarily needing to be formal inter-agency collaborations).
- When circumstances require, UNHCR must therefore **engage in initiatives with local protection actors by itself, without immediately establishing inter-agency partnerships**.
- On the other hand, UNHCR must **be willing to use the resources of other agencies when they are more relevant**.



## NEXT STEPS

The Regional Bureau is exploring **a number of partnership opportunities** to enable the three platforms, and the C4C initiative more broadly, to achieve the necessary scope and scale. One such avenue involves partnerships with telephone operators and digital service companies to facilitate UNHCR's access to displaced and stateless people through mobile applications including chatbots, texting, voice messaging, and connectivity. Other avenues include partnerships with volunteer translators' associations, community leaders, other United Nations agencies and the governments of the countries concerned.

The **baseline study** on connectivity, usage and communication needs among the different groups and categories of affected populations was extended to Burkina Faso in August 2021. The results of this study will be ready in March 2022.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

The three online platforms are as follows:

- ➊ CoronaWestAfrica.info – COVID-19 West and Central Africa – Community engagement tools: <https://coronawestafrica.info/>;
- ➋ community mobilization and engagement platform for community outreach and humanitarian workers working with people in situations of forced displacement: <https://www.cwc.westafrica.exposed/>;
- ➌ community engagement and awareness-raising platform on gender-based violence (GBV): <https://gbv.westafrica.exposed/>.

Study – *Digital access, communication needs and community practices. How digital inclusion can improve the protection of refugees, the internally displaced, and stateless people in West Africa:* <https://www.unhcr.org/handbooks/aap/documents/WCA-Digital-Access-Communication-Needs-Report-eng.pdf>

### **On promising practices more generally:**

For information on how and why to categorize an operational practice as a promising practice, an emerging practice or a case study, please refer to the two-page differentiation table<sup>40</sup> from the methodology and overview document<sup>41</sup> on gathering practices and case studies.

Please feel free to submit new case studies and practices through this online form.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Internal resource; see <https://bit.ly/3JAcfqW>.

<sup>41</sup> Internal resource; see <https://bit.ly/3v0nrj0>.

<sup>42</sup> Internal resource; see <https://bit.ly/33vR54h>.

**For more information, please contact:**

Division of International Protection  
Community-Based Protection Unit  
[hqts00@unhcr.org](mailto:hqts00@unhcr.org)

Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa

[SENRBCBP@unhcr.org](mailto:SENRBCBP@unhcr.org)  
[briard@unhcr.org](mailto:briard@unhcr.org)

