In coordination with the Government of Iran, UNHCR works to promote resilience-building and livelihoods for refugees through support to technical and vocational training, wage-employment and self-employment including the establishment and expansion of businesses engaging refugees. In Iran, male refugees (refugee card holders) aged between 18 and 63 are eligible for Temporary Work Permits (TWP), which are valid for one year and allow them to work primarily in agriculture, construction, and furnacing sectors. Currently, some 87 job categories are authorized for refugees. Meanwhile, many Afghans are engaged as unskilled daily labours in the informal sector. From 2018 to the end of 2022, UNHCR and its partners provided technical and vocational training and income-generating activities to over 11,700 refugees living in 20 provinces across. More than 60 per cent of the participants were from six refugee-hosting provinces, namely Khorasan Razavi, Fars, Esfahan, Kerman, Markazi, and Tehran. UNHCR continues to advocate expanding access to income-generating opportunities for refugees including female-headed households.

Technical Vocational Training Organization (TVTO)

The key livelihood intervention of UNHCR in Iran is provision of vocational training programmes aimed at enhancing the capacities of Afghan and Iraqi refugees, in partnership with its government partner, the Technical Vocational Training Organization (TVTO). This initiative is geared towards equipping refugees with the necessary skills to address their livelihood needs. From 2018 to the end of 2022, UNHCR supported 9,100 refugees (of whom approx. 30 percent were men and 70 percent women) in 19 provinces.

Average Distribution between TVTO Vocational Categories

- Garment production: 29%
- Artisan: 2%
- Business development: 3%
- Metal industry: 4%
- IT and software: 4%
- Electronics: 7%
- Automotive industry: 9%
- Facilities: 9%
- Food industry: 6%
- Agriculture: 5%
- Tourism: 2%
- Building construction: 2%

Income-Generating Activities

In addition to building refugees’ skills, UNHCR has also supported refugees with income-generating opportunities, which have been implemented mainly through national NGO partners. These interventions included on-the-job training and wage-earning employment, such as garment production, leather crafts making, carpentry, shoemaking, furniture manufacturing, and welding.

Livelihood Interventions since 2018 by Province

UNHCR IRAN LIVELIHOOD INTERVENTIONS