

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.



Use of Smart Phone in UNHCR Standardised Expanded Nutrition Surveys (Sens)

As part of UNHCR's initiative to improve the collection of nutritional data, we increasingly recommend using android smartphones to collect data in the field surveys. Collecting data on smartphones provides

numerous advantages over conventional paper-based systems, and experiences have shown that by using smartphones in the field the quality of nutrition survey data is improved.



UNHCR is continuously improving on the manner in which we undertake in nutrition in refugee contexts. The UNHCR Standardised Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) guidelines provide practical, step-by-step guidance for survey coordinators. The SENS contains six modules that measure indicators linked to nutritional well-being: Anthropometry and Health, Anaemia, Infant and Young Child Feeding, Food Security, Water Sanitation and Hygiene, and Mosquito Net Coverage.

NUMEROUS ADVANTAGES WITH MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

- User-friendly, handy and easy to use
- Collecting and digitising data at the source makes data entry more efficient and cleaner, and leads to improved data quality.
- Improved error control with pre-coded ranges and restrictions tailored to the survey's needs
- Easier and timely monitoring of teams' performance
- Easy integration with Excel
- The need for data entry is eliminated and data cleaning is limited
- Rapid turnaround of main anthropometric results
- Environmentally friendly
- No internet network required



HOW IT WORKS

The standardised SENS questionnaires are readily programmed and available for mobile phone data collection and can be reused in any setting. During data collection, the survey teams carry the smartphones with pre-coded questionnaires and record all responses directly on the phones.

At the end of the day, data from the phones is transferred through a secure network to a database, where data from multiple phones and days of data collection can be stored. There is no need for an active internet or mobile network connection to collect and save data. The data can easily be exported as an Excel readable format from the database, a format compatible with most data analysis software.

To use mobile technology for data collection in surveys, UNHCR has chosen standard mobile smartphones; however the smartphones need to run on Android platform to be compatible with the Open Data Kit (ODK) applications. ODK is a set of free, open-source applications for creating questionnaires and storing data.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- **Android mobile phones**
- **ODK applications**
- **Wireless router**
- **Computer**
- **Steady power supply**

CHALLENGES WITH MOBILE PHONE DATA COLLECTION

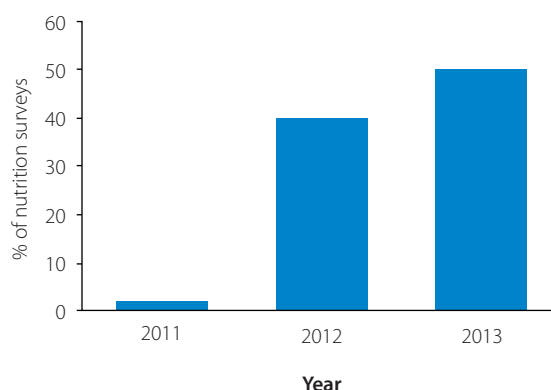
Introducing new data collection tools and technology also presents challenges. The survey coordinator and certain team members need to be familiar with mobile phones and related technologies. The survey coordinator needs specific training on the smartphones, server and ODK applications. Technical support can be provided to countries from UNHCR headquarters in collaboration with the technical partner CartONG. For survey coordinators unfamiliar with new technologies, handling the equipment, server and applications may add extra anxiety



to an already stressful survey setting. In this case, the survey teams should have technical support available in-country.

If an operation is planning to use mobile technology for data collection, they should contact UNHCR Headquarters or Regional Offices for support and guidance.

Proportion (%) of UNHCR nutrition surveys with mobile technology, conducted (2011-2012) and planned (2013)



Together with the UNHCR SENS guidelines, UNHCR recommends the use of smartphones for data collection due to more convenient data collection with improved error control, no need for data entry into computers and less data cleaning. This new technology has resulted in higher quality data being collected with less burden on enumerators at a lower cost than paper based surveys, as well as quicker dissemination of results.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- **Workshop for field staff on mobile technology in SENS data collection**
- **Scale up implementation to more countries and operations**
- **Evaluation of impact on quality and cost-efficiency**
- **Translation of questionnaires and tools into more languages**



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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