

WFP Innovative Food Assistance Instruments – The Biometrics Project, Kenya



The Biometrics Project was started in WFP Kenya, and introduced through a country-level agreement between WFP and UNHCR in the Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps in Kenya in October 2013.

This system checks the fingerprints of every person coming to collect food against fingerprint records held in UNHCR's refugee registration database (called proGres). If their fingerprints “match”, the person is allowed to collect food. If their fingerprints do not match, and their identity cannot be verified through other means—like their photo (also stored in the system) or a short interview—they are not allowed to collect food. Before the ‘biometrics project’, there was no effective mechanism for targeting refugees who are permanent residents in camps and entitled to food rations

The biometrics project has helped reduce fraud and resulted in a monthly savings of US\$ 1.5 million through better targeting of beneficiaries and management of resources.



In fact, just within six months of going live with biometrics, the refugee population has reduced by 20 percent.

Speaking at a WFP event recognizing innovations that have made a positive difference to how WFP works and to our efforts in helping achieve zero hunger, Programme Officer Cheryl Harrison said the initiative had also promoted stronger relations with both donors and UNHCR: "This was at a time when donors were signaling fatigue and we were at risk of not being able to feed our real refugees. The savings are real and impressive and the donors' confidence is higher. Our relationship with UNHCR is also very strong which will mean other opportunities in future."

