



# **Information provision through digital tools to promote self- reliance among displaced persons**

## **Opportunities and limitations**

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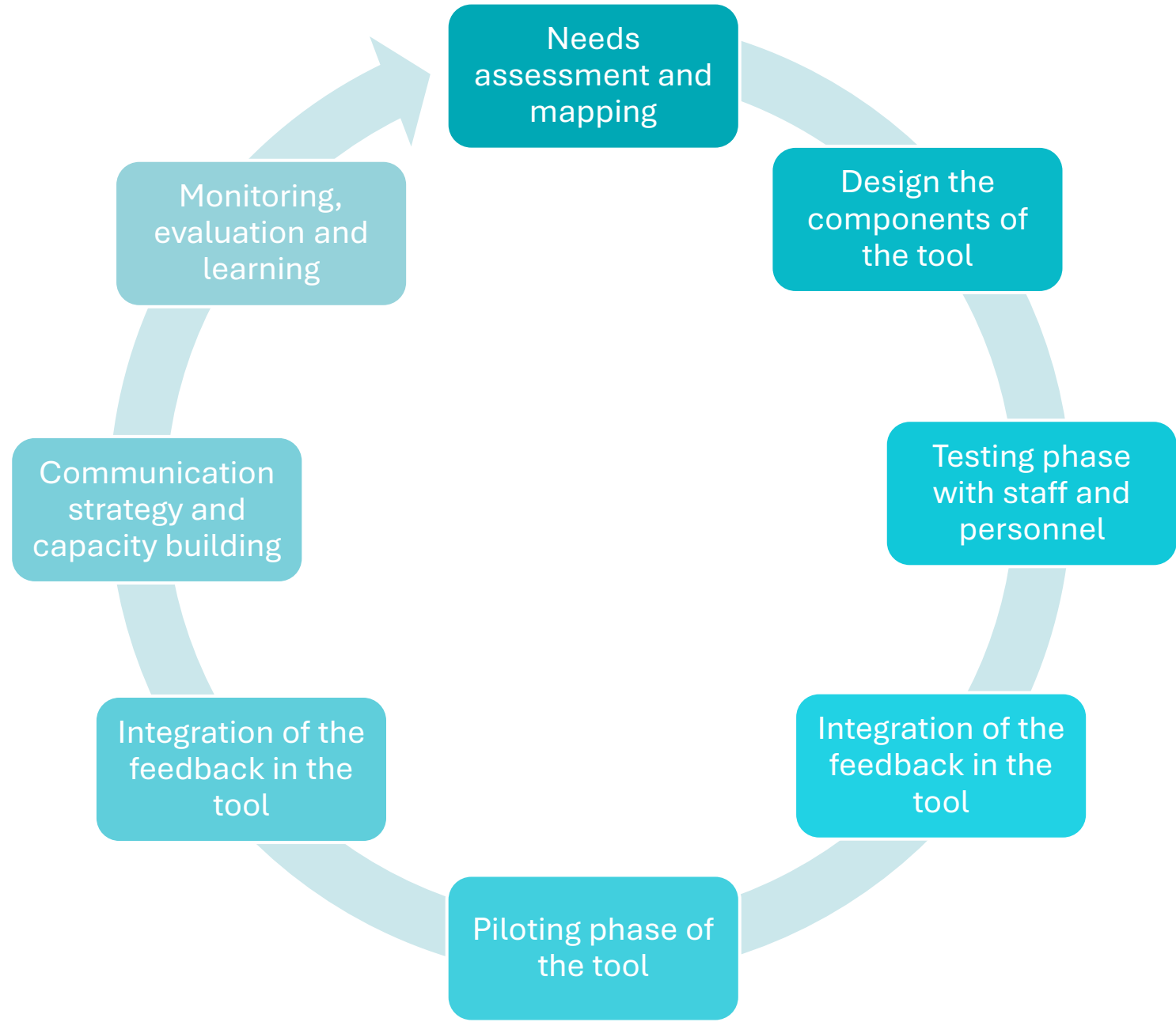
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# Agenda

1. Project cycle management applied to digital information provision tools for displaced populations (applicable to all types of technologies)
2. First model of WhatsApp Business API tool: UNHCR's Turn.io chatbot
3. Second model of WhatsApp Business bulk messaging tool: Broadcast lists
4. Opportunities and limitations of the two models

# Project cycle in digital tools for information provision purposes

*A participatory  
approach*



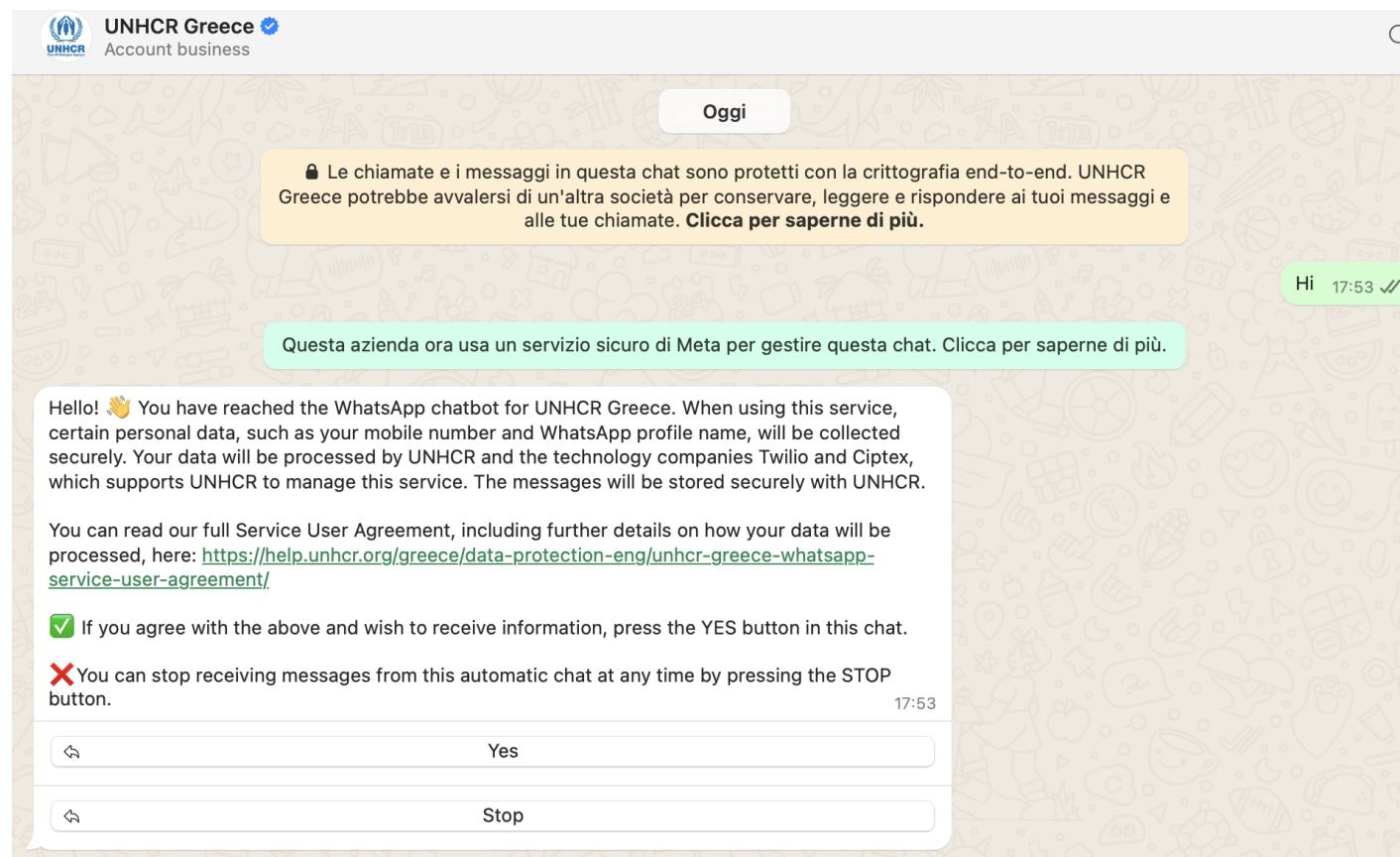
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# **Model 1: Turn.io for UNHCR (chatbot)**

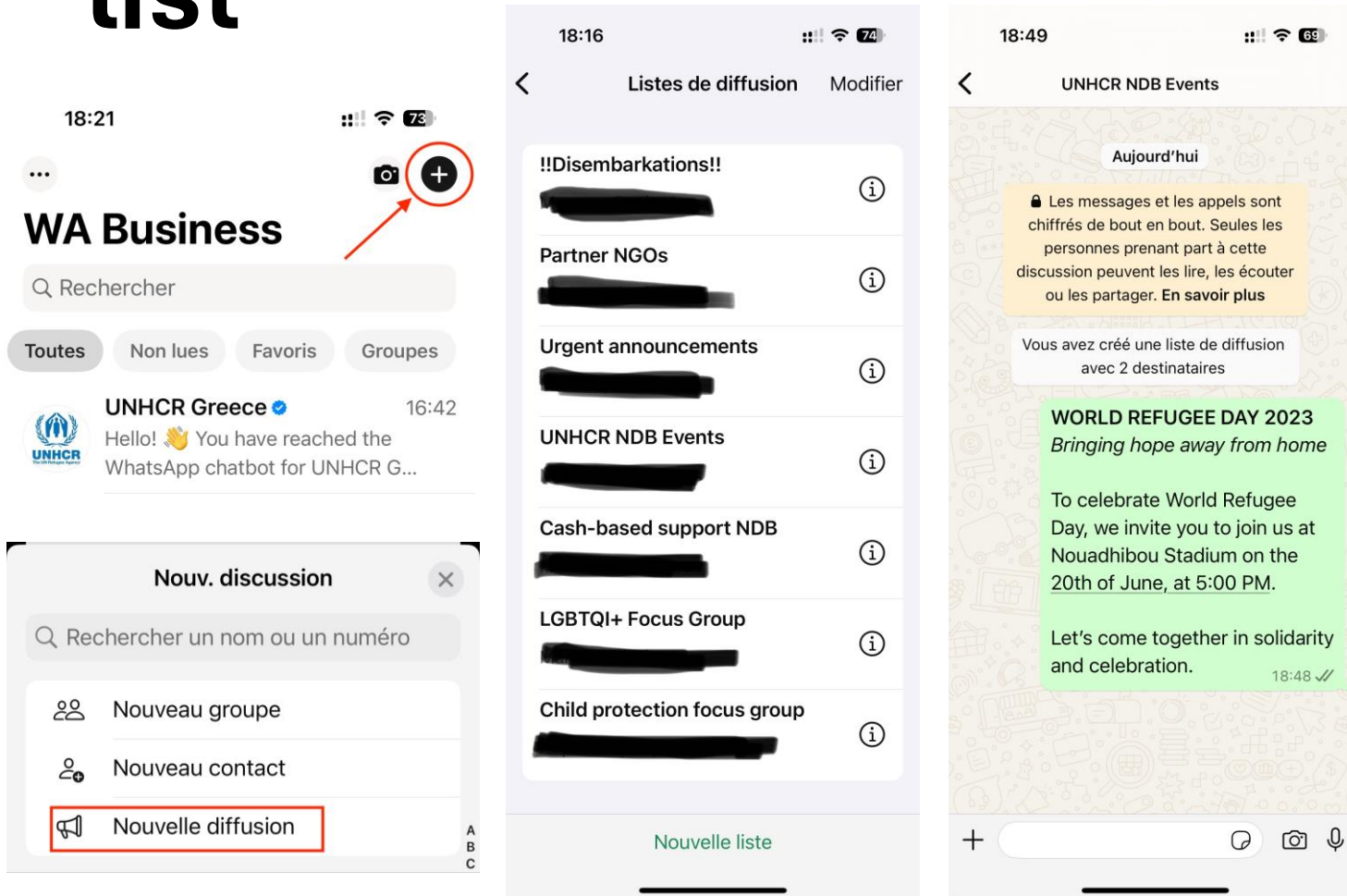


# Characteristics of a well-designed Chatbot

- Accessible communication
- Multilingual and inclusive design
- Efficient information provision
- Human oversight/alternative
- Solid data protection



# Model 2: WhatsApp Business Broadcast list



- Private, scalable messaging for displaced communities
- High impact with minimal barriers to access
- Tailored communication that builds trust
- A reliable channel for essential information

# Pros and Cons of the two models

## Turn.io type Chatbot (UNHCR Model)

Type: Human-on-the-loop, automated two-way communication



- **24/7 Availability**
- **Scalability**
- **Workload reduction**
- **Inclusivity**
- **Privacy and consent**
- **Referral mechanism**



- **Limited personalisation**
- **Technical complexity**
- **User learning curve**
- **Initial setup time**
- **Costs**

## Broadcast Lists on WhatsApp Business

Type: Human-in-the-loop, one-to-many communication



- **Fast and direct**
- **Familiar format**
- **No special tech needed**
- **Flexible**
- **Privacy preserved**



- **Labour-intensive**
- **Limited interaction**
- **Scalability issues**
- **Dependency on contact management**

# In a nutshell...

Feature	Turn.io type Chatbot	WhatsApp Business Broadcast Lists
<i>Communication Style</i>	Automated, two-way	Manual, one-to-many
<i>Human Involvement</i>	On-the-loop	In-the-loop
<i>Availability</i>	24/7	Limited to working hours
<i>Personalisation</i>	Limited	Medium/High
<i>Technical Requirements</i>	High (API, programming, maintenance)	Low (standard WhatsApp Business)
<i>Best Use Case</i>	FAQs, access to services, referrals	Info, alerts, updates, outreach
<i>Accessibility</i>	High (audio/text/buttons)	Medium/High (audio/text-reliance on multilingualism/translators)
<i>Data protection</i>	Can vary	High (by design)
<i>Population size</i>	Small to country operations	Small to medium (ex. cities, camps)



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# Thank you for listening!

For any further question:

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# Food-for-thought in the choice of a digital tool...

- **Digital divide.** Does the use of this channel marginalise groups without access to digital tools? How can we strike a balance between efficiency and inclusiveness?
- **Appropriateness.** Which types of communication channels are preferred or considered appropriate by different communities? How can we meaningfully involve these communities in the design of digital tools?
- **Data protection and fake accounts.** How securely is information shared and stored via this channel? Fake accounts impersonating the organisation or relevant authority could lead to misinformation, erosion of trust, and breaches of personal data. How can this be prevented?
- **Neutrality and perception – user trust and community dynamics.** Does the use of a particular channel raise concerns among certain communities who may associate it with surveillance or political agendas?

# Suggested readings

- ICRC Humanitarian Futures for Messaging Apps - Understanding the Opportunities and Risks for Humanitarian Action (March 2017) <https://shop.icrc.org/humanitarian-futures-for-messaging-apps-print-en.html>
- IFRC: Chatbots In Humanitarian Contexts Learning From Practitioner Experiences (2023) [https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/06/20230623\\_CEA\\_Chatbots.pdf](https://communityengagementhub.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/06/20230623_CEA_Chatbots.pdf)
- UNHCR Digital Transformation Strategy 2022-2026 ‘Strengthening protection, building self-reliance and optimizing delivery’ (2021): <https://www.unhcr.org/digitalstrategy>
- UNHCR Innovation Service – ‘Six key findings from engaging communities through messaging apps’ (October 2021) <https://medium.com/unhcr-innovation-service/six-key-findings-from-engaging-communities-through-messaging-apps-95a9291818f7>
- UNHCR Innovation Service – ‘Taking innovation global with two-way communications with refugees’ (February 2025) <https://medium.com/unhcr-innovation-service/taking-innovation-global-with-two-way-communications-with-refugees-8b4d51adef0b>
- UNHCR Turn.io WhatsApp Service - Introduction to the pilot <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOx3b9M6Qtl>
- UNHCR UNHCR Digital Inclusion – Chama Chatbot <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zN7JEWRxVQ>