How to assist the forcibly displaced: vulnerability assessment, profiling and targeting

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Outline

- Introduction
- Facts and figures
- How does UNHCR work?
- Vulnerability
- Profiling
- Targeting
- Q & A

Introduction

UNHCR – Key organizational figures

- Present in over **130 countries**, with over **16,800 staff** – around **90%** based in the **field**
- Required budget for 2019: US$ 8.6 billion
- In 2018, of a required US$ 7.7 billion, only received US$ 4.2 billion – around 55% of needs
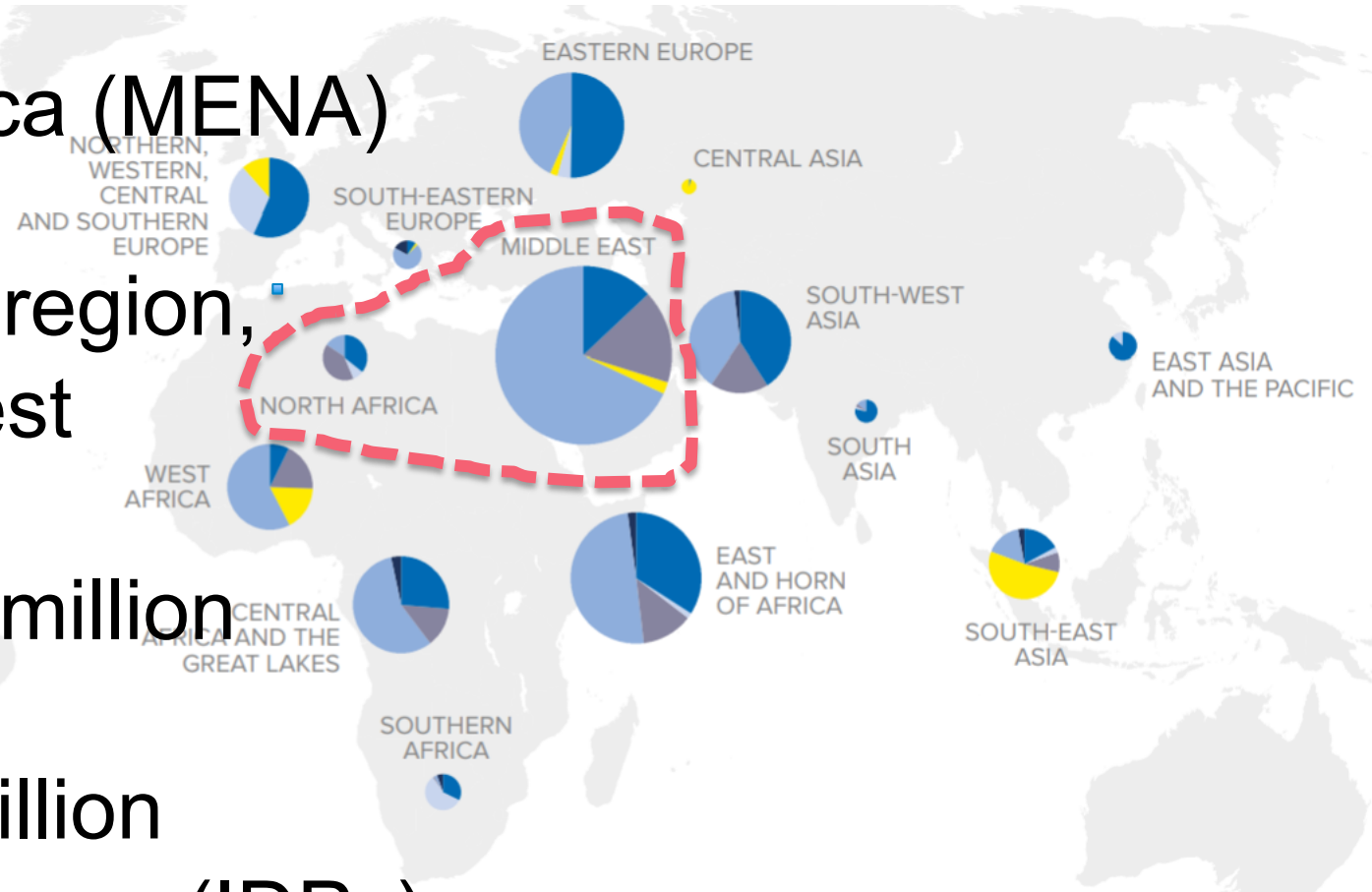
Who is of concern to UNHCR?

- refugees
- returnees
- stateless people
- internally displaced persons
- asylum-seekers.

MENA Bureau

- Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Bureau – Amman, Jordan
- Covers 19 countries in the region, including some of the largest displacement crises:
    - Syria situation: over 5.6 million persons of concern
    - Yemen situation: 3.65 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)
    - Iraq: over 570,000 IDPs

Syrian refugees in the region

- Syria currently produces more refugees than any other country
- The vast majority is in the Middle East

End August 2019: Over 5.6 million

Location name	Source	Data date		Population
Turkey	UNHCR, Government of Turkey	22 Aug 2019	64.8%	3,654,173
Lebanon	UNHCR	31 Jul 2019	16.4%	926,717
Jordan	UNHCR	4 Aug 2019	11.7%	660,330
Iraq	UNHCR	31 Jul 2019	4.1%	228,851
Egypt	UNHCR	31 Jul 2019	2.3%	130,371
Other (North Africa)	UNHCR	30 Nov 2018	0.6%	35,713

UNHCR
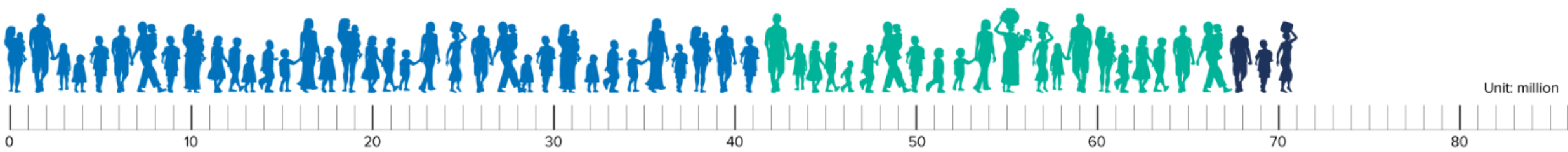The UN Refugee Agency

Facts and figures

Keeping track

- Every year, UNHCR tracks the number of people forced to flee
- These figures are published in the annual Global Trends and Global Appeals reports
  - how many people need help
  - how much help they need
  - how many staff we must deploy

Global trends for 2018

70.8 million forcibly displaced people worldwide

Unit: million

0   10   20   30   40   50   60   70   80

Internally Displaced People
41.3 million

Refugees
25.9 million

20.4 million under UNHCR's mandate
5.5 million Palestinian refugees under UNRWA's mandate

Asylum-seekers
3.5 million

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Global trends for 2018

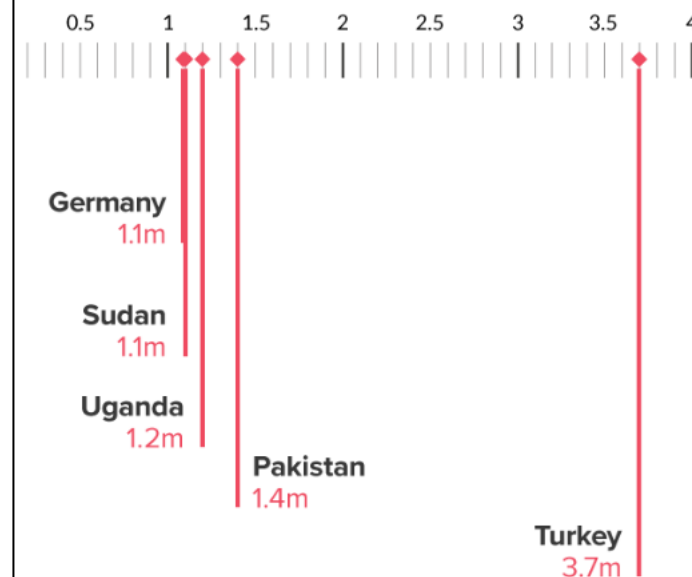## Where the world's displaced people are being hosted

80%

About 80 per cent of refugees live in countries neighbouring their countries of origin

57% of UNHCR refugees came from three countries

Syria	Afghanistan	South Sudan
6.7M	2.7M	2.3M

Top refugee-hosting countries

0.5 1 1.5 2 2.5 3 3.5 4

Germany 1.1m
Sudan 1.1m
Uganda 1.2m
Pakistan 1.4m
Turkey 3.7m

341,800 new asylum seekers

The greatest number of new asylum applications in 2018 was from Venezuelans

UNHCR has data on **3.9 million** stateless people but there are thought to be millions more
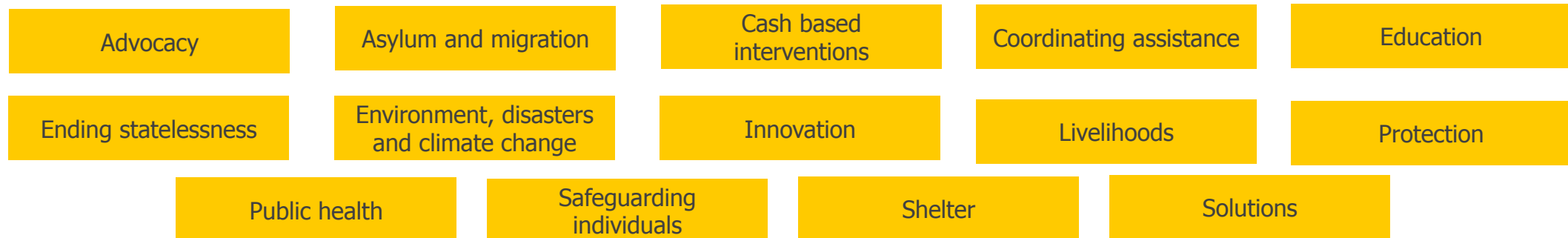
How does UNHCR work?

How is UNHCR funded?

- UNHCR relies almost entirely on voluntary contributions from governments
- UN and pooled funding mechanisms
- Also inter-governmental institutions (for example, EU), private sector and private donors

Contributions to UNHCR - 2019
(as at 30 September 2019, in United States dollars)

	Donor	Contributions
1	United States of America	1,668,082,053
2	European Union	478,034,742
3	Germany	198,656,892
4	Sweden	137,855,916
5	Japan	124,116,003
6	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	100,211,521
7	Denmark	86,502,448
8	Norway	71,564,251
9	Private donors in Spain	63,741,114
10	Canada	59,194,791

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What does UNHCR do?

- Provides assistance – either emergency, or longer term
- Promotes refugee protection and access to basic human rights
- When asked by the government, registers persons of concern and conducts Refugee Status Determination (RSD)
- Researches and advises on new laws and regulations affecting people of concern
- Coordinates major appeals and responses

Advocacy	Asylum and migration	Cash based interventions	Coordinating assistance	Education
Ending statelessness	Environment, disasters and climate change	Innovation	Livelihoods	Protection
	Public health	Safeguarding individuals	Shelter	Solutions

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Durable solutions

UNHCR tries to finding solutions that enable refugees to live their lives in dignity and peace:

- **voluntary repatriation**: in 2012, over 3,000 refugees in Angola registered with UNHCR for assistance to return to Namibia
- **resettlement:** less than 1% of refugees were resettled in 2018
- **integration:** in 2014, 162,000 Burundian refugees were granted citizenship in Tanzania

Cash assistance

- most refugees live in environments where they have access to markets and services in the same way that local communities do;
- cash enables them to fulfil their needs in a dignified manner and contributes to the local economy.

UNHCR and cash assistance

- UNHCR uses cash-based interventions (CBIs) to provide protection, assistance and services to the most vulnerable.
- 2016–2018: US$ 1.8 billion in cash to over 16 million people, in over 100 countries
- 95% is in the form of multi-purpose grants (MPGs)

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Multi-purpose cash grants

- MPGs are meant to cover refugees' basic needs such as rent and other expenses
- Reduce protection risks
- Allow refugees dignified choice of how to spend the money

Livelihoods

UNHCR activities:
- advocating for the right to work;
- training and building skills;
- helping people find a market for their skills and goods.

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Through safe work, people forced to flee can provide for their families' basic needs, maintain their dignity and contribute to society, which is what they want. They often enrich their communities with their experience and skills, while preparing for a better future.

Vulnerability

UNHCR's "specific needs"

UNHCR has over 100 codes to identify conditions and situations that can put a refugee at risk;

- medical conditions (including mental health);

- disabilities;

- conditions specific to children (early marriage, child labour, child exploitation) and to women;

- survivors of violence and torture, legal and physical protection needs (detention, undocumented, etc.).

Vulnerability as a concept

- There is no agreed upon definition of what it means to be vulnerable

- We often assume the most poor, or with the most serious specific needs, are the "most vulnerable"

- But there are different kinds of vulnerabilities, which can result from a combination of factors

- Which are not always visible

Who is a vulnerable refugee?

This family is unable to meet their basic needs

This family can meet their basic needs, but are not self-reliant enough to consistently meet these and additional needs

This person is self-reliant and can meet their own material needs, but needs support with their legal status

Vulnerability as a construct

- Vulnerability is multi-dimensional, not uni-dimensional
- If we think of it in terms of risks and capacities:

$$RISK = \frac{THREATS \times VULNERABILITIES}{CAPACITIES}$$

The more capacities refugees have to respond to threats and vulnerabilities, the more self-reliant they are (and vice-versa)

Vulnerability as a spectrum

Three main dimensions on the spectrum:
- Basic needs
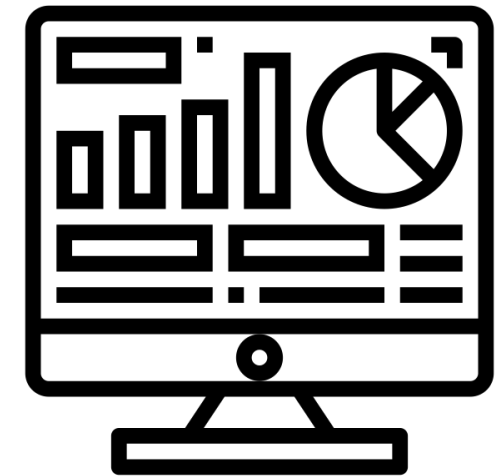- Coping Capacity and self-reliance
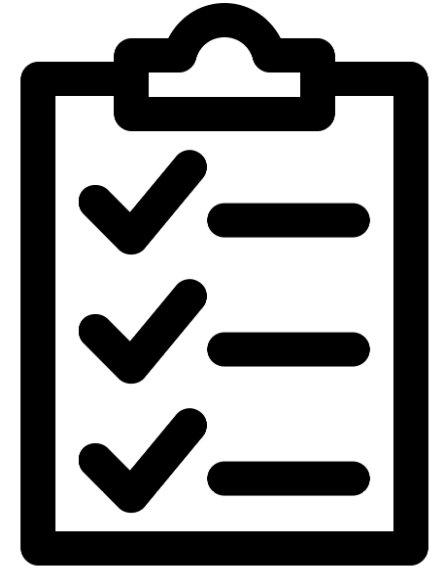- Well-being and community inclusion

Profiling

Current regional situation

- Different country operations have different approaches to measure "vulnerability" in order to prioritize and target assistance:

  - Proxy means targeting (using predicted expenditure)

  - Scorecard

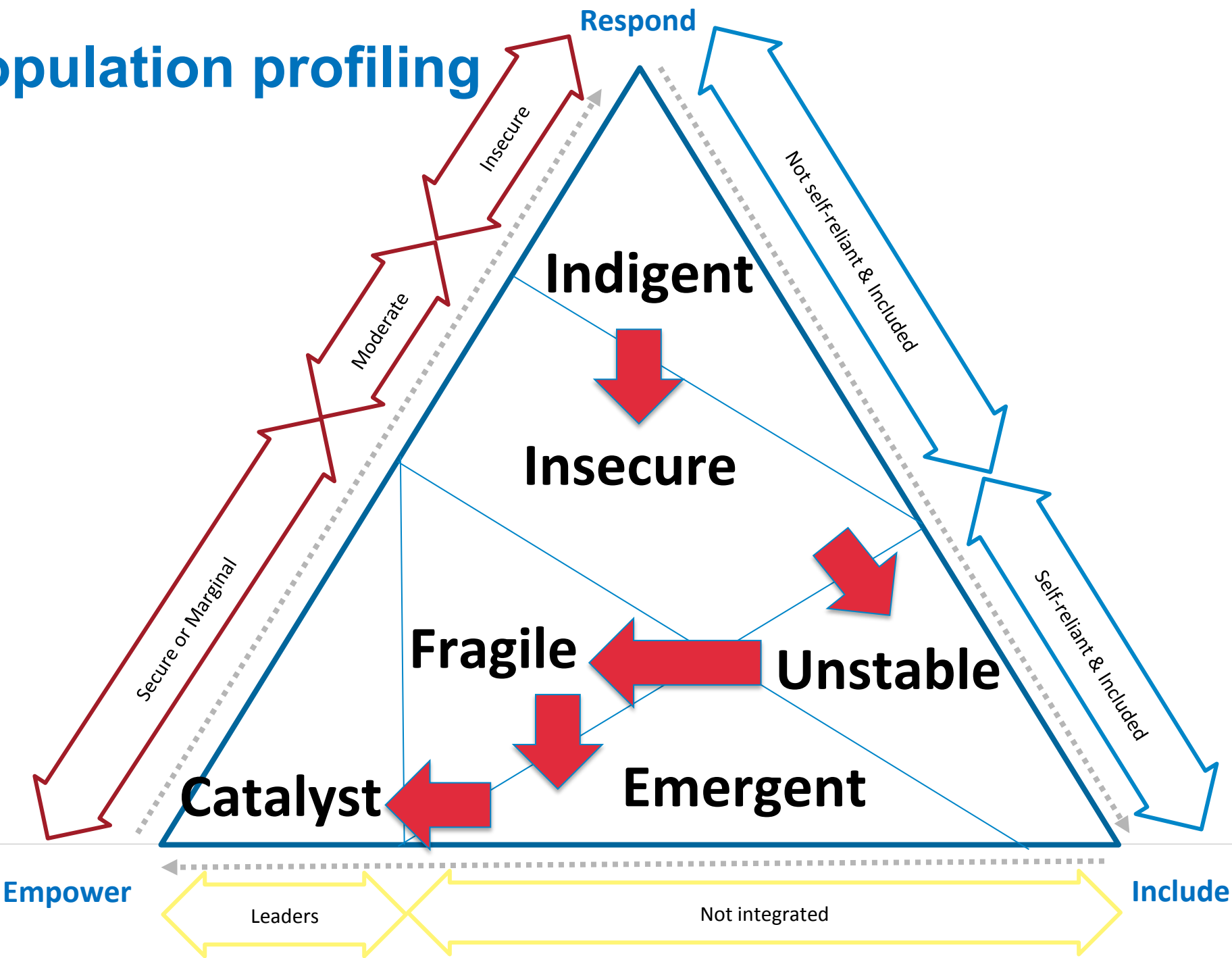 - Categorical (looking at specific needs)

How can we do better?…

Available data

- Registration database (proGres) contains biographical data (sex, age, address, etc.)

- Household surveys containing socioeconomic data (income and expenditure; food security; living conditions; education, etc.)

- Combining both types of data, we can use statistical methods to profile the population into different groups
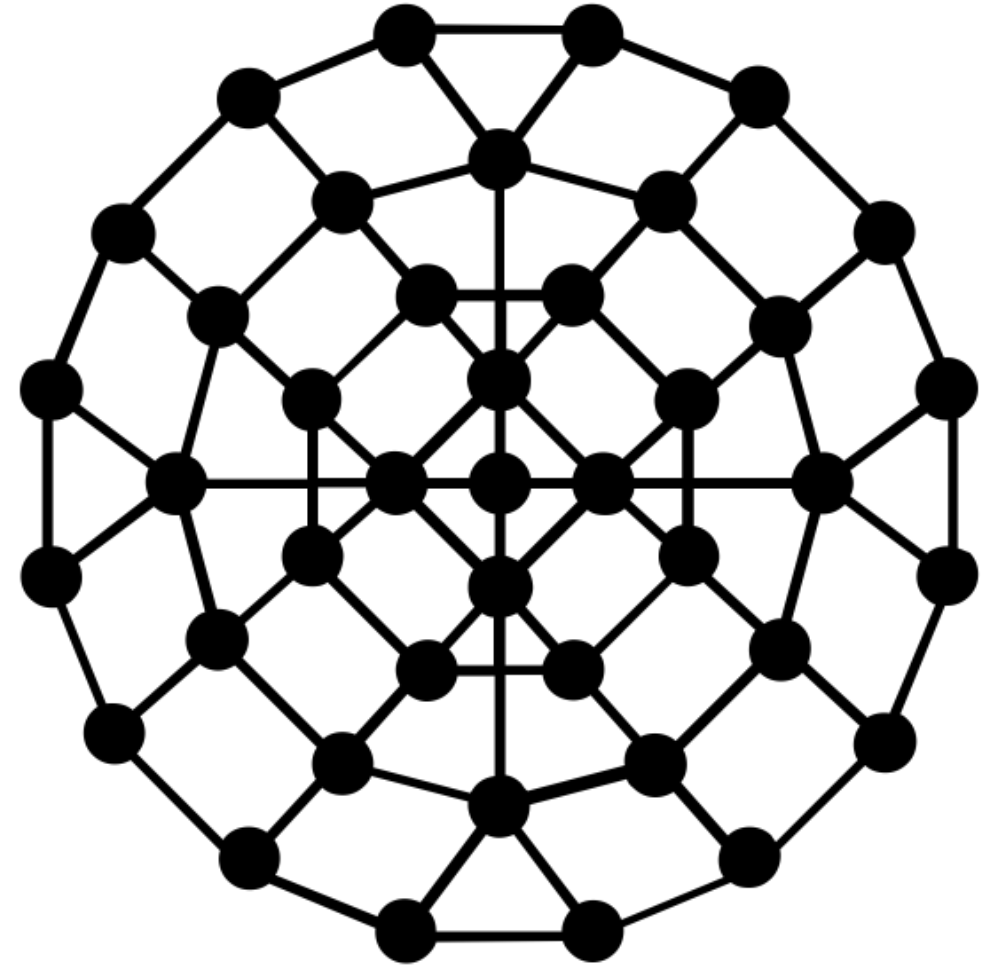
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Population profiling

Respond

Insecure

Moderate

Secure or Marginal

Not self-reliant & Included

Self-reliant & Included

Indigent

Insecure

Fragile **Unstable**

Catalyst **Emergent**

Empower

Include

Leaders

Not integrated

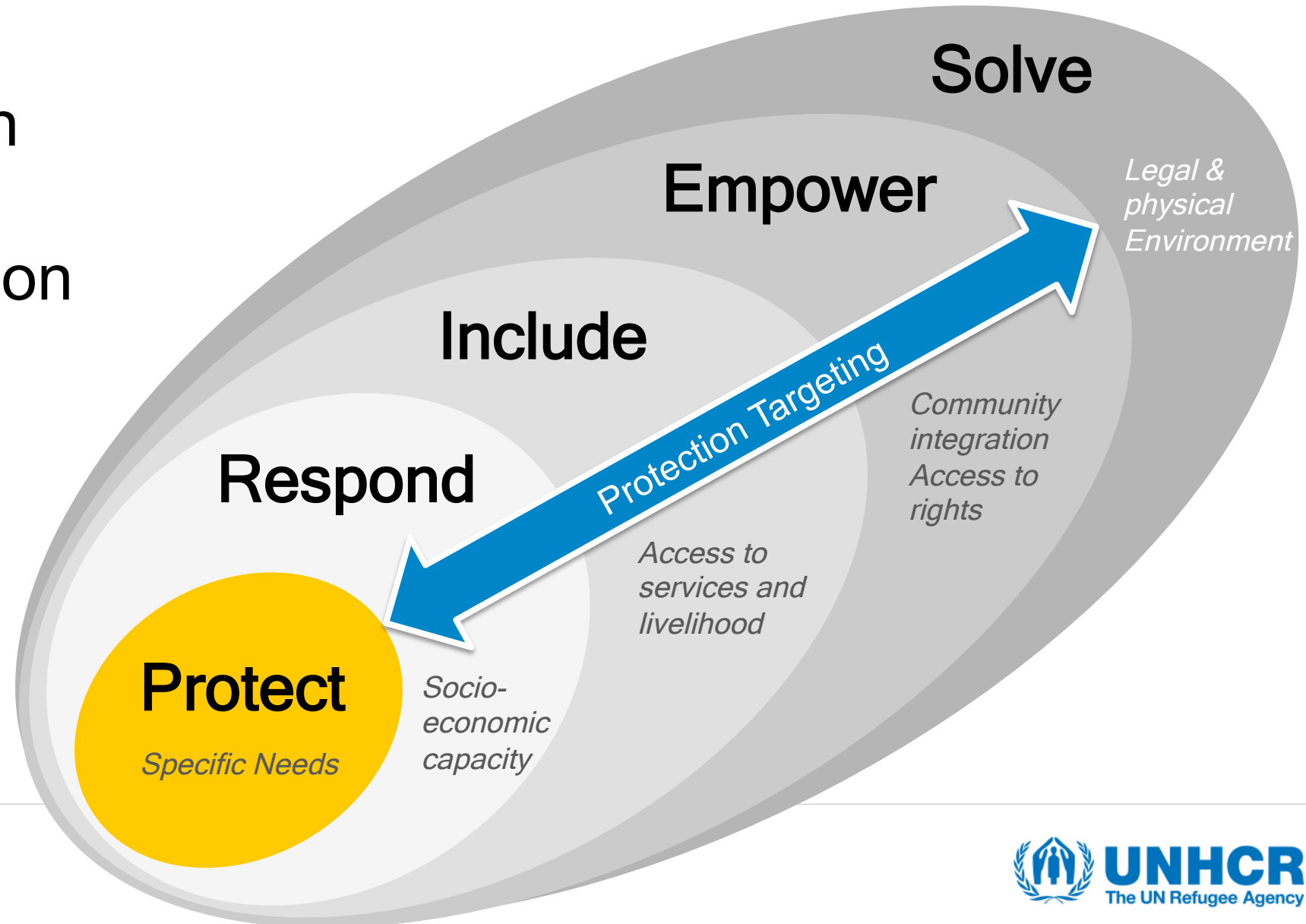UNHCR
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Item Response Theory (IRT)

- Statistical tool for inferring an unobservable phenomenon from a set of variables
  - In this case, the unobservable phenomenon is vulnerability, and the variables are the existing data on refugees
- Multi-dimensional: several, interrelated, dimensions contribute to define the general latent construct (vulnerability)
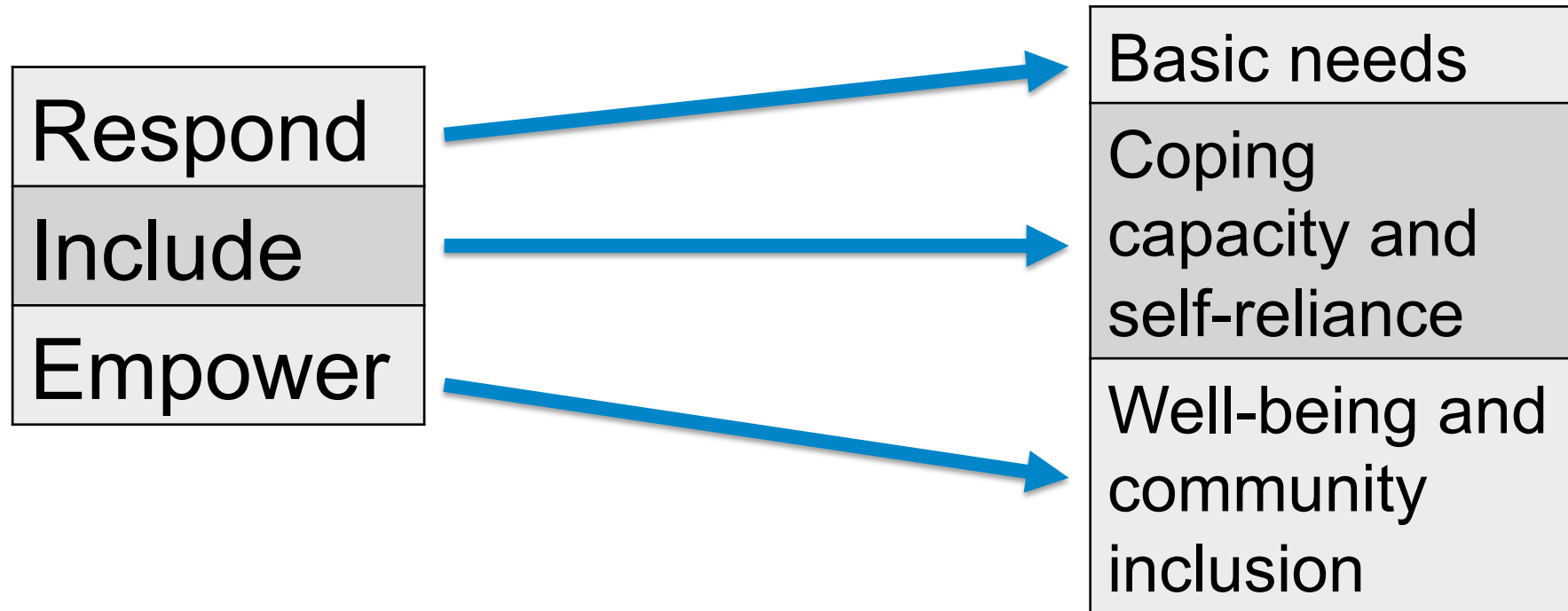
Targeting

UNHCR Strategic Directions 2017–2021

- Outlines five main directions for UNHCR to focus on
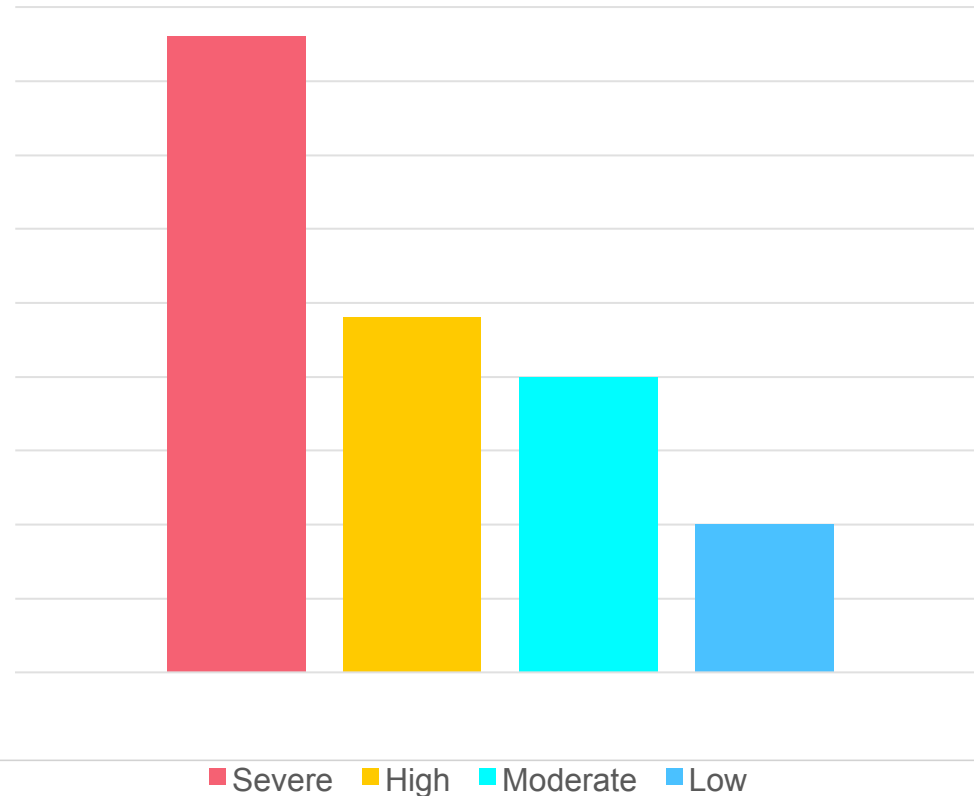- Each direction addresses a different type of vulnerability

Aligning with the strategic directions

Three strategic directions can be said to correspond to the dimensions we established earlier
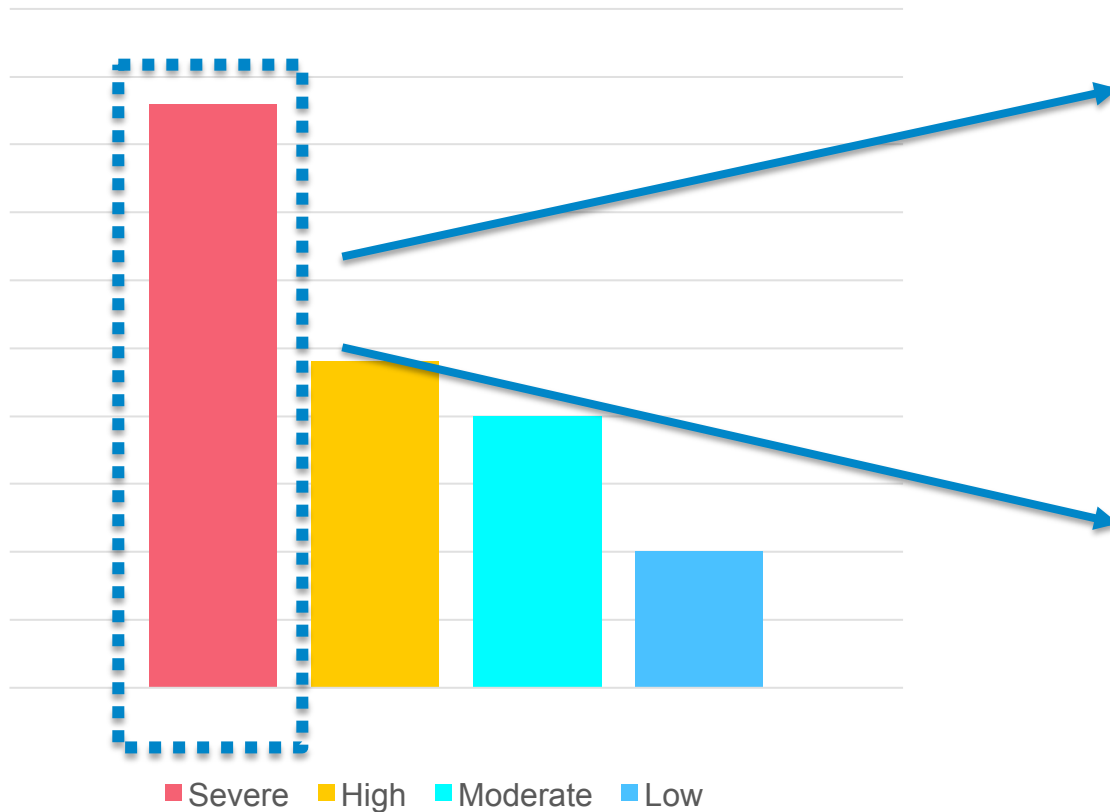
Current methodologies

- Some operations are using poverty as a single factor for categorisation

- Everybody under a certain threshold receives cash assistance

■ Severe ■ High ■ Moderate ■ Low

How profiling can help

- But within this larger group of "severely poor" what if we find different groups, or profiles?

Legend: ■ Severe ■ High ■ Moderate ■ Low

Group 1
Single parents with young children, no child care option and a certain set of skills

Group 2
Elderly couples unable to work due to poor health, no other family members

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Customized assistance

Group 1
Single parents with young children, no child care option and a certain set of skills

→

Improve coping capacity and self-reliance

Livelihoods support, such as microcredit for a home-based business

Group 2
Elderly couples unable to work due to poor health, no other family members

→

Respond to basic needs

Cash assistance to meet needs such as shelter and food

Improved efficiency and effectiveness

- In this example, customizing assistance according to profiles and needs will result in two main and very important outcomes:

  - Cash assistance for those who truly need it = unable to respond to their basic needs on their own

  - Other types of assistance for those who have different needs

- Refugees receive what they need, and we maximise our resources

Q & A