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Article

Refugees in the Minawao camp: Status and erosion of social assistance in the face of the SDGs

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Abstract: This article analyses the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Minawao refugee camp in Cameroon, focusing on the social pillar of sustainable humanitarian. Established in 2013 to accommodate Nigerians fleeing the violence of Boko Haram, the camp now faces growing challenges related to the sustainability of assistance. Based on a mixed methodological approach, the analysis draws on data collected from humanitarian operators, refugees and the host community. The data was collected using tools such as participant observation, individual and group interviews, questionnaire surveys, mapping, documentary review, etc. Although essential infrastructure has been put in place, the study reveals that minimum humanitarian standards are not being met in several key sectors: food security, education, sanitation, shelter provision and Non Foods Items (NFIs). The lack of financial resources, combined with insufficient involvement by the Cameroonian government, has led to a gradual erosion of social protection for refugees. Maintaining assistance on a temporary basis compromises the integration of the SDGs into humanitarian operations. The article highlights the need for a forward-looking approach by humanitarian agencies, coordination between stakeholders and the involvement of new partners, including refugees, to guarantee their well-being and the achievement of the SDGs.

Keywords: sustainable humanitarian; refugees; SDGs; social assistance; Minawao

1. Introduction

Sustainable development, introduced at the Stockholm Conference in 1972 and clearly defined in the Brundtland Report ‘Our Common Future’ in 1987, was reaffirmed in 2015 with the definition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an essential universal concept as well as an inclusive global project to leave no one behind (Babin, 2017; Sauvé, 2007). Paragraph 23 of the Declaration adopting the Sustainable Development Programme recognised the need to establish sustainable means of action in favour of vulnerable groups, such as refugees, living in regions affected by complex humanitarian emergencies (Nations Unies, 2015; Wardeh and Marques, 2021a).

There are around 37 million refugees, almost 40% of whom are in sub-Saharan Africa (HCR, 2024a). This region has been the scene of numerous armed conflicts and violence, such as those perpetrated by Boko Haram in Nigeria since 2003 (de Montclos, 2012; Higazi and Brisset-Foucault, 2013). Since 2013, the expansion of Boko Haram’s military area of operations into the Lake Chad Basin region has precipitated to the displacement of thousands of Nigerians into neighbouring countries, including Cameroon in the far north of the country (Pérouse de Montclos, 2017). This situation has led to significant humanitarian needs in the region (Turner et al., 2019) which has already been the victim of Boko Haram attacks since 2009

(Vincent et al., 2017). Faced with an influx of refugees, the usual response is to create camps (Al-Husban and Adams, 2016; Dick, 2003), as illustrated by the creation of the Minawao refugee camp in 2013 by the Cameroonian authorities and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (HCR, 2015).

The Minawao Refugee Camp (MRC) has since become a place of refuge, hosting 76,987 Nigerian refugees in December 2023 (HCR, 2024b). They received vital humanitarian aid covering basic needs. The humanitarian response deployed in the camp was structured around seven sectors of assistance: education, nutrition, health, food security, water-hygiene and sanitation (WaSH), protection, shelter and non-food items (NFIs). In 2017, livelihoods and the environment and energy component were added to the list of assistance sectors (HCR, 2017). After ten years of existence, the humanitarian agencies coordinated by UNHCR have developed a range of actions to meet the needs of refugees, despite their growing numbers due to the still frequent attacks by Boko Haram. This study investigates whether these results have been achieved, and the guidelines of the Sustainable Development Programme as advocated have been followed.

These questions arise in a context where the MRC is in a protracted situation. The humanitarian community's desire to integrate the principles of sustainability and development into aid mechanisms was demonstrated at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit with the Grand Bargin Pact (Besiou et al., 2021; Cassam-Chenaï, 2020). This agreement institutionalised the UN-initiated "New Way of Working" into the Humanitarian-Development Nexus approach (Barakat and Milton, 2020; Cassam-Chenaï, 2020). This approach evolved in 2017 into the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (HDP Nexus), following the recognition that development is not possible without peace (Barakat and Milton, 2020). It now represents the reference framework for sustainable humanitarian operations (Cassam-Chenaï, 2020). The HDP Nexus aims to harmonise humanitarian efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and peace, maximise the impact of interventions and respond more effectively to the needs of crisis-affected populations.

In practice, the humanitarian community has recognised the strategic benefits of the HDP Nexus but has expressed limitations in understanding and clarifying its operational programming framework (Hövelmann, 2020; Howe, 2019; Steinke, 2022). As a result, its practice has faced a number of challenges (Steinke, 2022) while the academic literature on the implementation of sustainable humanitarian, particularly in refugee camps, remains sparse (Wardeh and Marques, 2021b). This study is therefore based on the premise that it is necessary to draw on field experience in order to understand the practical gaps that need to be filled. More than ever, humanitarian action needs to be better understood and new knowledge needs to be generated in order to formulate effective policies and help humanitarian organisations improve their operations (Audet, 2016).

In view of the breadth of the three pillars of sustainable development and the wide range of assistance sectors covered by the MRC, the article will focus on the social dimension of sustainable humanitarian action (The environmental and economic dimension are developed in a series of manuscripts). In turn, the article examines the results of the initiatives undertaken and the main challenges faced by humanitarian actors in their quest to provide sustainable assistance to the Minawao refugees. The

aim is to contribute to the debate on the transition from humanitarian aid to solutions that ensure the well-being, resilience and empowerment of refugees within the framework of the SDGs.

2. Methodology

2.1. Context of study site

The majority of Nigerian refugees seeking asylum in Cameroon have taken refuge in the MRC, situated 70 km from the Nigerian border. The MRC is located within the administrative perimeter of the municipality of Mokolo, the capital of the Mayo-Tsanaga department in the Far North region of Cameroon (**Figure 1**).

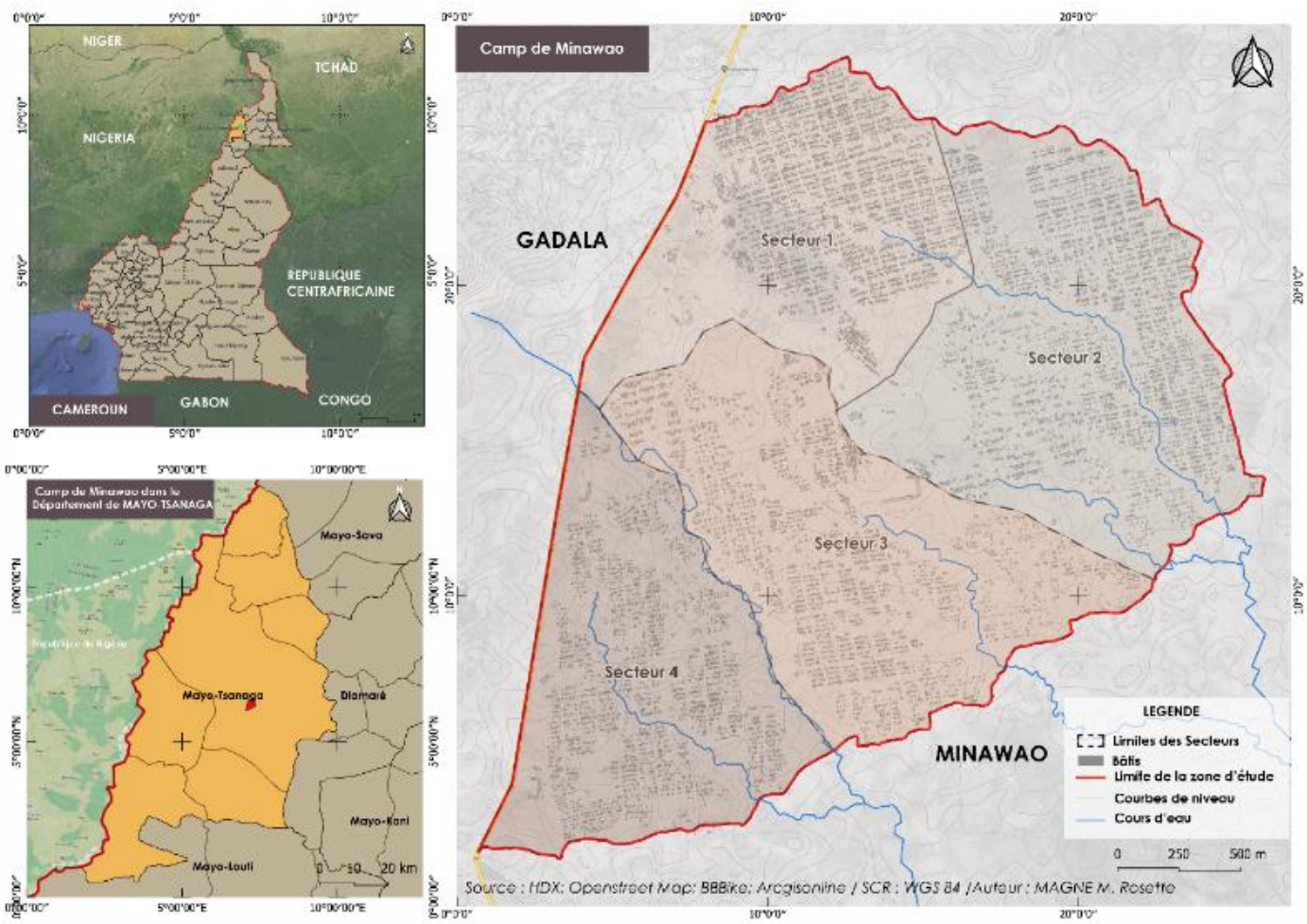


Figure 1. Location of Minawao refugee camp.

Since its inception on 623 hectares, the number of refugees has increased continuously, as illustrated in **Table 1** and a spatial extension estimated at 12.84 hectares during the surveys. This indicates an average annual growth rate of 6.77% and a notable increase in occupancy density from 71.92 inhabitants per hectare in 2015 to 121.08 inhabitants per hectare in 2023.

Table 1. Evolution in the number of refugees in the Minawao camp.

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Numbers	44,808	59,581	60,425	55,541	61,897	68,171	68,516	76,063	76,987

Source: data 2015 to 2023, camp profil—UNHCR.

Despite its location 30 km on the outskirts of Mokolo, which isolates it from urban centres and human settlements, the MRC has evolved into a vast human settlement equipped with infrastructure (Majewski, 2022) making it the largest refugee camp in the country (Mahamat, 2021) and even in Central Africa. The choice of the MRC is in line with the synchronicity of dates. Established in 2013, its development is taking place at a time when the vision of sustainable development is being implemented in the context of humanitarian interventions. Cameroon was also the first country to volunteer at the World Humanitarian Summit to implement the Nexus approach (UNCT Cameroon, 2022). With this in mind, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) has mandated a National Nexus Working Group (National Task Force) in 2019 to develop the HDP Nexus and make it operational. The first deliverable of this task force was: "Pillar 1. Basic social services: by 2026, the most vulnerable people living in convergence areas and/or affected by the crisis access sustainable basic social services Nexus (UNCT Cameroon, 2022)". To this end, the National Task Force was subdivided into two main work bases: one in the Far North region, where the MRC is located, and the second in the East region of the country. After five years of work, the present study is also intended as an assessment to draw on experience in the field.

Humanitarian aid in the MRC is coordinated by the UNHCR, which enters into technical implementation partnerships with NGOs. It is supported by United Nations agencies and the Government of Cameroon. The alignment of aid sectors with the pillars of sustainable development in **Table 2** makes it possible to draw up a list of the various themes that will be addressed in the remainder of this report. We recognise that the pillars of sustainable development and the sectors of assistance are interrelated.

Table 2. Framing of assistance sectors.

Pillar	Social	Economies	Environment
Assistance sectors	Health, Education, Security, WaSH, Nutrition, Food safety, Protection, Shelters-NFIs	Livelihoods	Environment and energy

2.2. Data collection and analysis

This article is based on data collected during a six-month stay in 2022 in the Minawao refugee camp and exchanges planned during 2023 with three target groups: humanitarian operators, refugees and the host community. Access to the camp, the various target groups and secondary data was made possible by an internship with the NGO ADES (Agence de Développement Economique et Sociale). DES acted as the UNHCR's technical partner, assuming responsibility for camp management and the provision of assistance across a range of sectors, including WaSH, Shelter and NFIs, Mass media environment and energy. This position allowed us to collaborate with all the UNHCR's other technical partners and understand the day-to-day operations of

humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, it permitted the acquisition of experiences derived from the immersion during journeys, breaks, refocusing meetings, scouting visits, and so forth.

In order to formalise this approach, a summary was produced for each assistance sector based on brief visits to each NGO. During these visits, more in-depth interviews and participant observation were conducted at the core of their operational activities. The collation of data from the host community resulted in a discussion session with representatives and some residents of the village hamlets directly adjacent to Minawao: Gadala, Ouro zoel, Ndjaindi and Louguéré. For the refugees, the empirical data was supplemented by a small survey of 472 heads of household.

The analysis of the data collected in each assistance sector begins with a summary of assistance by way of contextualisation. This is followed by a diachronic report on the performance of humanitarian assistance in relation to the annual sectoral objectives. To do this, secondary data was used, particularly the monthly 'camp profile' reports. The sectoral objectives defined in these reports are based on humanitarian standards, hence the theme 'standard' in the various diachronic analysis tables.

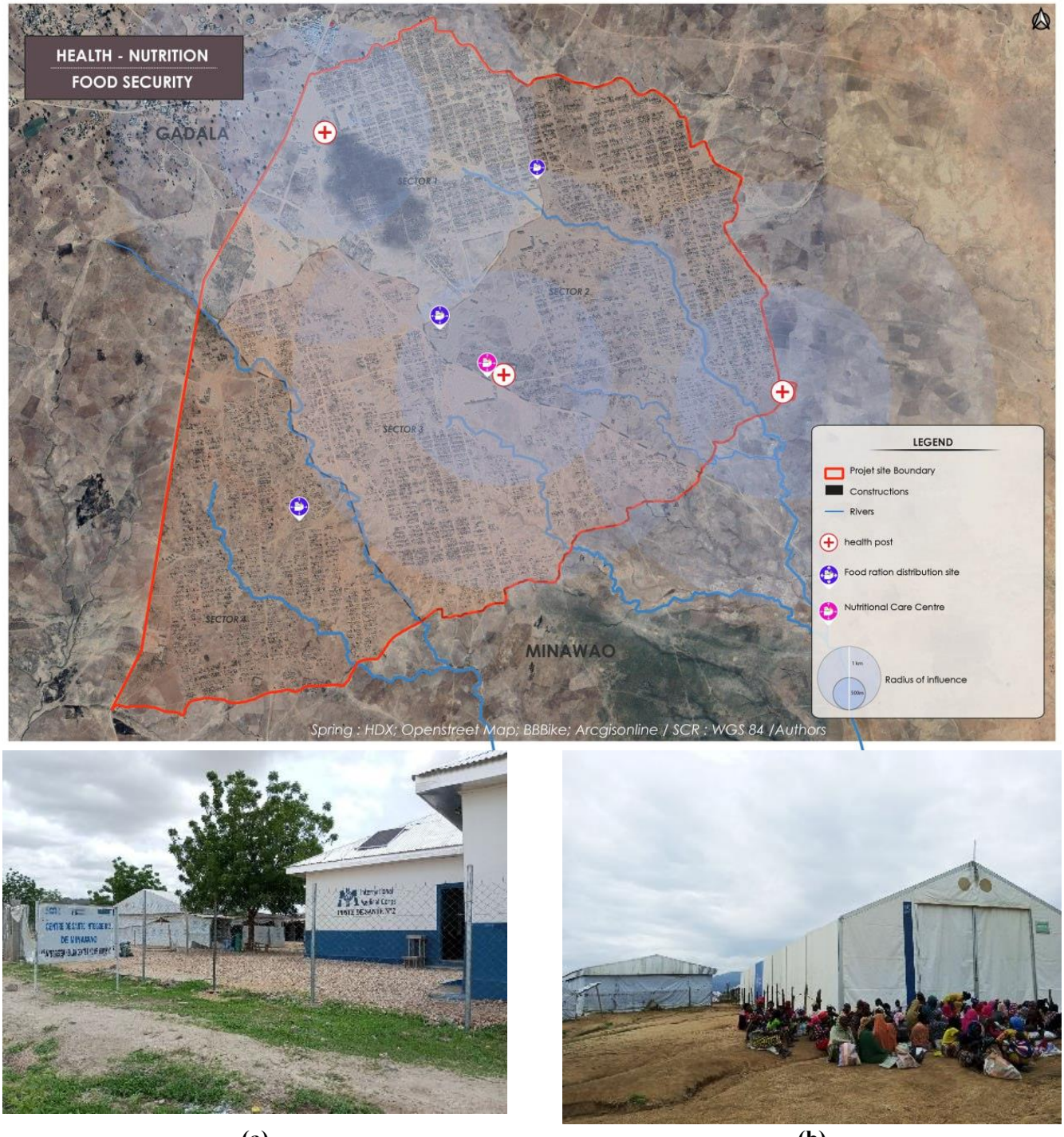
The diachronic reports are in turn commented on in relation to the empirical data obtained during the stay in the camp or in relation to the results of the household survey of the refugees. The analysis concludes with a discussion of the sustainability of the initiatives undertaken and the challenges faced by humanitarian actors in their quest to provide sustainable assistance to refugees.

3. Results

3.1. Analysis of humanitarian assistance in the health-nutrition-food security sector

Humanitarian assistance in the health, nutrition and food security sectors are representative of SDG 2 (Zero hunger) and SDG 3 (Good health and well-being). The MRC has the infrastructure shown in **Figure 2** to ensure access to essential healthcare and transfer to the Mokolo district hospital in the event of an emergency. The map shows a low coverage rate and a non-optimal distribution of health posts and the nutritional care centre.

Despite this spatial distribution, **Figure 3.** shows that humanitarian standards were generally met throughout the study period. The health service is effective because of the low mortality rate (less than 0.75 per 1,000 inhabitants/month) and the low infant mortality rate (less than 1.5), with the exception of 2018–2019 and 2015 respectively. Nutritional assistance is also satisfactory, as the Global Malnutrition Rate (GAM) remains below the recommended 10% and the percentage of children suffering from Severe Malnutrition (SAM) and Acute and Moderate Malnutrition (AMM) is 100%.



(a) **(b)**

Figure 2. Cartography of health, nutrition and food safety infrastructures. **(a)** View of a health post; **(b)** view of the food ration distribution site.

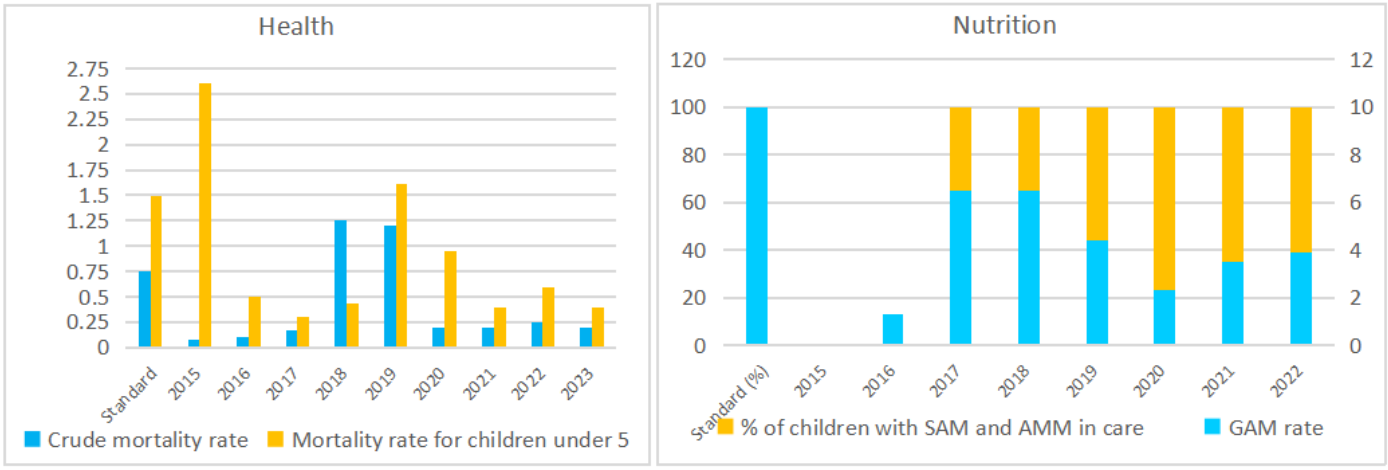


Figure 3. Performance review of humanitarian assistance in the health and nutrition sector.

Surveys and observations made in the field give a mixed picture. Although the mortality and malnutrition rates recorded remain low, the existence of socio-cultural barriers, coupled with the fact that more than 60% of the refugees are Muslims, are factors that do not guarantee the accuracy of these figures. The refugee culture prefers home births and self-medication. 10% and 18% respectively of those surveyed admitted to having recourse to these practices. Similarly, the rapid burial of the dead recommended by tradition, precludes health post personnel from accurately determining the actual mortality rate. Furthermore, it was observed and mentioned during the interviews that the quality of service is affected by shortages of medicines and medical equipment. The deficit in healthcare personnel is mainly made up by 130 community relays and trainees. Additionally, since 2019, there has been a significant reduction in financial resources, which is at odds with the growing need for medical care. It affects the entire healthcare system, both qualitatively and quantitatively. One of the visible manifestations of this impact is that it is forcing the restriction, or even the absence, of the services offered, in particular those related to mental health, sexual reproductive health, treatment of respiratory infections and some awareness-raising activities. In the same vein, the nutrition component has been affected by this drop in funding, and the impacts observed during the surveys are: the reduction and inadequacy of the food rations distributed, the inadequacy of child stimulation kits, the failure to treat all cases of malnutrition detected in pregnant or breast-feeding women, and the dilapidation of the nutrition centre.

In terms of food security, assistance includes a monthly distribution of food to ensure an energy intake of at least 2100 kilocalories per refugee. **Figure 4** illustrates that this objective has largely unmet since 2015, with the exception of 2018. The scores for the last three years reflect the food insecurity in which the camp's refugees live, and the variation in energy intake over the course of a year reflects the instability of the food basket provided to them.

Participant observation during the six food distribution sessions also revealed a lack of distribution sites and, above all, a paucity of diversity in the food basket. During the survey period, the food basket consisted of rice (7.7 kg/person), salt (0.105 kg/person), oil (0.84 kg/person) and soya or pulses (peas 2.5 kg/person). This lack of diversification reinforces the practice of refugees selling part of their ration to

supplement it. Some parents also sell the nutrition kits or share them within the family to compensate for the various shortages.

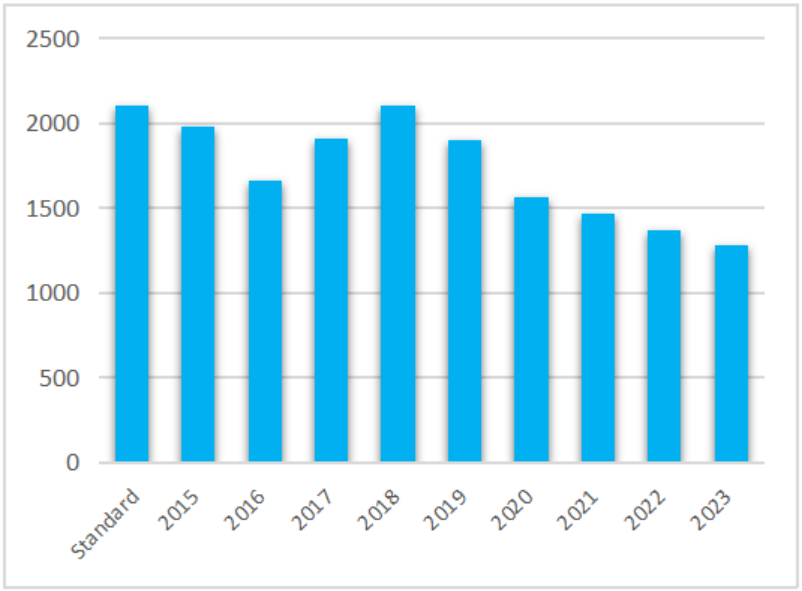


Figure 4. Performance review of humanitarian assistance in the food security sector.

3.2. Analysis of humanitarian assistance for shelter and NFIs

It is representative of SDG 11 in its targets 11.1 and 11.5. Access to housing in the MRC starts with the provision of a shelter to each new household and NFIs kits such as the dignity kit for women. Three types of shelter for one family are distributed:

- The tents were mainly distributed when the camp was set up, and 53.6% of households surveyed said they had received them when they arrived. They have an approximate lifespan of one year, but are not very resistant to bad weather and the risk of intrusion.
- Emergency shelters are constructed on site using a wooden frame and tarpaulins for the walls and roof. 47.88% of households surveyed received it on arrival. it has a relative lifespan of 2 years. It offers average resistance to bad weather and the risk of intrusion.
- The Refugee Housing Units (RHU) shelter kit is a prefabricated shelter that is fairly resistant compared with the previous two and is mainly distributed to people with special needs (PBS). The RHU has a lifespan of 3 years but its structure cannot be modified according to needs. Less than 2% of households surveyed had received one.

Figure 5 indicates that assistance in this area meets an average of 70% of the needs expressed. Work with the team in charge of this aspect of assistance revealed that a mismatch between the number of family shelters built and the number of new refugees. The shelters are built progressively, depending on the availability of materials and the team's speed of implementation. In the two waves of settlements of 145 and 210 refugee families, three quarters of households were settled within the regulatory timeframe. The rest spent an average of three months in promiscuous communal shelters while awaiting the availability of their family shelter.

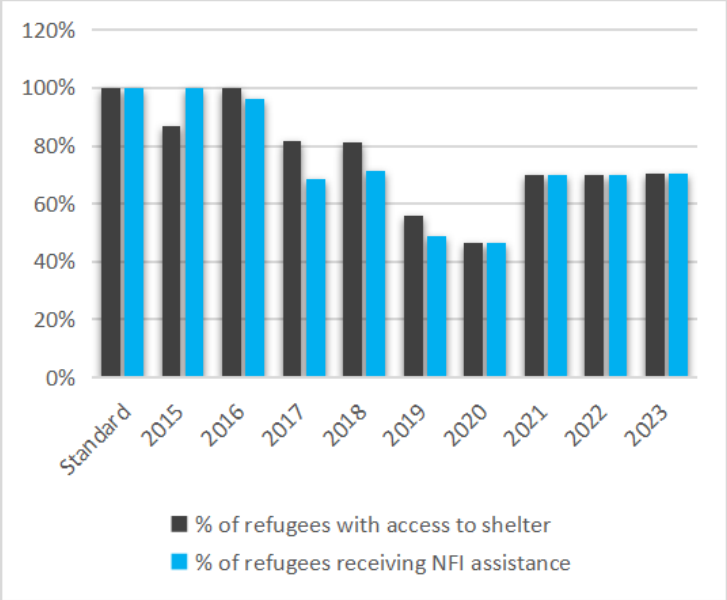


Figure 5. Shelter and NFIs supply performance review.

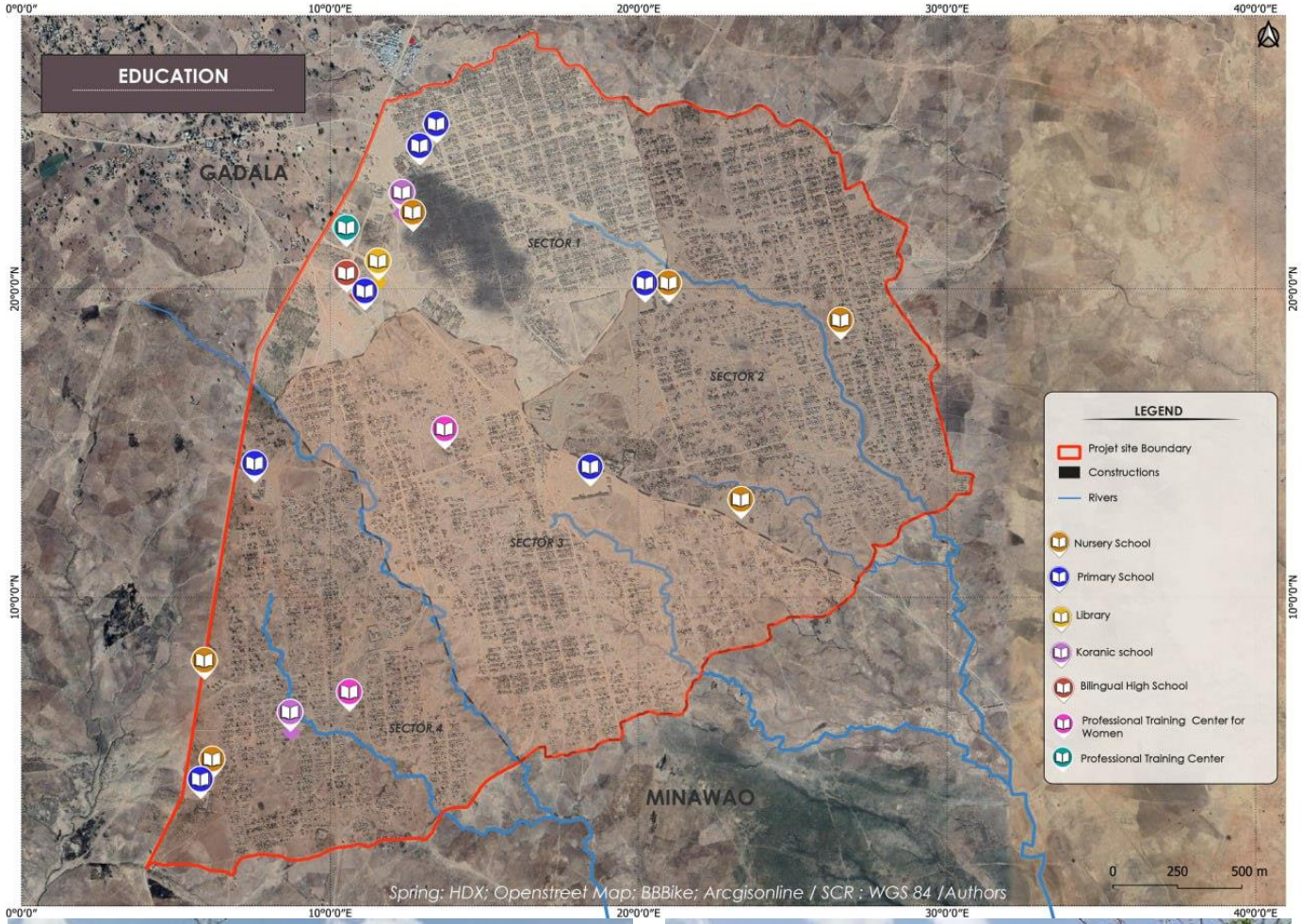
Furthermore, there is a need to renew NFIs kits for former refugees and provide support for the maintenance or rehabilitation of shelters, particularly during the rainy season. The shelter team attributed the lack of humanitarian assistance to a shortage of funding and building materials and kits. Ten years on the provision of decent housing remains under the banner of humanitarian standards, with the provision of temporary shelters unsuited to the climatic conditions and lifestyle of the refugees. This has prompted refugees to enhance their shelters, to the point where it has become a family dwelling consisting of a succession of clay brick rooms covered by a straw or tarpaulin roof. 73% of the households surveyed lived in this type of earthen dwelling. This eco-responsible construction guarantees decent housing for refugee households. However, the fact that this activity is not supervised has led to unbridled exploitation of the soil, the main consequence of which is the creation of large excavations that accelerate the process of soil erosion. Demographic growth in the camp is exacerbating this practice, jeopardising the effective implementation of SDG 11.

3.3. Analysis of humanitarian assistance for education

In line with SDG 4, humanitarian aid has provided schools and vocational training facilities, all of which are functional and built of solid materials. The spatial analysis in **Figure 6** shows a concentration of these in the north-west of the camp and a relatively good spatial distribution. They have been built progressively over the years in response to needs and the expansion of the camp.

Based on the data available from the local UNHCR office and within the camp, **Table 3** below has been prepared for each school level. The assessment shows that the pupil-teacher ratio for the nursery cycle is respected, with the exception of 2017, when it was more than double that recommended. There has also been a decrease in the number of girls enrolled, with a significant drop in 2022, compared to the number of boys, which increases slightly until 2021. At primary level, no standard has been

reached. Although not all children of primary school age are enrolled, the pupil-teacher ratio is very high, reflecting a shortage of teachers and classrooms. Finally, at secondary level, the Minawao bilingual high school has seen its enrolment fall by 59% in five years. These results, although significant, are contrary to targets 4.1, 4.5, 4.a and 4.c of SDG 4.



(a)

(b)

Figure 6. Cartography of school and training infrastructures. **(a)** View of public primary school group 1; **(b)** view of public primary school.

Table 3. Annual number of teachers and pupils per school cycle covered.

Workforce	Category	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Nursery cycle							
	Community relays	46	45	74	74	74	72
Teachers	Government teacher	2	3	4	4	4	4
	Total	48	48	78	78	78	76
	Girls	2737	703	1850	1924	1934	1012
Students	Boys	2689	631	1576	1612	1823	1014
	Total	5426	1334	3426	3536	3757	2026
Average annual enrolment rate[a]		-	-	-	-	-	-
Standard (Enrolment rate)		100%					
Pupil/teacher ratio		113.04	27.79	43.92	45.33	48.17	26.66
Standard (Pupil/teacher ratio)		50					
Primary cycle							
	Community relays	103	66	69	69	62	62
Teachers	Government teacher	24	12	18	18	21	19
	Total	127	78	87	87	83	81
	Girls	6258	5812	6581	6302	5306	5306
Students	Boys	8477	7197	6982	7628	5756	5756
	Total	14735	13009	13563	13930	11062	11062
Average annual enrolment rate		73%	74%	61%	67%	89%	67%
Standard (Enrolment rate)		100%					
Pupil/teacher ratio		116.02	166.78	155.90	160.11	133.28	136.57
Standard (Pupil/teacher ratio)		60					
Secondary cycle							
	Community relays	24	20	10	8	8	8
Teachers	Government teacher	19	19	16	18	18	19
	Total	43	39	26	26	26	27
	Girls	680	361	229	468	332	324
Students	Boys	723	503	295	48	474	504
	Total	1403	864	524	516	806	828
Average annual enrolment rate		18%	12%	7%	7.5%	7%	7%
Standard (Enrolment rate)		100%					
Pupil/teacher ratio		32.63	22.15	20.15	19.85	31.00	30.67
Standard (Pupil/teacher ratio)		60					

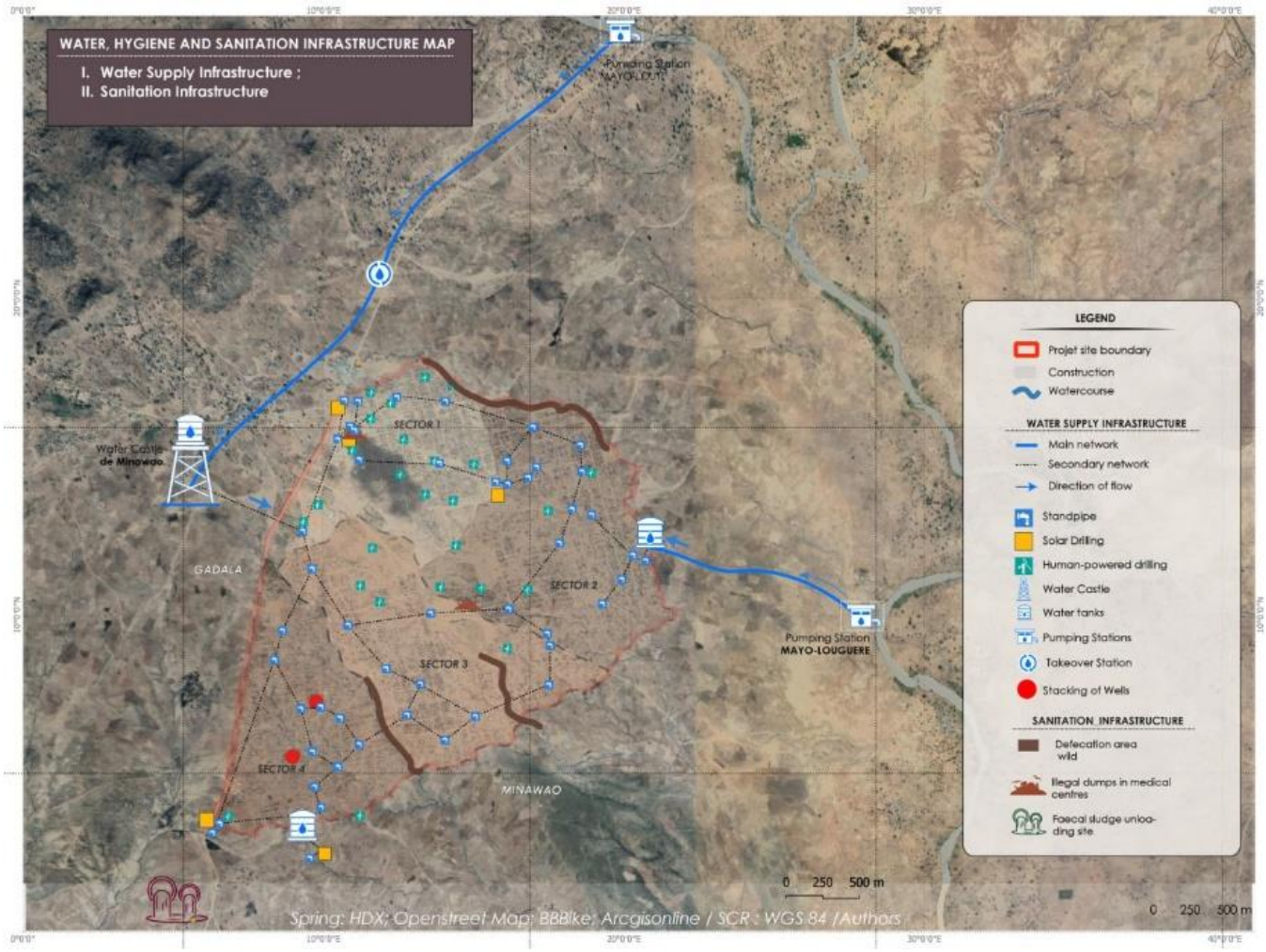
[a] The enrolment rate is the percentage of school-age children enrolled in the corresponding cycle.

According to interviews and observations, the few Cameroonian government teachers are not regular due to a general strike by teachers over non-payment of their salaries. The decline in the number of pupils, especially girls, is explained by the influence of the traditions of the refugees' ethnic groups. Girls are encouraged to leave school to help in the home or to get married. The precarious situation in the camp reinforces this ideology, pushing young people to abandon school in favour of small

economic activities to increase household income. In addition, two other challenges were identified in the various field studies: the lack of supporting school infrastructure (multimedia centres, playgrounds and sports facilities, etc.) and the lack of school supplies and teaching materials.

3.4. Analysis of WaSH humanitarian assistance

SDG 6 recommends ensuring universal and equitable access to drinking water and sanitation. With this in mind, humanitarian aid has established sanitation and water supply and distribution infrastructure, as shown in **Figure 7**. The sanitation infrastructure is complemented by around 300 hand-washing stations, almost 3051 traditional and emergency latrines, two teams of four community relays for manual collection and transport of faecal sludge, equipped with a tricycle and two open-headed barrels, to the landfill and natural treatment site located 3 km from the camp.



(a) **(b)**

Figure 7. Cartography of WaSH infrastructures. **(a)** View of a water distribution point potable; **(b)** view of some wells.

Cartographic analysis reveals that the southern part of the camp has a poor drinking water supply, which has led the refugees to build wells. In addition, the sanitation system is dysfunctional and has been supplemented by open defecation areas created by the refugees. These results corroborate the failure to meet the minimum WaSH standards illustrated in **Figure 8**. The ratio of one latrine or shower per 20 refugees has not been achieved. The same applies to the ratio of 15 liters/refugee/day and the ratio of one water point or hygiene promoter per 500 refugees. They reflect an insufficient of sanitation facilities and of accessible drinking water.

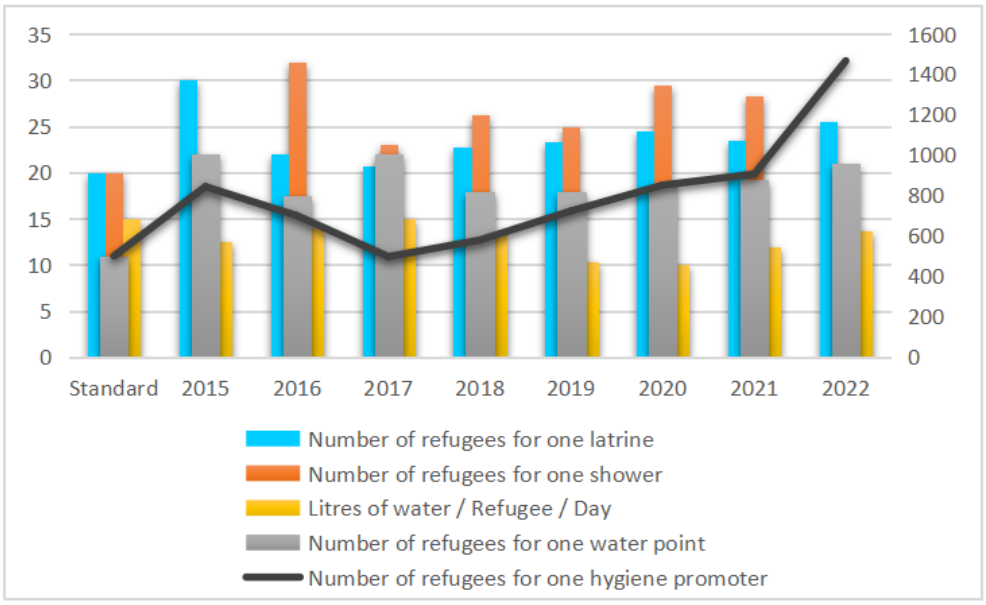


Figure 8. Performance review of humanitarian assistance in the WaSH sector.

The main difficulties in efficiently serving the growing number of refugees identified in the various surveys can be summarised in three factors: the climate,

breakdowns and the dilapidated state of the pipes. The Sudano-Sahelian climate is characterised by a 7-month dry season, during which water sources dry up. Of the 34 existing boreholes, 11 pumps, 11 drainage channels and 23 lost wells are affected by infrastructure failures. The 51 standpipes have 11 platforms, 22 drainage channels, 35 lost wells and 103/201 broken taps. The non-functioning drains and lost wells indicate the presence of unhealthy water pools, which undermine the cleanliness of the water points. Faulty taps mean long queues at water points, causing frustration and tension. The dilapidated state of the distribution pipes means that they can crack under hydraulic or climatic pressure. Some cracks are also the result of vandalism by refugees in search of water.

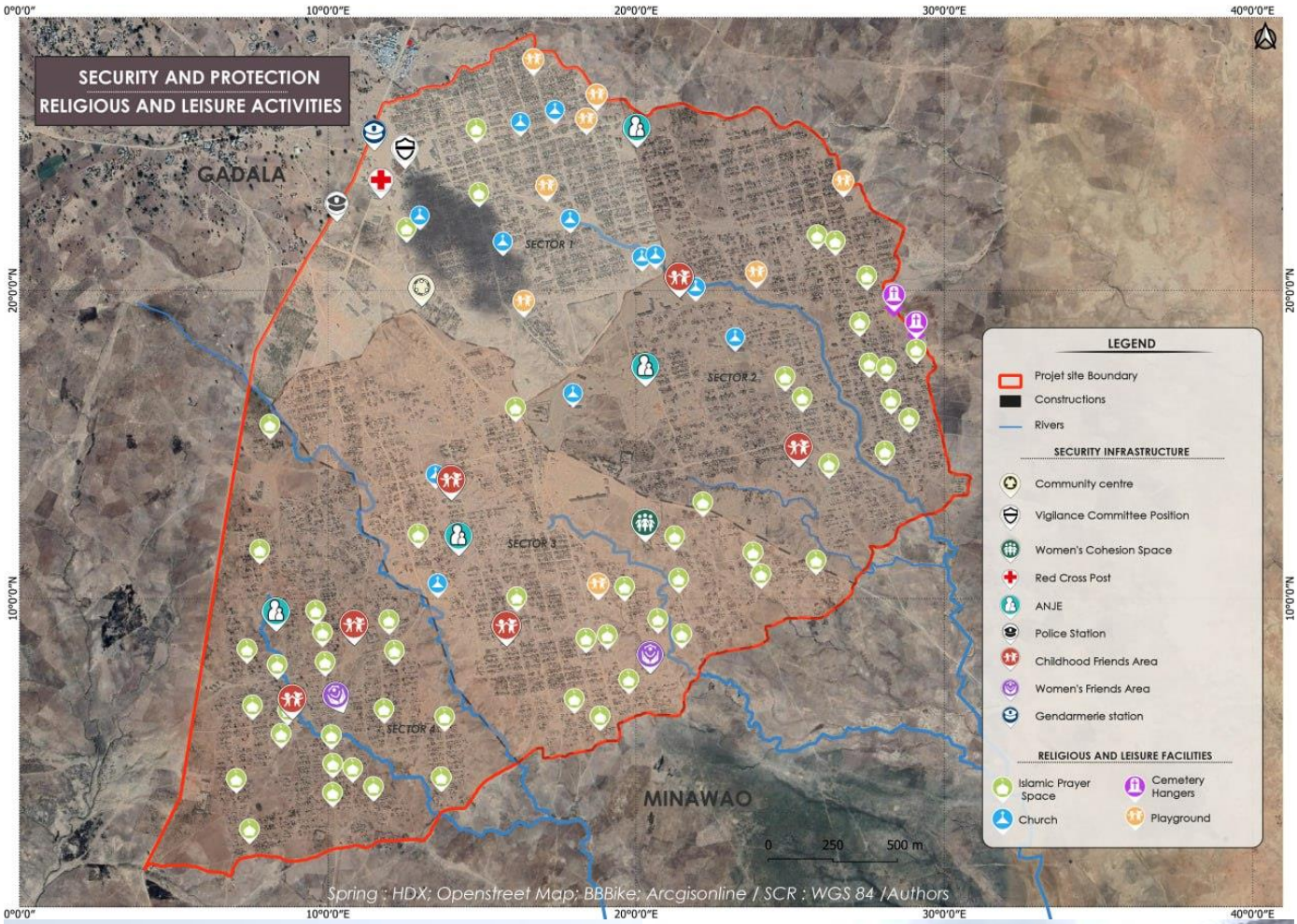
No significant efforts have been made in the area of sanitation. Emergency latrines are still being distributed to households. With rudimentary means (open-headed barrels and motorbike), the sludge collection teams concentrate on emptying the latrines installed in the facilities and administrative offices of the NGOs. The system in place is therefore precarious without effective collection. The main constraint mentioned by the WaSH team during the interviews was the reduction in financial support for the establishment of a sustainable sanitation system, despite the ongoing crisis. This has also had an impact on the reduction of staff (in the case of hygiene promoters) and difficulties in maintaining the infrastructure and equipment that was built on a temporary basis. It should also be noted that the constraints imposed by the emergency and the temporary humanitarian approach led to a lack of basic studies (hydrogeological and geophysical studies, environmental planning, etc.), irregular monitoring of groundwater reservoirs and a lack of knowledge of traditional latrines. After 10 years of the camp's existence, these factors call into question the practice of sustainable humanitarianism and the achievement of SDG 6.

3.5. Analysis of humanitarian assistance in terms of protection

It takes into account the civil and social protection of refugees, with the various infrastructures mapped out in **Figure 9**. In terms of civil security, the vigilance committee, composed mainly of refugees, has been in place since 2017 to compensate for the poor coverage provided by the gendarmerie and police stations. In 2022, this committee will comprise 140 active members. They cover the entire perimeter of the camp by carrying out a large number of rounds and local interventions. This is a sustainable system, in line with the peacekeeping prerogatives of SDG 16. It enables refugees to take responsibility for security and peaceful coexistence. The challenges listed during the meetings with the two bodies are essentially material (motorbikes, torches, mackintoshes, etc.). In terms of social protection, the equipment corresponds to the needs of the different social categories of refugees to be assited for and complements the assistance in the field of health, nutrition and food security. However, there is a lack of play areas for children and listening areas for women. These have gradually been replaced by prayer rooms, which play a meditative role, while children play in the streets of the camp.

Following a diachronic analysis of the performance of humanitarian aid, the data in **Figure 10** show that the annual averages are on a downward trend, reflecting the difficulty of responding effectively to existing needs in order to reach the 100%

standard.



(a) **(b)**

Figure 9. Cartography of protection infrastructures. **(a)** View of children playing in the street; **(b)** view of a 'women's friendly' space.

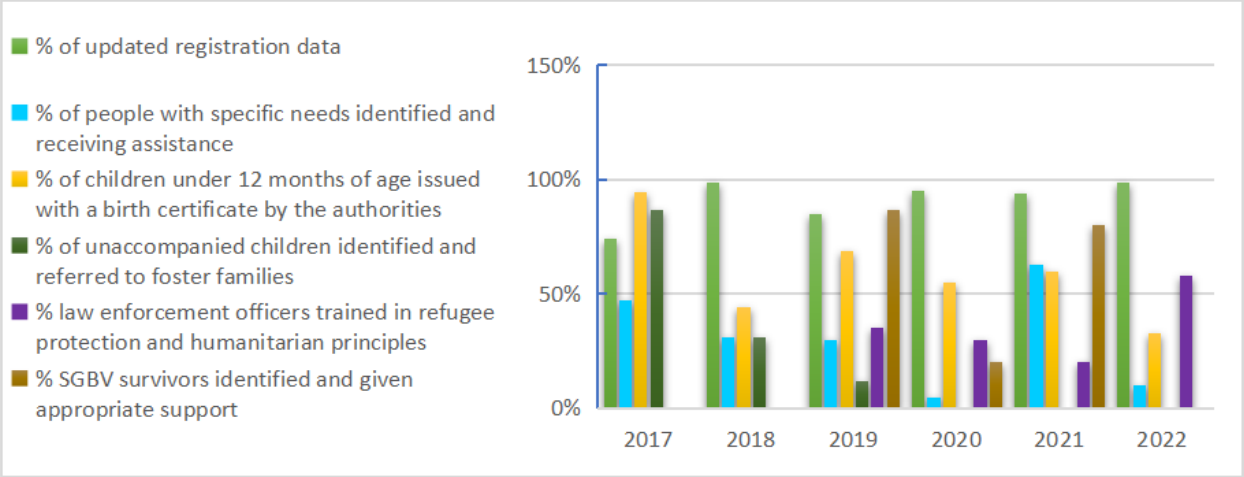


Figure 10. Performance review of humanitarian assistance in the protection sector.

3.6. Influences on the host community

The empirical data, together with the results of the discussion session with village leaders, show that humanitarian aid has had a socio-economic impact on the population living near the camp. As summarised in **Table 4**, this impact can be seen in the presence of potable water supplies, improved security and health services, and the opening up of these rural communities. However, local people have expressed frustration at the increase in the number of refugees, which has had an impact on the availability of timber and arable land. Coexistence conflicts were particularly acute until 2016. Since then, they have calmed down with the establishment of a joint committee for the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the many achievements of the Cameroonian community. Today, this committee has been disbanded and the Cameroonian security forces are acting as intermediaries in the event of a conflict.

Table 4. Synthesis of the social influence of humanitarian assistance on the Cameroonian community.

Influences	Realisations
Positives	Two solar-powered boreholes and 1 Human-Powered Borehole (HPB) at Ouro Zoel (about 3 km from the camp, heading north) One HPB at Gawar (about 6 km south of the camp) Tree HPB at Gadala (2 km west of the camp) One HPB at Ndjaindi (about 4 km east of the camp)
	Making the camp's schools, security posts and health posts accessible to local Cameroonians
	Improve the access road to the camp
Negatives	Swindling and conflict over land: multiple leases of agricultural land to several refugees at the same time, underpayment of refugee benefits.
	Conflict over wood resources: frustrations and fights when refugees cut wood outside the camp.

4. Discussion

There were a number of limitations in the preparation of this article, in particular the confidentiality of certain secondary data and the fact that the monthly reports were not systematically archived. However, a judicious use of the available and collected data has established the ineffectiveness of humanitarian aid in achieving the minimum standards required. This is particularly the case particularly in food security, education,

WaSH, social protection and the provision of shelter and NFIs. The effectiveness of humanitarian aid in refugee camps, such as those for the Rohingya in Bangladesh, is limited by funding shortages and fragmented policies (Zakir Hossain, 2021). In the MRC, the most significant cross-cutting constraint mentioned was the lack of financial resources, which in turn resulted in a lack of quality material resources and appropriate human resources. As (Al-Husban and Adams, 2016) observe, long-term camps such as the MRC are affected by a decline in the effectiveness of assistance due to donor fatigue, as evidenced by the example of the Zaatari camp. Exhaustion generally occurs as a result of frequent changes in the field of interest of donors (Awadari, 2020) who are more interested in more recent high-profile crises. Indeed, despite the fact that humanitarian funding in 2022 grew by 27% compared to 2021 (Development initiatives, 2023) analyses of global humanitarian assistance indicate that this growth was due to an increase in contributions from public and private donors, largely in response to the Ukrainian conflict. Private donations increased by 29%, all in favour of Ukraine. On the other hand, strong donor solidarity with the conflict in Ukraine has increased pressure on budgets, mobilising funds to the detriment of other countries in protracted crisis and poorer (Development initiatives, 2023). On the ground, (Awadari, 2020; Cassam-Chenaï, 2020) also attribute donor fatigue to the poor management of humanitarian agencies. This assertion is supported by Pérouse de Montclos (2017) who raises the issue of aid diversion, noting that aid has become a significant source of financial income, with evaluation procedures largely limited to checking lists of beneficiaries drawn up by the same aid actors. While this was not referenced in the MRC, it is a factor that merits consideration. Humanitarian workers, local actors, and even refugees are reluctant to discuss this openly due to concerns about losing their contracts and status (Pérouse de Montclos, 2017). To address the financial shortfall (Moreno-Serna et al., 2021) propose leveraging multi-stakeholder partnerships with non-traditional humanitarian actors. Implementing this approach has enabled the provision of energy to refugee camps and host communities in northern Ethiopia, while simultaneously achieving SDGs 7 and 17.

This ineffectiveness occurred in a context of insufficient or even absent forward planning in the assistance actions taken. This has resulted in the continuity of assistance on a temporary basis. In the health sector for instance, the objective of healthcare in crisis situations, as set out in the humanitarian charter, is to reduce excessive morbidity and mortality (Association Sphère, 2018). This justifies the actions taken in the MRC and the evaluation of assistance by the mortality rate. However, the actions are limited in the perspective of reducing the mortality and morbidity rate even after 10 years. It would have been beneficial to anticipate the lack of suitable staff by implementing a training programme for refugees or local healthcare providers already working in the camp as trainees and community relays (Matsumoto et al., 2019). Similarly, in the Shelter and NFIs component, it has been now established that camp layout procedures and shelter types become ineffective when the camp is in a protracted situation (Wardeh and Marques, 2021a). he shelters distributed in the camps are standardised units designed in general terms that are unsuitable for the thermal and socio-cultural realities of the refugees (Albadra et al., 2021; Daher et al., 2015). This justifies the self-built earthen housing activities observed in the MRC. Because the provision of appropriate shelters that protect refugees from the weather

and ensure personal safety, security and dignity, in accordance with cultural norms, must be a priority for the UNHCR (Wardeh and Marques, 2021a), could have implemented training in construction techniques and supervision of the use of soil and water in the CRM. This would enable the provision of adequate housing in a more efficient manner, while ensuring the preservation of natural resources. in the area of sanitation, the use of urine-separating latrines in the camps in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon or the installation in the Zaatari camp of a purification station, a simplified sewer, sorting facilities, etc. (Van Der Helm et al., 2017; Wardeh and Marques, 2023) are all technologies that could be implemented for the MRC. The MRC already has a designated area for sludge disposal, and emergency latrines are currently being constructed on-site.

The temporary nature of refugee camps has long been a topic of debate, and recent research has highlighted the long-term implications of camp longevity in terms of precariousness (Hart et al., 2018; Poinsot and Agier, 2009; Wardeh and Marques, 2021b). Thus, the financial aspect alone cannot justify maintaining refugee camps, in this case the MRC, in provisional conditions. According to (Al-Husban and Adams, 2016), the provision of assistance in a provisional manner is due to the uncertainty surrounding the camps, a dynamic that (Aburamadan et al., 2020) situate on a spectrum between temporary and permanent space. In other words, humanitarian actors argue that it is difficult to consider the full life cycle of the camp, political resistance and financial limitations during the design phase (Moore, 2017). On the other hand, argues that it is a voluntary decision so not to perpetuate the presence of this foreign population on the territory (Bouagga, 2019), even when the camp has existed for several years This argument is supported by Pérouse de Montclos (2017) insofar as, in order to reject the refugees' right to asylum, Cameroon prohibited the UNHCR from setting up a second camp, even though the UNHCR claimed that CRM was full. Cameroon subsequently signed in 2017 a tripartite agreement for the repatriation of refugees (Government of Cameroon, 2017).

Secondly, the results show that despite the significant efforts made for the refugees in the MRC, the assistance referred directly to the SDGs (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11 and 16), without illustrating concrete and efficient actions to achieve them in their entirety. The shortcomings and difficulties in complying with the minimum humanitarian standards therefore point to a gradual erosion of social protection for refugees in the Minawao camp. Initiatives need to be rethought to ensure their sustainability. To this end, the effectiveness of sustainable assistance depends on the host government, apart from the financial criteria (Byler et al., 2015) deplored by humanitarian workers in the MRC. The host government largely sets the context for the evolution of sustainable humanitarian action because the management of refugee camps, as they currently exist, are intrinsically politicised (Byler et al., 2015; Matsumoto et al., 2019). The fact that they still see the camps as temporary settlements creates restrictions on action on the ground and thus prevents refugees from benefiting from sustainable living conditions (Seifert et al., 2023)

Cameroon for his part was the first country to adopt the Nexus approach and establish a dedicated National Nexus Working Group under the auspices of the HCT. Despite these intentions and the theoretical frameworks that followed, the findings of this study reveal limited implementation with a weak of mobilisation of the

Cameroonian government on the ground. Assistance is centralised and coordinated by the UNHCR. The limited presence of the FMOs has been reinforced by the refugee vigilance committee. Some experiences demonstrate that the involvement of the host state enhances the effectiveness of the response and the achievement of the SDGs. In Iran, the government has expanded its universal health insurance programme to encompass all refugees registered in the country and has implemented measures to ensure that refugees receive equal treatment as Iranians (Kiani et al., 2021). In the Domiz camps, the formation of strategic partnerships with Iraqi government entities and the implementation of a comprehensive reception policy have resulted in enhanced efficiency in the delivery of essential services, including WaSH, shelter, health, and welfare, and the attainment of the associated SDGs (Wardeh and Marques, 2023). Indeed, Iraq moved quickly from the emergency phase to post-emergency standards by providing a connection to the main water supply and sewage networks and a plot at household level. Each plot comprises a concrete slab and three rows of standard bricks, which reinforce the standard UNHCR tent. Additionally, there are brick-walled facilities, including a kitchen, bathroom and toilet. Black water in the camps is collected either in septic tanks or in tanks that are emptied regularly. The Zaatari camp in Jordan has also distinguished itself socially, particularly in the WaSH, health and energy sectors (Wardeh and Marques, 2021a, 2023). With limited funds available, the partnership between the Jordanian government and humanitarian NGOs has facilitated a shift in assistance from a traditional approach to a circular economy driven by sustainable WASH services and infrastructure that can serve local communities even after refugees have left (Van Der Helm et al., 2017; Wardeh and Marques, 2023). Zaatari camp has also been recognised for its coverage of refugees' primary and secondary health needs, as well as its epidemic response mechanisms (Matsumoto et al., 2019; Wardeh and Marques, 2021b). Furthermore, the camp is powered by a 12.9 MW solar plant, which provides renewable energy to the entire camp and to shelters for 12/24 h.

5. Conclusion

This article examines the social aspects of humanitarian assistance to refugees from the perspective of humanitarian standards and the associated SDGs. In response to the growing needs of refugees, humanitarian operators have constructed new infrastructure and implemented new approaches. While improvements are still needed overall, the drinking water supply system and the functioning of the vigilance committee are two key achievements that can be leveraged to integrate the SDGs into the logic of humanitarian operations. The results of the various analyses demonstrated that the humanitarian aid provided was ineffective in meeting the needs of refugees in the Minawao camp. The situation was further complicated by the low level of mobilization Cameroon government, which meant that humanitarian actors had to navigate a complex environment where the refugees' immediate needs clashed with long-term sustainability objectives. It is evident that insufficient attention has been devoted to the SDGs. Conversely, the aforementioned examples illustrate that two pivotal factors are essential for an effective humanitarian response to refugees and for achieving the SDGs: the political context of the host country and the implementation

of long-term solutions. It is therefore imperative that humanitarian organisations adopt a proactive approach, promote coordination between the various stakeholders, including refugees, and involve non-traditional donors. It would therefore be appropriate for future research in the Minawao refugee camp to analyse and map these stakeholders while defining their mandates for a transparent and harmonious coordination approach. Furthermore, given the contextual differences that exist in refugee camps, it is a priority for the future of sustainable humanitarian aid to involve refugees in the assistance process, so that they are not limited to their position as recipients of humanitarian aid.

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