

# Best Practices from the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region of Successful Cooperation with the Private Sector

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## List of Abbreviations

<b>AfDB</b>	African Development Bank
<b>EAC</b>	East African Community
<b>EHAGL</b>	The East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FCS</b>	Fragile and Conflict Affected Situations
<b>GIZ</b>	German Agency for International Cooperation
<b>GRF</b>	Global Refugee Forum
<b>ICGLR</b>	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
<b>ICVA</b>	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced People
<b>IFC</b>	International Finance Cooperation
<b>IGAD</b>	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>INS</b>	Instant Network School
<b>PSP</b>	Private Sector Partnership
<b>RAVES</b>	Refugee Agricultural Value Chains for Economic Self Reliance
<b>SCI</b>	Save the Children International
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>UNIDO</b>	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
<b>UWC</b>	United World College
<b>WB</b>	World Bank
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Program



Kenya. UNHCR-World Bank Joint Data Center Kakuma mission. 2023. © UNHCR/Charity Nzomo

## Key Private Sector Engagement in EHAGL Region

The East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes (EHAGL) Region now hosts **5 million refugees and asylum seekers** in addition to **13 million internally displaced people (IDPs)**. As we are confronted with an ever-growing population of forcibly displaced and stateless persons with increasing needs and shrinking humanitarian budgets, we are faced with **the need to “do more with less.”**

While we do see increasing commitments for economic inclusion of refugees at the regional policy level exemplified in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Kampala Declaration on Jobs and Livelihoods, to date, self-reliance remains out of reach for many refugees in the region. In 2021, internal UNHCR assessments showed that around **70% of refugees in the region had limited right to work and self-employment opportunities.**

Furthermore, displaced populations are often settled in areas with few economic opportunities and limited access to markets. The humanitarian community can not address the needs of forcibly displaced people alone. Support from national, regional, and international private sector partners is needed to find solutions for these populations and their hosting communities. Engaging with the **private sector to diversify the funding base and generate jobs is critical.** Private sector engagement is key to **open advocacy channels with governments to promote economic and financial inclusion and the right to work for refugees.** Close engagement with the private sector is essential to create livelihood opportunities for the forcibly displaced and their integration into market systems.

**Humanitarian programming offers an opportunity for the private sector to engage in innovative approaches and solutions.** Greater private and humanitarian sector collaboration is required to help refugees and their host communities prosper. Better business models for refugee self-reliance need to be developed in cooperation with the private sector that are long-term and strategic, which include forcibly displaced people in the digital economy, in health and education innovation, and climate-smart farming solutions.

At the **EHAGL Regional Bureau level, numerous sector specialists have collaborated closely with UNHCR's Private Sector Partnership (PSP) Team in Africa** to create a strong working relationship to fulfil our mission to raise private sector support and awareness of the plight of people forced to flee, as well as the opportunities for private sector engagement with displaced persons and hosting communities.

This has resulted in numerous experiences highlighted in this briefing note including; 1) advocacy for improved legal frameworks for the private sector to engage formally with refugees; 2) collaboration with key partners such as Multilateral Banks and Chambers of Commerce as accelerators for scaled up work and livelihood opportunities; 3) cooperation with the private sector on shared value partnerships, including major events to raise awareness of the importance of private sector engagement; 4) engagement with private sector foundations; 5) sectorial specific engagement on key topics where innovation of the private sector and support is most needed.

The EHAGL region focuses on two key pillars of engagement, which will also be reflected in the upcoming **global Private Sector Engagement Strategy, namely 1) a fund-raising component and 2) a focus on shared value partnerships.** The latter is the focus of this briefing note.



*Kenya. Refugee-owned company supplies clean energy to camp residents. 2021. © UNHCR/Samuel Otieno*



Kenya. Digital inclusion for gender equality. 2023. © UNHCR/Pauline Omagwa

## Creating an Enabling Environment for Private Sector Engagement

The EHAGL Regional Bureau has been engaging closely with regional and national governmental actors and key development partners, such as the World Bank (WB), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), to advocate for rights-based inclusion of refugees into national economies. Policy frameworks that support formalized engagement of refugees in their national economies are a prerequisite for the private sector to hire refugees, include refugee-managed enterprises in their value chains and provide third country solutions centred on refugee employment.

Best practices worth highlighting include:

- **Advocacy for legal frameworks that enable refugees to work:** At the regional level, engagement with regional organizations, such as the East African Community (EAC), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), is key to ensure refugee management policies reflect a rights-based approach to refugee management and enable refugees to become self-reliant.
- **Partner coordination and access to information:** UNHCR promotes the use of data, research and assessments for evidence-based programming and to inform the engagement of private sector partners. It is also the lead agency in coordinating the economic inclusion of people forced to flee by humanitarian, development, and private sector partnerships.

- **Working with key partners to promote financial inclusion of refugees:** Another best practice is the work undertaken to ensure refugees have access to financial services such as bank accounts and loans to promote the growth of refugee-owned enterprises.
- **Linking refugees with global employers for third country solutions:** UNHCR is supporting refugees to obtain all necessary documentation to enable employers around the globe to hire refugees who match their skills needs and provide important services.

## Best Practice: Advocacy for legal frameworks that enable refugees to work

### IGAD: The Kampala Declaration on Jobs and Livelihoods for Refugees, and Hosting Communities

In December 2018, the United Nations General Assembly affirmed the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) as a blueprint for governments, international organizations and other stakeholders to ensure that host communities get the support they need and that refugees can lead productive lives. The compact highlights the recognition of the development challenges posed by large-scale refugee situations and the need for inclusive development in refugee-hosting areas to build the resilience of local and refugee communities. It calls on the private sector to help enhance refugees' self-reliance.

In a region where many refugees have limited right to work (UNHCR 2021 internal survey showed that some 70% of refugees have limited right to work), ongoing support to hosting governments and advocacy for an enabling environment and the right to work remain key to enable refugees to become self-reliant. Building on the need for solid data, analysis, and information, UNHCR will continue to ensure that key partners, agencies, donors and IFI's have the

information required to advocate for a removal of legal barriers for economic inclusion of refugees (freedom of movement, work permits, right to open bank accounts, right to employment and self-employment, secure land tenure). This includes but is not limited to information about proven economic and other benefits of enabling refugee economic inclusion, such as impacts on growth, labour market and tax contributions.

A good example of regional advocacy in practice are the joint efforts undertaken by UNHCR, IGAD and its member states, and partners under the umbrella of the **Kampala Declaration on Jobs and Livelihoods for Refugees, Returnees, and Hosting Communities**.

**The Kampala Declaration aims to advance livelihood opportunities and economic inclusion to improve self-reliance.** IGAD Member States committed to (i) adopt the Action Plan to enhance livelihoods and self-reliance; (ii) rollout comprehensive national roadmaps and institutional mechanisms through whole-of-society and multi-sectoral approaches that will involve social partners, private sector, refugees, and host communities; and (iii) pursue durable solutions for protracted displacement and address socio-economic challenges for refugees, returnees, and host communities. The Declaration further committed the Member States and IGAD to the following five priority areas for economic inclusion and self-reliance:

- Create a conducive legal environment for economic inclusion and self-reliance to provide access to markets and finance as well as ensure the right to work and freedom of movement.
- Enhance the engagement of private sector and civil society to create sustainable livelihoods and jobs.
- Promote sustainable return and reintegration.
- Enhance natural resource management for livelihoods and self-reliance.
- Strengthen regional coordination, enhance partnerships, and financing.

In October 2022, IGAD, in partnership with UNHCR, German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), World Bank Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP), Amahoro Coalition, International Rescue Committee (IRC), Regional Durable

Solutions Secretariat (REDSS), International Labour Organization (ILO), and International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), organised the Kampala Declaration Forum to take stock of progress made to date by IGAD member states with regards to their commitments.

During this time, the PSP Africa and EHAGL Regional Bureau recognized the strategic importance of the Amahoro Coalition, an African-led initiative convening multi-sector actors, including CEO's from across the region to accelerate private sector leadership in driving sustainable market-based interventions that advance economic inclusion for displaced populations. The Amahoro Coalition was key in mobilizing private sector actors. For the first time, private sector leaders from the region joined the high-level inter-governmental meeting and voiced key policy changes needed to enable their active contribution. This represented a significant milestone in promoting collaboration between the private sector and government actors in advancing the refugee cause in the region.

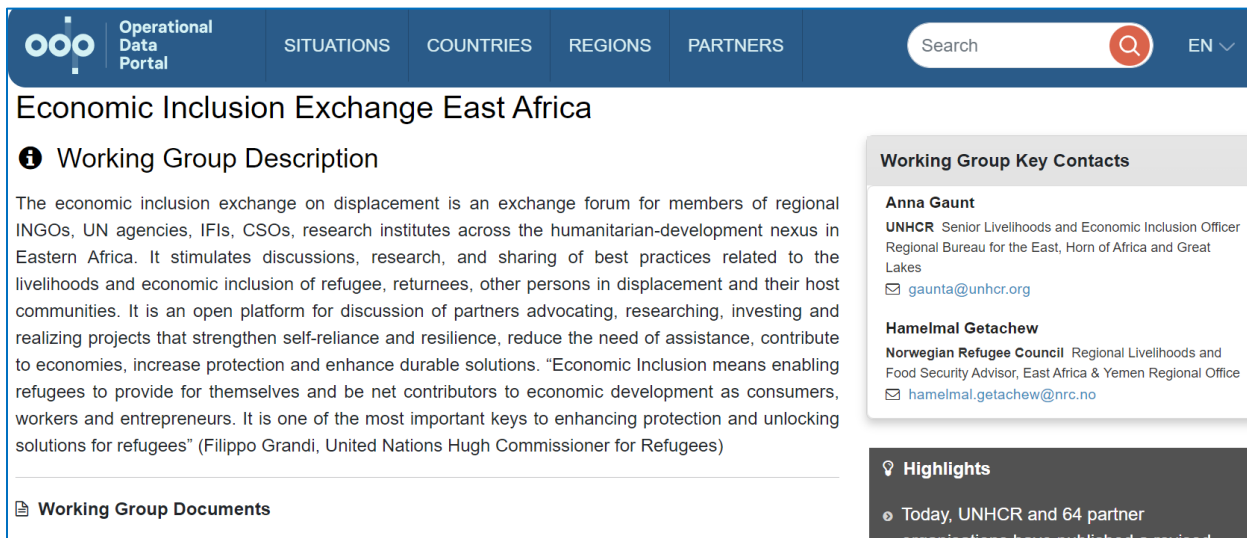
In IGAD member states, at country level, Uganda stands out with legal frameworks that permit full economic inclusion of refugees. Kenya is on a path to an inclusive framework anchored in its refugee bill and the **Shiriki Plan** currently being drafted.

## Best Practice: Ensuring effective Coordination of partners and access to vital information for private sector engagement

### Economic Inclusion Exchange East Africa working group

UNHCR promotes the use of data, research, and assessments for evidence-based programming and to inform the engagement of private sector partners, Multilateral Banks, and Foundations. In the EHAGL region, available data and research on the economic inclusion of forcibly displaced populations often focus on a project level, highlighting lessons learned and success stories. However, detailed data that would support the inclusion of refugees and returnees into projects across the humanitarian-development nexus and between countries is often lacking.

To ensure best access to information, UNHCR's Regional Bureau has set up the Economic Inclusion Exchange East Africa working group co-led with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC). The group has its own inter-agency website where data and reports are made available to all partners hosting over 600 publications. The working group discusses monthly key reports, project milestones, and other relevant findings among its over 500 members, from over 60 partner NGOs, agencies, etc., to ensure informed and efficient programming of livelihoods projects.



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## Economic Inclusion Exchange East Africa

### Working Group Description

The economic inclusion exchange on displacement is an exchange forum for members of regional INGOs, UN agencies, IFIs, CSOs, research institutes across the humanitarian-development nexus in Eastern Africa. It stimulates discussions, research, and sharing of best practices related to the livelihoods and economic inclusion of refugee, returnees, other persons in displacement and their host communities. It is an open platform for discussion of partners advocating, researching, investing and realizing projects that strengthen self-reliance and resilience, reduce the need of assistance, contribute to economies, increase protection and enhance durable solutions. "Economic Inclusion means enabling refugees to provide for themselves and be net contributors to economic development as consumers, workers and entrepreneurs. It is one of the most important keys to enhancing protection and unlocking solutions for refugees" (Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)

**Working Group Documents**

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#### Highlights

- Today, UNHCR and 64 partner organizations have published a revised

Economic Inclusion Exchange East Africa Working Group Website Screenshot. 2023

Numerous foundations, private sector partners, and banks are amongst regular members of the working group and share their input and experience of working with refugees, contributing to a coordinated approach where multiple partners collaborate based on their individual strength and capacities.

## Best Practice: Working with partners to promote financial inclusion of refugees

### Financial Inclusion for Small and Medium Enterprises Development

Most refugees in the region have no access to banks and other financial services, creating an enormous hurdle to self-reliance and economic independence. Without a bank account, they lack a safe place to save and receive money and have fewer options to make payments or access loans. The lack of access to finance also hinders the growth of aspiring refugee start-ups and enterprises.

UNHCR promotes access to financial services for refugees and local communities hosting them, builds awareness of the business potential of refugees as borrowers and their high repayment rates among banks and microfinance institutions, and helps overcome policy constraints and access barriers to enhance financial inclusion. It also highlights the need to overcome policy constraints hindering refugees' access to financial services. It is key for banks, microfinance providers and other actors in the field to understand the potential of refugees as customers with proven high repayment rates.

To create and foster an environment where refugees have a selection of financial services available, UNHCR has built partnerships with a range of financial institutions, financial service providers, and microfinance investors, including the following:

- With the [Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency](#) and the [Grameen Credit Agricole Foundation](#), UNHCR launched a programme to promote access to financial and non-financial services for refugees and host communities in Uganda. The programme provides

selected financial service providers with debt-financing and technical assistance, enabling them to expand their lending operations. They enable entrepreneurial and financial literacy training to over 100,000 refugees and host communities, 75% being women. This is stimulating the development of small businesses and growth of local markets.

- UNHCR is partnering with [KIVA](#) in several countries such as Rwanda to catalyse lending through crowdfunding loans to refugees and their host communities. To date, Kiva has mobilized philanthropic lenders on their crowdfunding platform to provide \$13M to over 15,000 refugee entrepreneurs, demonstrating the viability of lending to displaced populations. In Rwanda, Kiva is working through their Lending Partner [Inkomoko](#) to provide business training and entrepreneurial support to local entrepreneurs in Rwanda's refugee camps.
- Regionally UNHCR is working with [Financial Sector Deepening Africa](#) (FSD) to advocate for extending financial services to refugees in Africa. FSD has been supporting financial service providers with market studies and technical assistance in Rwanda, Uganda, and potentially soon in Ethiopia. This is crucial in ensuring that key financial institutions see the market potential of refugee hosting areas and settlements and engage at scale contributing to the local market systems.
- Dashen Bank and [Inkomoko](#) in Ethiopia partnered to increase access to affordable credit for 650 refugee and host community entrepreneurs in Assosa and Benishangul-Gumuz. After three months of training covering business development, book-keeping, cash flow, inventory management, and investment readiness for small businesses, Dashen Bank provided finance to clients who successfully completed the advisory program from its US\$500,000 capital. The program aims to integrate refugee-owned businesses into existing value chains seamlessly.



Kenya. Digital learning ICT for women. 2023. © UNHCR/Charity Nzomo

## Best Practice: Linking refugees with global employers for third country solutions

### Labour Mobility as complementary pathway

The Regional Bureau's Durable Solutions Unit is engaging closely with state actors, employers, and NGOs involved in establishing Complementary Pathways, including the Government of Canada's department for [Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada \(IRCC\)](#), [Nova Scotia Office of Immigration](#), [MacLeod Group Health Services](#), the [Health Association Nova Scotia \(HANS\)](#) and talent platforms [TalentLift \(TL\)](#) and [Talent Beyond Boundaries \(TBB\)](#) in order to enhance refugee access to labour mobility programs. These enable refugees to resettle to countries with high labor needs and find employment.

In 2022, the Bureau hosted a Labour Mobility workshop in Nairobi, which brought together the above actors, high commissions, and regional partners. In 2022, Phase II of **Canada's Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot** programme was launched with the support of the Bureau and Country Operations in the EHAGL region. The

programme funds partnerships to expand access to employment pathways for refugees to Canada.

UNHCR's Uganda and Rwanda Country operations have partnered with Finn Church Aid (FCA) and Save the Children International (SCI) to develop labour mobility pathways. Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Somalia are laying the foundations for the same in 2023. In 2022, over 120 refugees were selected and receiving job offers in Canada, and another 74 refugees have undergone interviews and are awaiting selection decisions. Working closely with the private sector companies in hosting countries was essential to ensure that refugees have proof of previous employment and skills. We also collaborated closely with companies in Canada to ensure refugees are well matched in terms of skills, experience and language requirements.

UNHCR was instrumental in helping refugees to obtain all required documentation that enables their travel abroad to their new Canadian employers. This way, refugees were able to find truly durable solutions for building a new life and earning a decent living in Canada. This was not possible without the commitment of the private sector to give skilled refugees a chance to earn an income and become members of the Canadian society.



© UNHCR/Sebastian Rich

Kenya. Refugee and host community artisans create products with MADE51. 2019 © UNHCR/Sebastian Rich

## Engaging Accelerators to scale up interventions

Given the need to mobilize the private sector on a large scale as employers of refugees, advocates for economic inclusion, and buyers and suppliers of refugee-made products, **UNHCR has focused engagement on key partners that can function as Accelerators of engagement.** These partners include the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) such as the WB, AfDB and IFC as well as Business Membership Organizations (BMOs) such as Chambers of Commerce. These banks often engage in infrastructure development that improves refugee and hosting communities' access to road networks, electricity, water, markets, etc. IFC, UNIDO and Chambers of Commerce partners play a key role in attracting the private sector to refugee hosting areas and

providing key information on population density, consumer spending, and the viability of refugee hosting areas as a marketplace. To attract more private sector engagement, UNHCR hosted numerous events at country level to ensure that private sector partners are aware of the right to work for refugees, understand how to get work permits, what skills refugees bring to the table, their education levels, etc.

Some of the identified best practices of working through Accelerators include:

- Attracting private sector investment in refugee hosting locations.
- Developing refugee-hosting areas to create win-win solutions for refugees and host communities alike.
- Sharing information with the private sector and mobilization at the national level.
- Integrating refugees into agricultural value chains.
- Sharing information through existing bodies about refugee skills and capabilities.

## Best Practice: Attracting private sector investment into refugee hosting locations

### International Finance Corporation engaging with refugees as entrepreneurs

IFC is an international financial institution and part of the World Bank Group, which encourages private-sector development in less developed countries by offering investment, advisory, and asset-management services. **The IFC's Fragile and Conflict Affected Situations Africa Program focuses on strengthening the private sector within fragile states by targeting advisory and investment interventions.** These include training smaller businesses, helping companies develop supply chains, promoting legal and regulatory improvements, and backing large infrastructure projects. IFC's East Africa Refugee and Host Community Program is a first-of-its-kind program to develop and support private sector solutions for refugees and host communities in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Sudan.

The most advanced program under this partnership is the IFC financed [Kakuma Kalobeyei Challenge Fund \(KKCF\)](#) that enables private investment to unlock the economic potential of refugees and their hosts in the Kakuma-Kalobeyei refugee-hosting area in Kenya's Turkana County. The fund aims to enable better economic integration and self-reliance of forcibly displaced populations within their host community. The initiative attracts private, social and local enterprises to start or scale up their operations in the Kakuma-Kalobeyei area, resulting in employment opportunities for refugees and the host community. It also contributes to increased access of goods and services, growth of refugee and host community-owned businesses, improved economic opportunities for women and youth and streamlined procedures to reduce the time and cost of obtaining business permits, licenses, and registrations in Turkana West.

In Ethiopia, IFC and UNHCR collaborated to establish a share farming model on a 1000-hectare land operated by refugee-host cooperatives. This initiative builds upon years of

investment from the IKEA Foundation to UNHCR, to develop viable agricultural value chains in the refugee camps located in Dollo Ado and Bokolmanyo Woredas in the Somali region. Building on its private sector expertise, IFC will enhance the commercial viability of the current operations by bringing in a farm management company. This partnership will focus on transferring skills, improving governance, and building capable local management teams to develop a farm business, creating job opportunities, and generating income for both refugee and host farmers.

## Best Practice: Developing refugee hosting areas to create win-win solutions for refugees and hosting communities

### African Development Bank: Investing into investment climate reform to improve economic inclusion in refugee hosting areas

The overarching objective of the AfDB is to spur sustainable economic development and social progress in its African member countries thereby contributing to poverty reduction. Since 2022, the AfDB has shown a growing interest in expanding their support to people forced to flee in the EHAGL region.

UNHCR, in partnership with the EAC and the IGAD, is implementing a regional programme funded by the AfDB called "*Enhancing the Investment Climate for the Economic Empowerment of Refugee, Returnee, and Host/Return Community Women*". The programme addresses the legal, regulatory, and infrastructural barriers to economic empowerment of refugees, returnees, and host communities to attract further private sector investment in hosting areas. This will provide win-win solutions for refugees, returnees, and their host communities by stimulating the local market economies.

**The programme identifies sectors for investment and trade in refugee hosting and return areas and facilitates engagement with the private sector through public private**

**dialogues.** The outcome of the research currently undertaken will assist the bank in identifying opportunities for investment in refugee hosting areas that will improve the investment climate and attract more private sector partners.

The programme includes a capacity building component for the IGAD and EAC secretariats with the aim of fostering cooperation and the exchange of best practices. In June 2023, UNHCR, with IGAD and the EAC, organized a joint 'Peer to Peer' workshop. In this workshop, senior officials from IGAD and EAC exchanged investment climate experiences and lessons learnt regarding opportunities and challenges facing forced displacement responses in the sub-region. Participants had the opportunity to share the latest updates on forced displacement trends and discuss forced displacement as a development challenge, that requires holistic solutions such as connection of refugee settlements to infrastructure.

## Best Practice: Information sharing with the private sector and mobilization at national level

### National Private Sector Dialogues

Building on private sector commitments made at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) and responding to various requests to companies to hire refugees, country operations have organised numerous national Private Sector Dialogues. Most recently, these took place in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Sudan, and Uganda. **These dialogues raise awareness about the possibility of hiring refugees, highlighting their skills and talent and the legal framework, aiming to increase private sector engagement with displaced populations overall.** They are vital in engaging national private sector partners who may not have the capacity to create jobs on an international scale, but function as key employers helping refugees to integrate into national market systems.

In Sudan, for instance, private sector partners from the telecom and agribusiness sector, after the dialogue, understood the potential of refugee customers as consumers of telecommunication products. The **White Nile Sugar Company** for instance expressed interest in providing

opportunities to refugees to access employment through casual labour in planting, weeding and water control in the irrigation canals in sugarcane farms, indicating employment opportunities for 3000-4000 individuals. In addition, they were also seeking 300-400 refugees with specialized technical skills in electrical installation and repair, mechanical engineering and air-conditioning. This partnership was paused due to the conflict in Sudan but will be revisited when possible.

Many hiring companies are unaware of the conducive policy environments in many refugee-hosting countries. Therefore, UNHCR has also partnered with companies such as **Kepler, who have worked with the private sector and humanitarian organisations to create job fairs that match the skills of refugees with employers.** UNHCR also advocates for including refugees in national jobs databases and job centres. For example, recently in Djibouti, UNHCR collaborated with the Ministry of Labour to incorporate refugees into the newly established online jobs database.

## Best Practice: Integrating refugees into agricultural value chains

### FAO Refugee Agricultural Value Chains for Economic Self Reliance (RAVES) project

One of the focus areas of cooperation between FAO and UNHCR is the development of sustainable agricultural livelihoods for displaced populations. Over the last two years, FAO has been piloting collaboration with private companies, including [INSTA](#) in Kenya and [KadAfrica](#) in Uganda as part of the US\$ 4.7 million IKEA Foundation funded *Refugee Agriculture Value Chains for Economic Self Reliance (RAVES)* project. This project promotes a value chain approach for economic integration of refugees and host communities. Farmers are incentivized to plant crops of interest to the private sector, such as groundnuts in Kenya and passion fruit in Uganda.

INSTA commits to purchasing the products to ensure the viability of the production chain beyond the donor investment phase. INSTA, in turn, produces products to reverse the effects of

malnutrition in children, which are utilized in USAID and World Food Program (WFP) food pouches. Producing the raw material locally reduces the carbon footprint of products that had to previously be imported. The project builds capacities among refugees and host communities to engage in market-oriented sustainable production and agribusiness. This is achieved through the establishment of farmer field schools and training in agricultural practices, climate-smart agriculture, gender-responsive climate-resilient technologies, and business skills.

### WFP “buy local” food initiative

UNHCR has been partnering with WFP to find opportunities to diminish the dependency on food items that are shipped internationally and need to be stored in warehouses. Transitioning to cash-based interventions and encouraging small scale farmers to cultivate products that can be sold in refugee hosting areas is key in stimulating local economies. This, in turn, attracts more investment from established private sector companies. Below are two examples where WFP have been implementing this approach, enhancing refugee livelihoods and ensuring food security of local communities.

**Integrated smallholder resilience and livelihoods support in Gambella (2022 – 2025):** WFP received funding from the KfW Development Bank and is implementing a ‘buy

local’ food systems initiative in the Gambella Region of Ethiopia that will see refugees and host communities produce food and develop supply chains. This initiative will stimulate agricultural production that directly responds to consumer needs and improves the nutrition of 15,000 households. The pilot phase will initially cost US\$3.5 million. Locally produced food items will reduce the need to ship in food items such as dry beans and maize.

**Retail in a Box:** In South Sudan the [WFP](#) has rolled out a ‘[retail in a box](#)’ pop-up initiative in the Gorom refugee camp that is spurring on local businesses while helping refugees buy their foods of choice. As of mid-2023, Gorom was home to over 4,000 refugees across 11 villages. To create a new market for the refugee community, WFP installed portable storage containers in the camp, transforming them into secure shops with doors, windows, and ventilation. Local suppliers were selected and trained by WFP on food safety and quality, cash management and customer service. This initiative contributes to strengthening local market systems, making refugees and their hosting communities more resilient to shocks, and creating valuable income opportunities along agricultural value chains.



Rwanda. Refugees and host community members improve their livelihoods thanks to Misizi marshland project. 2021. © UNHCR/Eric Didier Karinganire

## Best Practice: Information sharing through exiting bodies about refugee skills and capabilities

### Working with Chambers of Commerce and Industry

Chambers of Commerce act as a private sector voice, advocating for an improved rights framework that allows refugees to have legal employment status and access work contracts. Formal employment also ensures inclusion in pension schemes, health insurance and enables refugees to contribute as taxpayers.

Chambers of Commerce can amplify information on refugees' location and their importance as consumers and employees who can bring additional skills to their employers such as language abilities, vital details on the presences and habits of consumers in their countries of origin, etc. Refugees are also key in providing access to companies that wish to extend their operations into refugee settlement areas.

These settlements offer interesting business opportunities due to the density of inhabitants and the possibility of easily accessing many new potential consumers and clients.

In the EHAGL region, UNHCR has seen some initial engagement with the national Chambers of Commerce. For instance, in Rwanda, UNHCR initiated conversations with the Private Sector Federation to include refugees into services provided to the Rwandan business community. The aim is to jointly organize business fora, guide key partner engagement and foster economic inclusion of refugees through employment, internship, and apprenticeship. This will help refugee owned enterprises supported by partners such as INKOMOKO to grow and integrate into the national economy and develop business relationships with key Rwandese enterprises.

In Kenya, the UNHCR office has collaborated closely with the [Kenya National Chambers of Commerce and Industry \(KNCCI\)](#). The **KNCCI is part of the efforts to initiate formalization and registration of refugee owned businesses in Turkana County where the Kakuma Kalobeyi Settlement** is located.

IFC, UNHCR and Turkana County Government **established the one stop shop services ([Biashara Center](#) for business)**. This initiative seeks to have a one stop shop in Kakuma to address the business and civil registration needs of the host and refugee communities. This will help in timely provision of business and county services to refugees, host communities and their businesses. UNHCR also initiated engagement in Uganda to see how refugees can be included in services provided to the national business communities.

Advocacy by the private sector is crucial to ensure that hosting governments understand the significance of creating an enabling legal environment that allows private sector actors to hire refugees as employees and engage with refugee enterprises as suppliers within their value chains.

#### **Kakuma as a Marketplace: A Consumer and Market Study of a Refugee Camp and Town in Northwest Kenya**

Kakuma camp is a melting pot of refugees from South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sudan. This study, authored by IFC, and published in 2018, showed the market potential in Kakuma and illustrated business opportunities and challenges for the private sector in the region. The study showed business opportunities in retail trade, telecommunications, mobile money, banking, access to credit, education, housing, sanitation, and energy. A key takeaway of the study is that Kakuma, rather than being a barren economic landscape, presents a population engaging in a vibrant informal economy that offers opportunities to the private sector to transform into a sustainable formal economy that promotes economic self-reliance.

*Source: Kakuma as a Marketplace: A Consumer and Market Study of a Refugee Camp and Town in Northwest Kenya Source: (English). Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/482761525339883916/Kakuma-as-a-Marketplace-A-Consumer-and-Market-Study-of-a-Refugee-Camp-and-Town-in-Northwest-Kenya>*

## PSP Africa: Working with the Private Sector on Shared Value Partnerships

Private Sector Partnerships (PSP) Africa and the EHAGL Regional Bureau have developed, through joint initiatives, a strong working relationship to achieve the common aim of supporting forcibly displaced communities by focusing on shared value partnerships, which can lead to funding commitments. These best practices include the following:

- Co-creating opportunities for discourse with the private sector in Africa.
- Engaging the expertise of UNHCR programme and operations colleagues in conversations with private sector stakeholders.
- Consistent communication and updates between the Bureau and PSP to keep each other abreast on operations, activities, and initiatives to identify synergies for collaboration.
- Elevating refugee and displaced persons' voices in PSP activities with the Bureau's support.

Below are examples of how each best practice has been actualized within the last two years.

### Best Practice: Co-creating opportunities for discourse with the private sector in Africa

#### Example: 36 Million Solutions – Africa Private Sector Forum on Forced Displacement

In 2021 UNHCR, in partnership with the Amahoro Coalition and the Government of Rwanda, organised the first Africa Private Sector Forum on Forced Displacement, dubbed “[36 Million Solutions](#).” The forum followed Amahoro Coalition’s participation at the 2019 GRF, which

identified the need to mobilise more African businesses and philanthropists to engage and contribute to supporting displaced communities in Africa.

UNHCR’s objective was to build strategic partnerships with private sector leaders on the continent and to obtain impact-based contributions to support interventions in areas such as education, livelihoods, and access to healthcare. The forum was a critical first step in building strong ties with the African private sector community and forging a group of business leaders championing and advocating for the support and inclusion of people forced to flee. A total of 589 participants attended, resulting in 20 pledges in cash and in-kind worth US\$4.25 million to UNHCR. In addition, internships and work opportunities were offered to refugees, providing vital opportunities to gain work experience that can lead to future employment. Efforts were made to integrate refugees into supply chains, fostering the growth of refugee-owned businesses.

Collaboration between the PSP team in Africa and the EHAGL Regional Bureau was key to the success of this forum. In the lead-up to the event, regular consultations were held with senior management and programme colleagues for critical decision-making. PSP Africa and the Bureau worked together to mobilise the private sector community and to develop relationships with UNHCR. During the forum, the Regional Bureau Director engaged in bilateral meetings with the National Bank and Kush Bank to discuss partnership opportunities to support forcibly displaced communities in Kenya and South Sudan.



Kigali, Rwanda. 36 Million Solutions Private Sector Forum. 2021.

**Best Practice: Engaging the expertise of UNHCR programme and operations colleagues in conversations with private sector stakeholders**

**Example: Co-creation workshop with EHAGL Regional Bureau and Safaricom PLC, engagement with the Tent Partnership and UNIDO**

### Safaricom

Safaricom PLC, a lead telecommunication company based in Kenya, was among the private sector participants in the forum. PSP Africa worked with Bureau colleagues in livelihood and innovation in structuring the partnership with Safaricom before the forum. In the follow-up to their participation, in March 2022, UNHCR organized a co-creation workshop with Safaricom to explore joint livelihood and innovation interventions to support refugees.

Livelihoods and education programme colleagues from the Bureau actively participated in the workshop and highlighted the needs of displaced communities in Kenya and the region. Following the workshop, a partnership proposal was submitted to Safaricom valued at US\$ 5 million. The Safaricom partnership model of engagement through involving the Bureau and continuous stewardship shows how closely working together results in a strategic approach to building partnerships.

PSP Africa has continued to engage Safaricom, and as a result, UNHCR launched a joint campaign with Safaricom dubbed [#BongaForLife](#) in December 2022. **The campaign asked Safaricom customers to donate their loyalty points to help drought-affected families in Kenya.** The discussions also raised the awareness amongst staff of the market potential of refugees as customers for their mobile service products.

Most recently we have also started to explore opportunities for joint advocacy in Kenya to permit refugees full access to mobile banking services.

### Tent Partnership

The Senior Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion Officer of the EHAGL Regional Bureau and PSP HQ facilitated a preliminary discussion with the Tent Foundation, an important worldwide partner advocating for businesses to hire refugees and looking to expand their activities in Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda. The foundation has a network of over 300 major companies committed to integrating refugees into their workforce.

The Tent Foundation has been working with UNHCR in the Middle East and North Africa region, with UNHCR providing access to our network of partners and to refugees. Ideally, UNHCR would benefit from technical expertise, knowledge sharing, and joint advocacy efforts to attract new businesses to integrate refugees into their social impact strategies. The partnership conversation continues to flesh out opportunities in East Africa and engage businesses. The hope is to engage enterprises that form part of the Tent Partnership, mobilizing leading businesses to connect refugees to work through hiring, training, and mentorship.

### United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

In October 2022, the EHAGL Regional Bureau, in close cooperation with the Kenya and Uganda offices helped organize private sector missions, to show enterprises specialized in green and sustainable technologies from Germany the potential for investments in refugee hosting areas. This was done to mobilise private sector solutions for sustainable livelihoods in the humanitarian context. UNIDO hosted a roundtable in Kenya where PSP Africa facilitated the participation of the Amahoro Coalition.

Private sector partners visited Kakuma-Kalobeyei and explored innovative solutions for issues such as the need for cold storage of farm products and medical supplies, medical solutions, and solar solutions to meet the growing energy needs of the local population. UNHCR is now exploring how to work together with UNIDO to secure pledges from the private sector before the 2023 Global Refugee Forum.

## Best Practice: Elevating refugee and displaced persons' voices in PSP activities, with the support of the Regional Bureau

### Examples: Inclusion of MADE51 in PSP Africa Events

PSP Africa has routinely sought refugees' representation in its events and activities such as the Ramadan Iftar, Step for Safety walks, virtual comedy show, and most recently, the World Refugee Day Charity Golf Tournament. Refugee participation has been enabled in two distinct ways – first, through sharing personal remarks, creating a space for refugees and displaced persons to tell their narratives, and second, through displaying products and items that refugee artisans have made. For PSP Africa, [MADE51](#) has offered a strong opportunity to showcase refugee artisan products.

Engagements with MADE51 are facilitated through our strong relationship with the EHAGL Regional Bureau. In some instances, the MADE51 participation has also been supported by private sector partners.

For example, at the [36 Million Solutions Forum](#) in Kigali, Rwanda, PSP Africa worked with the EHAGL Regional Bureau and PSP HQ to connect with IKEA F to help cover the costs of MADE51 participants who attended the Forum and ensure that they could partake in the refugee artisan marketplace. Further, in June 2022 and 2023, through the facilitation of the EHAGL Regional Bureau, **PSP Africa invited MADE51 to display and sell products at the World Refugee Day Charity Golf Tournaments** held at Muthaiga Country Club. Such an event secures engagement with a diverse golfing community in Kenya. Through their participation in the tournament, MADE51 secured corporate clients for the sale of beaded lanyards.

For events organised throughout the year by PSP Africa and celebrity supporters, efforts are made to include MADE51's pop-up stand to sell refugee-made products to the private sector to display the work of refugee artisans and directly support their self-reliance.

#### MADE 51

UNHCR launched [MADE51](#) in 2018 as a global brand of artisanal home décor and accessories crafted by refugees. The aim is to strengthen the capacity of displaced persons to utilize their artisanal skills to craft market-ready products. This initiative connects refugees, returnees and IDPs with social enterprises to design, produce and market artisanal products around the world. Through MADE51, UNHCR applies its mandate in refugee protection and solutions and convenes partners to co-invest their core business strengths in creating a global collection of refugee-made products that can be presented to global audiences, with a specific focus on the retail sector. Currently as of March 2023, there are 35 Local Social Enterprise (LSE) partners in 23 countries. 3,534 refugee and host community artisans (2,595 refugees, 939 host community) earned income through MADE51 in 2021. Over 90% of MADE51 artisans are women.

In collaboration with EAC, IGAD and the UNHCR EHAGL Regional Bureau, MADE51 is strengthening value chains for refugee artisans within the region and expanding regional sales networks. In 2022, MADE51 LSEs partners began to participate in joint regional marketing opportunities where they showcased and sold their refugee-made product lines at sales venues (i.e., Village Market) and events (i.e., Nairobi Marathon) in Nairobi. MADE51 products have been distributed through local, regional, and international markets. Internationally, MADE51 strengthens their ability to deliver on current opportunities (e.g., the 2023 UNIQLO order of 29,000 pieces). The EHAGL region has shown receptivity to this type of fair trade and mission-driven business. This regional programme will allow MADE51's model to grow into a larger business venture.



Uniqlo stores in Japan and England celebrated 2023 World Refugee Day with our artisan collection.



© UNHCR/Sebastian Rich

Kenya. Host community tailor poses with her MADE 51 products. 2020. © UNHCR/Sebastian Rich

## Working with Private Sector Foundations

Private sector foundations are key partners in the EHAGL region when it comes to advocacy, technical expertise, networking and funding for innovative projects. While many institutional foundations value and prioritize funding grassroots efforts, they are simultaneously interested in systems change at large and providing support to activities that will change policies to allow socio-economic inclusion of refugees. UNHCR's unique and complementary value-add to refugee-led efforts is well aligned with foundation interests and results in long lasting partnerships.

Few institutional foundations are explicitly interested in refugees or issues of migration but may have other areas of programmatic alignment with UNHCR such as education or health, aligned with their strategic goals (e.g., Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)). The examples below show how the Bureau team and PSP have created holistic partnerships:

- **Technical engagement:** Successful partnerships require ongoing and mutual relationship investment from both UNHCR and Foundation technical teams. This is key in the co-creation process.
- **Collaboration:** Partnerships benefit from a regional collaboration approach, in particular when foundation operations are decentralized. Examples include partners such as The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Mastercard Foundation, Porticus and "la Caixa" Foundation.

**Best Practice:** Technical engagement with foundations, ongoing relationship investment from both the technical and fundraising teams

### Providing technical advice and support to [IKEA Foundation](#)

As noted above, most foundations do not accept unsolicited proposals and instead rely on a strong

relationship and robust technical discussions as steps to receiving a proposal invitation. Many foundations value co-creation or some form of input into the project development process. Additionally, because foundations have a clear strategy and approach, UNHCR technical input is essential in identifying mutually beneficial alignment and opportunity throughout design, implementation, monitoring and bespoke reporting of successful projects.

At the 2019 GRF the IKEA Foundation pledged EUR 100 million in grants over the next five years for programmes that help refugees and their hosting communities improve their incomes and become more self-reliant. All IKEA Foundation funded projects in the region have a strong private sector component that ensures the sustainability of the projects.

One programme in the [Somali region of Ethiopia \(Dollo Ado\)](#) focuses on the development of an economically inclusive and resilient refugee hosting area, where business-based activities in the agricultural sector can ensure local food production and improve energy access. This was made possible through a generous land allocation by the government. IKEA Foundation's investment has developed sustainable agricultural value chains.

In Rwanda, the [Misizi Marshlands Agricultural Project completed in 2022](#), had governmental support through allocation of land for farming cooperatives of refugees and host communities. The project, implemented jointly with FAO, UNHCR, and WFP, improved income, food security, and peaceful coexistence for 1,427 households. Another IKEA Foundation funded project in Rwanda is addressing energy access for refugee and host community households through market systems development to stimulate change within local energy systems to improve clean energy access.

The [Sustainable Market Inclusive Livelihood Pathways to Self-Reliance program \(SMILES\)](#) seeks to address rural refugee livelihood challenges in Uganda. SMILES aims to help ultra-poor refugee and Ugandan (host community) households in the Kikuube and Kyegegwa Districts graduate from food insecurity and fragile livelihoods to self-reliance and resilience. The project combines a graduation approach, led by AVSI, and a market systems development

approach, led by Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI) in partnership with UNHCR, Renewable Energy Powering Agriculture and Rural Livelihood Enhancement (REPARLE), Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), and the University of Makerere.

Under its urban refugee livelihoods programme, IKEA Foundation has awarded US\$ 30 million to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) for urban [Re:Build projects in Kampala and Nairobi](#), which work closely with businesses on securing access to jobs for refugees.

## Best Practice: Regional collaboration for decentralized foundations

### Working regionally with the Mastercard Foundation

UNHCR has strong alignment with [The Mastercard Foundation](#) in the areas of private sector partnerships, education, and livelihoods for displaced populations. In addition to the foundation's financial support for education in Kenya, UNHCR has built technical relationships across the foundation. PSP Africa has a long-standing partnership with the foundation to mobilise private sector on the continent and the foundation played a key role in the 36 Million Solutions Forum by supporting refugee scholar presence and attracting private sector participation.

The UNHCR global education team regularly engages with the foundation as a key stakeholder in the Education Alliance. Livelihoods and education teams across Africa were among the trusted partners who provided technical advice for the foundation's Regional Refugee and Displaced Persons Strategy focussing education and work for refugee and displaced youth populations. The [Mastercard Scholar Programme](#), as part of the [15by30 campaign](#), pledged to give 3750 scholarships for higher education to forcibly displaced (not just in the EHAGL region). The campaign aims to ensure that 15% of young women and men can access higher education by 2030. Within the 15by30 campaign, there are several other private actors supporting scholarships in the region.



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Kenya. Grace Nshimitumukiza, 23, teaches students in a newly opened classroom space in Kenya's Kakuma Refugee Camp. 2019.

## Engagement with the Private Sector on key thematic areas: Innovation and Education

**Best Practice:** Developing innovative partnership to address long lasting issues affecting displaced populations

### Concentrated engagement of the UNHCR Innovation Service in the EHAGL region

UNHCR's Innovation Service has partnered with a variety of private sector actors committed to and investing in advancing innovation in delivering services to forcibly displaced people. The East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region hosts key economies such as Kenya, Uganda

and Rwanda with growing markets that are drivers for regional innovation.

Globally the Innovation Service partners with [Cisco](#) and [Ericsson](#), who have provided in-kind support to several regional projects, specifically focussed on connectivity, and [Verizon](#), who has contributed their expertise on accessibility issues. Looking ahead, the Service has recently signed an exciting partnership with [ARM UK](#) focused on data innovation work and is in discussion with other technology companies who have articulated an interest in supporting the work of the Innovation Service. Below are some more detailed examples from the region:

#### Gebeya:

Under the [PROSPECTS](#) funded project for safe access to digital employment, the Innovation Service is working with a pan-African online freelance platform, Gebeya, to provide bespoke training and mentorship to improve the labour market competitiveness of 150 forcibly displaced people and 150 members of host communities in Ethiopia. Gebeya will facilitate employment through a customized digital labour platform that will serve as a springboard to main talent

marketplaces. The project is a learning pilot to create replicable approaches to the inclusion of forcibly displaced persons in the digital economy.

### GSMA:

The Innovation Service holds a strong relationship with the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA), a global organisation unifying the mobile ecosystem, spanning several years with multiple examples of formal collaboration. In particular, in 2022, the Service worked with the GSMA on a large scale research project: [the Digital Worlds of Displacement Affected Communities](#). The study took place across three countries: South Sudan, Lebanon and Papua New Guinea and focused on how communities were using digital and mobile technology. The findings of this research are already paying dividends with many teams developing programming based on these insights. The Service has also been engaged with the GSMA in advocacy related efforts to ensure refugees can formally participate in the digital economy. This year we join forces advocating in Kenya for SIM registration that is inclusive of refugees and that enables mobile banking.

### Amazon Web Services and Microsoft Data Science:

In Uganda, the Innovation Service partnered with Amazon and Microsoft data science teams to support Uganda's [inter-agency Feedback, Referral and Resolution Mechanism \(FRRM\)](#). This was to analyse call centre data logs (text) and classify them into categories to provide better information assistance to the almost [2000 callers per month](#). This provides refugees with vital information about their rights, services and allows them to voice concerns and find solutions in a timely manner. Amazon and Microsoft contributed specialized skills: natural language processing engineers and suggestions to leverage UNHCR's Amazon/Microsoft corporate systems to classify and quantify these calls.

### Omdena Foundation:

Following the success of [Omdena Foundation research](#) for Project Jetson in Somalia, UNHCR Innovation Service has partnered up with [Omdena AI for Impact initiative](#) to package [an application built](#) by the University of Essex Human Rights, Big Data and Technology (HRBDT) initiative for the Innovation Service to detect and potentially predict drought patterns in Somalia using satellite imagery. These data are

key for agro-pastoral communities to plan their livelihoods, they can feed into early warning mechanisms on drought, and permit improved adaptation to climatic changes.

### DataRobot:

Under the [Data Robot AI for Good initiative](#), UNHCR's Innovation Service has procured DataRobot software licenses for predictive analytics for different UNHCR teams to leverage the software. Under this programme, UNHCR also has access to DataRobot Academy and specialized skills such as data scientists training. The first use case is Somalia, with a spin-off from [Project Jetson](#), which currently uses open-source software (R and python), is aiming to be able to [anticipate the number of forcibly displaced people arrivals](#) in the different regions of Somalia. This is key for UNHCR to be more proactive and enhance anticipative action. It enables us to improve our planning and ensuring that required resources are in place to receive new arrivals and provide them with basic necessities.

### Turn.io:

Since 2020, the Innovation Service has worked with the [Turn.io](#) platform to leverage WhatsApp services to reach communities of concern to share life-saving information, support registration activities and enable the coordination of available inter-agency services. WhatsApp is one of the most used channels by the communities UNHCR works with. This partnership has allowed UNHCR to 'meet people where they are' in an online space, providing timely responses to the most frequently asked questions related to asylum, access to rights and services. After an initial pilot in Ecuador, Sudan joined the global project and discussions are currently underway on how best to leverage the Turn.io platform to aid in the Sudan crisis response. Turn.io supported UNHCR beyond the scope of its contract with brokering additional funding sources and supporting negotiations with WhatsApp's parent company Meta to expedite engagement and response on sensitive issues.

## Best Practice: Joint engagement with private sector partners to promote education of children in displaced communities

### Working with the private sector on inclusion of refugee children into national systems and access to education materials and schools

The education sector has been at the forefront of engaging with the private sector to find solutions to improve education, provide refugees with access to higher education and scholarships, and the use of innovative digital solutions. Here are a few examples of initiatives that UNHCR is implementing with the private sector in the education space:

#### Smart Communities Coalition (SCC):

This multi-stakeholder partnership led by Mastercard and USAID, aims to transform delivery models in refugee camps and settlements, focusing on connectivity, energy and digital tools. Working together, [SCC's](#) members and collaborators will identify new models to deploy innovative technology and partnership solutions to enable transformational change in the delivery of services to displaced individuals and host communities. These efforts will empower displaced individuals with the increased ability to provide for themselves and their families, thereby helping generate greater value to host communities.

UNHCR is a member of the coalition and uses it as a forum to connect with organizations and make links with private sector organisations that can support UNHCR's programme and objectives. After a formal launch in July 2020, the Smart Communities Coalition Innovation Fund (SCCIF) awarded four grants to companies that will use renewable energy technologies to increase access to electricity in refugee-hosting areas of Kenya and Uganda in benefiting nearly 3,500 displaced and host community households. The first round is funded by Power Africa.

#### The Instant Network School (INS) programme:

[INS](#) is a flag-ship connected education initiative established by UNHCR and Vodafone Foundation. The programme aims to support refugee-hosting schools to increase the quality of education by providing innovative and digital solutions. The INS programme was established with a comprehensive approach and vision for educational technology, transforming existing classrooms into multimedia learning hubs. It provides an enabling and inclusive digital learning environment complete with connectivity, EdTech and solar resources, robust teacher training, curated digital content aligned to the national curriculum, and rich supplementary resources. The partnership programme has been running since 2013 and has been undergoing an expansion since 2020. The programme aims to reach 500,000 students, 10,000 teachers by 2025.

#### ProFuturo:

UNHCR, in collaboration with the [ProFuturo](#) Foundation, has successfully been implementing a connected learning programme in fifteen refugee-hosting schools in Rwanda since 2021 to provide access to inclusive, equitable, and quality digital education for refugee and host community children.

This programme supports the implementation of ICT in teaching and learning through integration of digital infrastructure into teaching practices in schools attended by refugees and Rwandan nationals to enhance the digital skills of primary students, teachers, and heads of schools. Digital tools such as, tablets, laptops, projectors, routers, and accessories, have enabled refugee hosting primary schools to utilize ICT in learning and teaching processes. This digital education programme was promoted by Telefónica Foundation and "La Caixa" Foundation. Through its Connected Learning Program, UNHCR has continued to strengthen the quality of primary education by improving the ability of teachers to manage classrooms and use digital tools and online platforms to enhance the learning experiences of 17,000 refugees and host community students.

### Learning Equality:

[Learning Equality](#) (active in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania) is a non-profit organization committed to enabling the right to quality education and is funded by Google.org. Learning Equality developed Kolibri, a free open-source educational “ecosystem.” It benefits learners who have little or no regular internet access, including young refugees, and has been one of the fastest-expanding educational platforms recently Kolibri is also designed to work on as many devices and operating systems as possible, meaning that learners don’t need to have the latest (and most expensive) phones or tablets but can use “legacy” devices that may be several years old. Another crucial advantage is that Kolibri, which draws on more than 125,000 open educational resources – both academic and related material to encourage further exploration – can be adapted to align with national curriculums. Teachers can curate material for their specific requirements, while the platform also lets them monitor students’ work and provide feedback. [Read more here](#) (page 36).

### United World College (UWC) Refugee Initiative:

For many years [UWC](#) has educated refugees from conflict hotspots like Syria, Palestine, Yemen, Western Sahara, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Tibet, Colombia and Guatemala. Considering the dramatic escalation in the number of young, displaced people fleeing conflict, persecution or environmental disaster, combined with the need for future post-conflict leadership, there is an urgent need to increase the number of refugee students being granted access to a world-class education at a UWC school or college. Therefore, UWC launched a Refugee Initiative, which aims to raise the funds for an additional 100 scholarships per year for refugee students to attend one of the 17 UWC schools and colleges worldwide (secondary education).

### Educate A Child Programme:

The [Educate a Child Program](#) jointly funded by UNHCR and Education Above All was initiated in 2012. Educate A Child supports the hardest-to-reach out of school children around the world facing barriers to education including poverty, discrimination, conflict, challenging geographies and climate change. It aims to provide equitable quality primary education for out-of-school refugee and internally displaced children, and to support their retention once enrolled. A new phase of the EAC Programme has been proposed to EAA, and includes Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia and Uganda amongst the total 16 focus countries globally.

### Coursera for Refugees:

[Coursera](#) aims to transform lives through learning. Coursera for Refugees brings this transformation to vulnerable populations around the world. Launched in 2016 when a handful of Coursera employees approached the U.S. Department of State with an idea: what if we could provide access to Coursera’s catalog at no cost to refugees around the world? Today, Coursera provides refugees worldwide access to wide-ranging courses. The platform serves over 118,000 refugees in more than 119 countries worldwide and works directly with governments and non-profits, enabling refugee learners to access top content from Coursera’s university and company partners for life-transforming skills.



Kenya. Digital inclusion for gender equality. 2023. © UNHCR/Pauline Omagwa

# Best Practices from the East and Horn and Great Lakes Region of **Successful Cooperation with Private Sector**

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