



OUTCOME AREA 7

Syrian refugee girls in Azraq Refugee Camp, Jordan, build digital skills through practical training, helping them to stay safe online and take on leadership roles in their communities. © UNHCR/Hasan Alabdallah

Community engagement and women's empowerment

Core output indicators

217,000 people took part in UNHCR and partners' participatory assessments in 107 countries, compared to 263,000 in 2024. Over half were refugees and asylum-seekers.

4.4 million people used UNHCR-supported feedback and response mechanisms to voice their needs, concerns and feedback in 130 countries, an increase of 2% from 2024. Over 91% of them were refugees and asylum-seekers.



Protection and solutions are strongest when displaced and host communities are heard, and when their ideas and capacities shape the response. In 2025, amid protracted displacement, more complex operating environments and a 16% decrease in expenditure under this outcome area, UNHCR prioritized accountability to affected people and core community based protection functions. This included participatory assessments, feedback and response mechanisms, and support to community based and women-led structures. These efforts sustained community engagement at scale across many operations.

Key results

UNHCR supported participation of affected communities and worked with community structures to identify and address risks, support social cohesion and promote peaceful co-existence, reaching more than **8.2 million** forcibly displaced and stateless people.

- In the Syrian Arab Republic, UNHCR-supported community centres, mobile units and community outreach volunteers reached nearly 1.4 million IDPs and returnees with counselling, assistance and referrals.
- In Lebanon, UNHCR involved more than 83,000 forcibly displaced people in programme design, implementation and evaluation through surveys, community groups and outreach volunteer networks, with strong participation by women and girls.
- In Sudan, UNHCR supported over 70 community-based protection networks, with more than 1,400 trained members, and 60 multi-purpose community centres to share information, consult displaced people and monitor protection concerns.
- In Jordan, UNHCR involved refugees with disabilities in programme design and implementation and provided specialized assistance to more than 640 people, including assistive devices, home-based care and skills training.
- Globally, 260 displaced and stateless people, 55% of them women, and organizations led by them contributed to the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) Progress Review. An Advisory Board of 17 organizations also helped shape UNHCR's approach to localization.

Local and national actors remained central to UNHCR's partnerships. Local civil society organizations alone accounted for 71% of partners funded by UNHCR, including local NGOs and refugee-led, IDP-led and women-led organizations.

- In 39 countries, UNHCR provided 229 small grants through the Grant Agreement modality, supporting unregistered organizations led by forcibly displaced and stateless people and host communities.
- In Ukraine, UNHCR engaged more than 750 civil society entities, including IDP councils and community-based organizations (57% women-led), strengthening community-based protection and complementing efforts by local authorities. Their work reached more than 200,000 people through social cohesion activities and provided basic social support to over 60,000 people.
- In Afghanistan, UNHCR provided small grants to women- and disability-led organizations and supported targeted projects for women and children with disabilities, strengthening outreach, monitoring and service delivery in return areas.
- UNHCR supported the launch of the Global Network of Refugees with Disabilities, helping move from consultation to sustained influence in policy and programming. The Network also engaged in the GRF Progress Review 2025, where refugees with disabilities contributed to policy dialogues on protection and solutions.

UNHCR strengthened women's participation and leadership through community governance, women-led initiatives and inclusive decision-making.

- In Ethiopia, UNHCR provided small grants and capacity-building to women-led organizations to strengthen their role in protection monitoring. Women's empowerment networks engaged over 400 members in dialogues on service delivery.
- In the United Republic of Tanzania, women's equal role in community leadership amplified their voices, improved identification of gender-specific protection risks and fostered more inclusive dialogue in refugee communities.
- In Ecuador, UNHCR and UN Women helped consolidate a national network of 18 women-led community organizations, creating a platform for grassroots leadership and advocacy.

UNHCR maintained and strengthened feedback mechanisms to ensure safe two-way communication and responsive action.

- In Chad, UNHCR digitalized the hotline and strengthened inter-agency accountability to affected people coordination, leading to safe access to feedback and response mechanisms for 90% of refugees, demonstrating substantial progress in accessible and coordinated feedback and response mechanisms.
- In Bangladesh, UNHCR expanded a centralized digital feedback platform and improved connectivity at service points, enabling over 365,000 queries to be processed with 97% resolved within service standards, making responses faster and more reliable.
- In Myanmar, UNHCR harmonized complaints and feedback mechanisms nationwide and improved the [UNHCR Help website](#). More than 83,000 people used these mechanisms to raise questions, complaints and feedback, helping UNHCR respond to people's needs and adjust its programmes.

Challenges

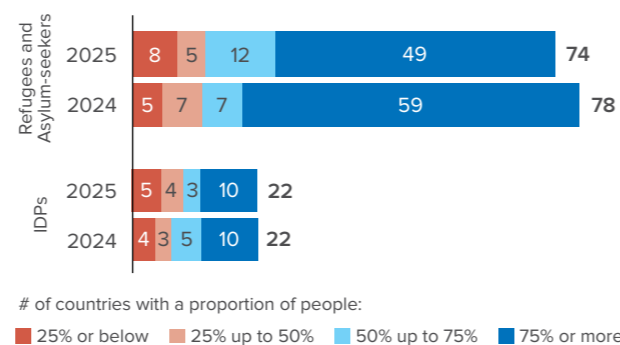
Funding reductions and staffing cuts weakened outreach, community-based protection activities and women-led initiatives. In several countries, entrenched social norms and restrictions on women's participation reduced their leadership, voice and engagement.

Insecurity, movement restrictions and access constraints made regular consultations harder, particularly for IDPs, and reduced opportunities for safe participation.

Weak links between community governance structures and national systems also limited sustainability and increased reliance on UNHCR support. In some displacement contexts, pressure on social cohesion and discriminatory social norms further undermined trust and inclusive decision-making.

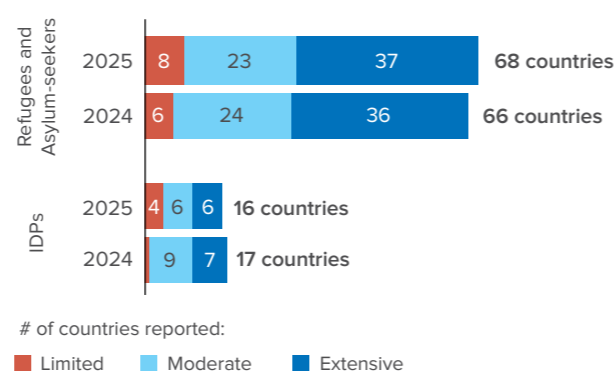
Core outcome indicators

Proportion of people who had access to safe feedback and response mechanisms



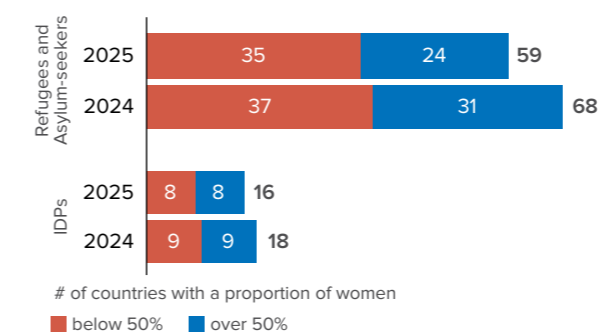
In 2025, 49 of 74 reporting countries (66%) indicated that more than 75% of refugees and asylum-seekers had access to safe feedback and response mechanisms, down from 59 of 78 countries (76%) in 2024. For IDPs, 10 of 22 reporting countries indicated that more than 75% of IDPs had access to safe feedback and response mechanisms - unchanged from 2024. Some operations, including Chad and Myanmar, reported gains after digitalizing and expanding communication channels and strengthening inter-agency coordination.

Extent to which the participation of displaced and stateless people was supported across programme phases



In 2025, 37 of 68 reporting countries (54%), UNHCR provided extensive support to refugee and asylum-seeker participation across programme phases, similar to 36 of 66 countries in 2024. For IDPs, the figure was 6 of 16 countries, similar to 7 of 17 countries in 2024. Participation was stronger where UNHCR sustained structured participatory processes, regular consultations and feedback mechanisms to involve people in programme design.

Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures



In 2025, 24 of 59 reporting countries (41%), indicated that refugee and asylum-seeker women held more than 50% of leadership and management roles, down from 31 of 68 countries (46%) in 2024. For IDPs, 8 of 16 countries (50%) reported the same share, broadly unchanged from 2024.

Financial overview

Global expenditure and budget for Community engagement and women's empowerment

- With the funds available, UNHCR could spend **\$237 million** towards budgeted needs of **\$625 million**.
- 16%** decrease in expenditure compared with 2024
- \$388 million** of unmet needs or **62%** of the budget.
- 42%** of total expenditure under this outcome area, or **\$99 million**, was funded by flexible funding, including **\$64 million** of unearmarked funding.

Community engagement and women's empowerment: largest operations by expenditure

These operations accounted for **\$116 million** or **49%** of global expenditure for this area in 2025

