

DPSM

KEY INITIATIVES

DPSM is launching its DPSM Key Initiatives update aimed at sharing regular updates on interesting projects having resulted or will result in key tools, resources, approaches and products useful to UNHCR operations.



UNHCR Standardised Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) Guidelines for Refugee Populations

Nutritional outcomes continue to be of concern in most refugee contexts. UNHCR recommends the measurement of nutrition status, anaemia and other associated indicators to monitor the situation, react in a timely manner to nutritional problems, and complement existing assessments, monitoring or surveillance data.

The UNHCR SENS Guidelines are aimed at UNHCR health and nutrition coordinators and partners to standardise the way annual nutrition surveys are conducted in refugee populations.

To measure trends over time, surveys need to be replicable and the same definitions, geographic boundaries, and methodologies need to be used from year to year.

EXPANDED SCOPE & ADAPTED TO REFUGEE SETTINGS

UNHCR SENS is based on the internationally recognised SMART (Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions) methods for survey design and anthropometric assessments, and adapted to the specific requirements of refugee settings. The SENS Guidelines includes standardised methods for collecting, analysing and presenting household-based data on nutrition, health, food security and WASH, whilst maintaining quality standards for the measurement of nutrition indicators.

Refugee settings, especially in camps, differ from “normal” settings in a number of ways, including the provision of monthly food aid rations, free primary health care services, proximity to health

centres, proximity to water collection points, and free distribution of mosquito bed nets, however, limited livelihood opportunities as well as limited access to other food sources than the general food aid ration are the norm.

The SENS Guidelines are designed to cover most emergencies and all stable, protracted situations. The SENS Guidelines are currently most suitable in camp settings, and guidelines for urban settings will be developed in 2013.



A SENS REPORT INCLUDES INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING DATA:

- **Levels of malnutrition and key health indicators in children**
- **Levels of anaemia in children and women**
- **Feeding practices of infants and young children**
- **Access to food at the household level**
- **Access to safe drinking water, toilets and hygiene practices at the household level**
- **Access to and use of mosquito nets at the household level**

BUILDING A COMPREHENSIVE PICTURE

By combining SENS results with other assessments like Joint Assessment Missions with WFP or screening reports, monitoring and surveillance data from UNHCR Health Information System and WASH monitoring, and nutrition programme data, we end up with a broad description of that particular refugee context, which will enable us to improve outcomes.

The surveys are undertaken by UNHCR and non-governmental organisation partners in collaboration with the World Food Programme, UNICEF, the Ministry of Health and other organisations specialised in conducting nutrition surveys. Since its roll-out in 2011, regular high-level technical trainings have been occurring for survey coordinators.

ENSURING HIGH QUALITY AND CONSISTENCY

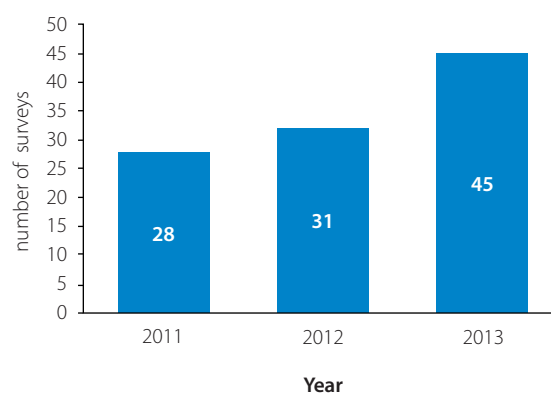
To improve data quality, facilitate data collection and data sharing, electronic data collection on the field (as opposed to paper-based) using mobile phones is being pursued to ease the process of data collection, data quality checks and data entry. UNHCR is integrating the use of mobile phones for data collection and entry as part of the SENS Guidelines.

The SENS Guidelines also include standardised questionnaires for each of these modules and standardised analysis guidance, standardised report formats, and a number of useful tools to undertake a survey. A major innovation is the development of standard analysis procedures.



The advantages of SENS are that it allows UNHCR and partners to describe the nutritional situation of refugees in a standardised way from year to year and across countries, with results being published in a timely manner with robust and consistent data quality. This allows UNHCR and partners to react swiftly to urgent problems and strategise for medium and long term nutrition issues.

Number of UNHCR SENS conducted (2011 and 2012) and planned (2013)



WHAT'S NEXT?

- **Establish SENS website May 2013**
- **Publish SENS Guidelines version 2**
- **Translate SENS Guidelines, questionnaire and tools into French**
- **Organise SENS training in French**
- **Translate SENS questionnaire to more languages**
- **Adapt SENS to urban setting**



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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