



Ensuring **refugee voices** are heard

"We are refugees, but we are also poets, cooks, photographers, journalists and so much more. Our story does not end with the difficulties we went through to get here. Now, we begin a new life".

Morteza, refugee from Afghanistan

UNHCR expert staff provide information, counselling and referrals to appropriate services through the Protection Helpdesk. © UNHCR/Socrates Baltagiannis



170,000

refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless in Greece. **54%** are women & children

Source: Ministry of Migration and Asylum, UNHCR; February 2026



Top 3

types of requests received through the Protection Helpdesk concern administrative procedures, accommodation and medical assistance

Source: UNHCR, end May 2026



81%

of people in Greece agree that people should be able to take refuge to escape war or persecution

Source: Ipsos and UNHCR, June 2024

CONTEXT

Meaningful engagement with refugee and host communities is essential to ensure that humanitarian action, protection and integration responses are relevant, inclusive, and accountable. In addition, newly arrived refugees need help in obtaining basic information and guidance both on their rights and duties, as well as in navigating through their new reality.

For integration to be successful, it is crucial that both refugees and the host community take reciprocal steps to create a climate of mutual understanding and respect. Sentiments of xenophobia or negative rhetorics create a challenging environment and a sense of marginalisation, that can hamper refugees' efforts to integrate with the local society. Refugees possess important skills and have resilience and creativity in finding solutions.

Communications play a pivotal role in amplifying refugee voices, humanizing their experiences and fostering informed and empathetic public discourse. **By reaching wider audiences, communications can help counter misinformation, shift perceptions and build support for inclusive policies and practices. UNHCR brings unique added value in this space through its mandate, field presence and direct engagement with both refugees and host communities.**




In 2025, severe funding reductions led UNHCR to scale down or even conclude some of its programmes, including on engaging with refugee and host communities. A public awareness programme targeting students, teachers and host communities ceased despite its long-term impact in changing perceptions and bringing communities together.

A total of \$8.3 million is needed in 2026 to sustain priority responses and scale up critical interventions across all UNHCR programmatic areas.

UNHCR'S COMMUNICATING WITH AND FOR COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME 2026

 <p>6,000 refugees and asylum-seekers as well as the wider public reached through different UNHCR channels in 2026</p>	 <p>\$600K prioritized financial requirements for 2026 to communicate with and for communities</p>	 <p>Working with more than 15 refugee-led and 50 grassroots organisations and local NGOs</p>
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UNHCR, through expert staff, its extensive networks with refugee communities and civil society, and strategic partnerships, works to ensure that refugee voices are heard and have a footing in decision-making, responses, and society overall. This is realized through the following:

 <p>Enable two-way communication</p>	<p>UNHCR uses multiple communication channels, to ensure that refugee voices are heard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ through a multilingual Protection Helpdesk, refugees can access information, receive counselling and referrals to appropriate services in seven languages (Arabic, Farsi, French, Sorani, Russian, English, Greek), also functioning as a feedback, complaints, and response mechanism ■ additional digital platforms are used to disseminate timely, reliable, and accessible information (HELP website, Facebook Info Point, WhatsApp) ■ via urban outreach activities, as UNHCR's Protection team also has direct in-person interaction with refugees ■ focus group discussions help involve communities more actively and gather insights considering age, gender and diverse backgrounds.
 <p>Strengthen refugee communities</p>	<p>UNHCR works to strengthen community representation and increase self-reliance by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ maintaining regular contact with Refugee-Led Organisations, Community-Based Organisations, and Women-Led Organisations to exchange information, identify gaps, and align actions, while including them in decision-making and initiatives ■ delivering regular briefing sessions addressing refugees, communities, and frontline actors' staff, covering thematics such as asylum and legal procedures, access to education, violence against women and children, and integration and socioeconomic inclusion ■ coordinating with NGOs and grassroots organizations to strengthen referral pathways and information provision, while enhancing the mapping of available services.
 <p>Raise public awareness and promote positive narratives</p>	<p>UNHCR leverages diverse communication channels, strategic partnerships, and high-visibility initiatives to amplify refugee voices and foster solidarity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ through digital platforms, traditional media, human-centred storytelling, campaigns, collaboration with public figures and refugees themselves, and emblematic events such as World Refugee Day, UNHCR raises awareness of refugee rights and contributions to society, counters misinformation, and mobilizes public support for protection and inclusion, promoting cohesive societies and peaceful coexistence ■ if reinstated with UNHCR support, capacity-building and awareness-raising activities in schools could significantly strengthen efforts to counter stigma and negative narratives in the public sphere.

UNMET NEEDS & POTENTIAL TO SCALE UP

<p>In 2024, UNHCR reached 5,435 refugees and asylum-seekers</p>	<p>In 2025, due to funding cuts up of more than 50%, around 3,500 refugees and asylum seekers were reached</p>	<p>In 2026, UNHCR needs \$350K more to extend its communications activities and services to a wider population, reaching an additional 2,000 individuals through UNHCR channels</p>
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