This challenge brief forms the basis of your innovation project. This is the invitation for external parties to share their knowledge, skills, expertise and (parts of) potential solutions. The more concise and comprehensive you write this document, the more straightforward discussions with other organisations are. The max wording is to support you in keeping the document legible and coherent, the questions/points listed should be seen as recommended guidelines rather than as formal procedures. The challenge briefs will be shared widely with possible external partners.

1. MAIN DETAILS

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2. PROBLEM STATEMENT [as defined on March 4th]

#1 “How can we tackle barriers that exist to access services related to safety and protection for the most vulnerable people in need of these services”

3. CURRENT CHALLENGE

What is the challenge/problem?

Refugees/IDPs in rural settings are often more disconnected from the outside world than those in urban settings. This leads to problems getting in touch with family & friends, financial needs, educational needs, and access to information in general. This problem is present worldwide. Refugees often spend up to a third of their disposable income on staying connected—the main obstacle to refugee connectivity: cost. (UNHCR, [https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/connectivity-for-refugees/]). This widens the gap between those who are connected and those who are not. This lack of connection also affects staff operations: it is difficult to track down staff and to communicate about the assistance delivered in the field. This compromises their safety during field operations (and accountability of their actions as well).

This altogether is posing a security as well as protection risks in rural areas.

Symptoms of the challenge

Technically, the possibilities for increased connectivity are available and possible. It has already been piloted, albeit mainly in urban settings. However, stakeholders do not prioritise the action. It is not considered life-saving. Ideas about the need to control refugee behaviour and misconceptions about ‘irresponsible’ use of internet (pornography, game addiction, etc.) are preventing upscaling of connectivity.
Causes of the challenge

Willingness to prioritise addressing this problem combined with costs and technical capabilities/difficulties create the cause of this challenge not being addressed.

Humanitarian Parameters of the challenge

Relevant context: Uganda, West Nile region as a pilot (then worldwide)
Actors: Refugees and IDP in East Africa (pilot) and worldwide.
Potential to collaborate with Network Operators to assist with provision of data, with Microsoft and FB, NetHope, a consortium of NGOs/private partners, as well as hardware suppliers who would have the technology produced, UNHCR- through development of standards and operating procedures, The Government of Uganda (and other countries) in seeking approvals for providing such service.
Stage of the disaster management cycle: Prevention stage

4. IMPACT GOAL

1. Describe the change you want to see in relation to current state.
We want to see people feel empowered to improve their life situation by being connected. We want them to be able to access necessary services to aid in their protection needs, to be able to use it as an educational tool and to be in touch with the rest of the world. We want this connectivity to improve their health, mental well-being and as a possible tool to facilitate sensibilisation efforts. Also, we would like to see the good practices currently happening to be upscaled for matters of efficiency and reach of as many people as possible.

2. Why finding a solution to this challenge is important for the organisation and for user.
   • Potential for impact

   Upscaling accessibility and connectivity for refugees/IDPs/Staff in rural settings can have a large impact in refugee settings across the globe. Also, close monitoring of the pilot and the involvement of various stakeholders as well as asking the right questions needed to upscale it to other settings, will enable the DRA to better access the most remote and vulnerable people. A solution that takes into account both the technical as well as the socio-cultural challenges in upscaling connectivity has the potential to reach a wide audience. The greater connection scale- the greater impact.

   • Consequences of not identifying a new solution

   The gap between those connected and not connected will grow, keeping the people in question in a disadvantaged position that they may not be able to grow out of.
   Also, it would be a waste of resources if at different places, the same innovations will be launched.

3. Why is it relevant for the DRA?

It does not only address the question of access to services for most vulnerable, but connectivity can also be used as a vehicle for other humanitarian innovations, such as staff safety, cash transfers, protection issues, and sensibilisation efforts, as the question of connectivity also involves accessibility of beneficiaries.

5. ASSUMPTIONS MADE
• The solution to many connectivity and safety issues is mainly to be found digitally and through technology/innovation.
• Sensibilisation through digital means is (as) effective (as live).
• Targeted population is literate and has basic level of education.
• There are safe physical conditions for access to the technology (for women/people with disabilities/children/old people)
• Connectivity and internet will not be abused
• Increased connectivity affects increased psycho-social well being.
• Innovation can be used in various (urban/rural/camp) settings.
• Potential of the innovation scalability is large.
• Availability of the local service providers.

5. RISKS IN PURSUING THIS CHALLENGE

Potentially safety and security of the targeted population can be affected. Therefore, a timely and adequate sensitisation should be taking place prior to the innovation launching. Risk of finding the best innovation service provider.
Risk of providing the local community/leaders acceptance. Risk of misuse of the technology by the targeted population or governments.

7. NEXT STEPS

• Landscape analysis of rural and urban/camp refugee settings as well as IDP context
• Work with GSMA towards assessing needs and 3G/4G data usage by those that are displaced
• Formalize partnerships with MNOs and Service Providers
• Roll out pilot to vehicles
• Field test analytics of usage
• Sensitize the community on internet and engaging properly online—with proper standards in place
• Sensitize all relevant implementing stakeholders (GoU, UNHCR etc)