



RESI
Refugee Employment
and Skills Initiative

NORWEGIAN
REFUGEE COUNCIL



THE REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS INITIATIVE IN KENYA

Rebuilding lives through trade: Unlocking market
opportunities for refugees and their hosts



Supported by:



Government of the Netherlands



'The online freelancing course was very informative and taught me about the opportunity of making a living online. My first job was translating from Kiswahili to Kisomali. I received good feedback, the client was satisfied and said they hoped to work with me again.'

- Salim, Online freelancer

CONTENTS

Opening statement	4
The Refugee Employment and Skills Initiative	5
Partnership to activate the humanitarian-development nexus	6
RESI in Dadaab	7
CASE STUDY: Digital jobs break barriers in Dadaab	8
CASE STUDY: Contemporary professionalisation of artisans in Dadaab	10
RESI in Kakuma	12
East Africa connections: RESI in a regional dimension	14
Regional highlights: Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania	16
Partners for skills and market access	18
Contact us	19



The Refugee Employment and Skills Initiative (RESI) applies the International Trade Centre's (ITC) innovative trade-led and market-based solutions to protracted displacement contexts. RESI creates economic opportunities for both refugees and their hosts to help generate income, build self-reliance and foster resilience.

RESI first brought its unique and tailored methodology to the Dadaab refugee camp in 2017. In 2018, the project expanded to Kakuma and in 2019 it will be expanding activities to neighbouring countries in East Africa.

RESI is ITC's first direct implementation in refugee camps. Through the collaboration between ITC and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and the support of Government of the Netherlands, RESI in Kenya is an example of humanitarian-development cooperation.

The Refugee Employment and Skills Initiative

RESI provides **trade-led and market-based solutions to foster income generating opportunities for refugees and their hosts**, helping build self-reliance and foster economic resilience.

RESI tailors its activities with targeted private and public partnerships, **builds strong market connections, and takes capacity building to the next level through relevant network connections, coaching and mentorship**. With this approach, RESI ensures newly acquired skillsets translate into actual income gains.

RESI follows a two-fold intervention:

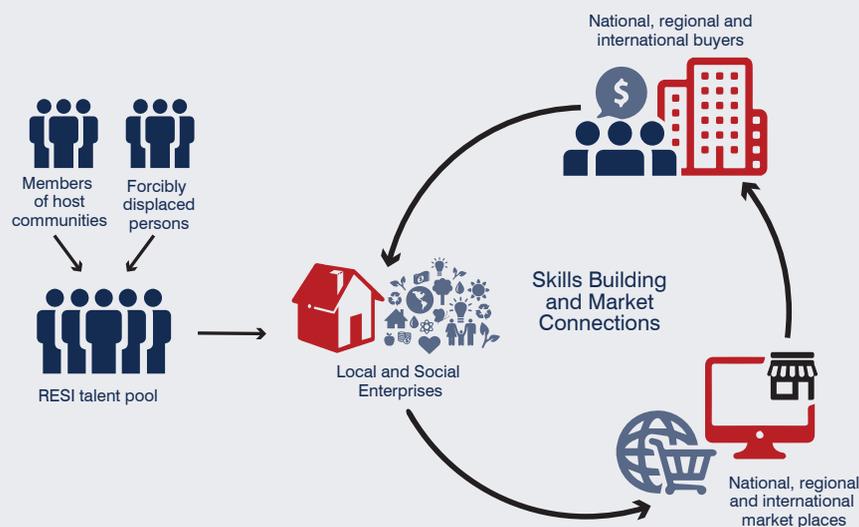
1. Promoting the development of commercially valuable skills and market-linkages for refugees and host communities;
2. Supporting local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to grow and create economic opportunities for displacement affected populations through increased business.

Participant's acquired skills and connections support their access to sustainable economic opportunities and builds their confidence and independence. RESI harnesses the productive potential of refugees and host community members to **respond to the demands of the local economy and eventually support their re-integration in their country of origin** if they return home.

Collaboration with multiple actors is a key component of ITC's approach. **RESI works with a diverse range of partners to solve key challenges related to displacement contexts and to build long lasting market connections**. RESI engages market partners to harness opportunities for refugees and local communities. **This unlocks access to local, regional and global value chains**.

RESI innovates with a tailored mentorship and continuous coaching scheme, which complements the training received by refugees and host communities. **The mentorship and coaching scheme provides practical guidance and motivational support that helps trainees apply their new skills** to manage and overcome challenges they might experience.

Launched in 2017, the RESI project in Kenya is implemented by ITC and NRC and currently works with Somali and Kenyan youth and women refugees in the Dadaab settlement and surrounding areas. In 2018, RESI launched a pilot project for refugees and hosts in the Kakuma camp in north-west Kenya. In 2019, the Initiative will expand in East Africa.





Partnership to activate the humanitarian-development nexus

There is a pressing need to shift from purely humanitarian or development responses towards more integrated durable solutions, leveraging the expertise and strengths of complementary partners.

Activating the humanitarian-development nexus means bridging the gap between approaches supporting immediate needs in emergency scenarios and those alleviating poverty in the long-term. This collaboration is much needed **to support affected populations to become self-reliant and move away from dependence on humanitarian assistance.**

Through capacity building, skill upgrading, market linkages, trade opportunities and governmental recognition, targeted populations are provided a set of tools and platforms through which they can become independent.

RESI's partnership with NRC in Kenya is crucial to the success of project activities. NRC brings its in-depth local knowledge on both refugee and host populations and the local terrain - while ITC brings its technical expertise. **The collaboration is beneficial: ITC can implement innovative activities, tailored to local realities, thanks to the strong on the ground presence of NRC.**

In addition, **the inclusion of host populations** and a partnership with the local government contributes to **making RESI inclusive and encourages shared sustainable economic growth.**

RESI would not be possible without the will to support innovative approaches in contexts of forced displacement. **RESI in Dadaab is supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the Government of the Netherlands,** as part of their efforts to improve prospects for refugees and vulnerable host communities in the Horn of Africa.

About ITC

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is the joint agency of the United Nations and World Trade Organization. ITC assists small and medium-sized enterprises in developing and transition economies to become more competitive in global markets, thereby contributing to sustainable economic development within the frameworks of the Aid-for-Trade agenda and the United Nations' Global Goals for Sustainable Development. For more information, visit www.intracen.org.

About NRC

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is an independent humanitarian organisation helping people forced to flee. The organization works in crises across 31 countries, providing life-saving and long-term assistance to millions of people every year. For more information, visit www.nrc.no.

RESI in Dadaab

Established following the 1991 civil war in Somalia, Dadaab is one of the world's largest refugee camps with a population of around 200,000 refugees. Over two decades old, with second and third generation refugees and a growing local host community, there is a need for new opportunities to generate income and gain self-employment.

The RESI Dadaab project develops **work opportunities for women and youth in the online freelancing and home décor sectors**. The project allows refugees and host community members to **gain commercially viable skills** through targeted training and then supports them to join either value chains.

Through capacity building and targeted network linkages, RESI enables refugees and host community members to connect to domestic and international value chains. This brings sustainable income-generating opportunities for youth and women in Dadaab and encourages self-reliance.

ONLINE FREELANCING

Online freelancing is a growing industry that offers the opportunity to find work, no matter the location. The only requirements are a stable internet connection, computer access, the right skillset and motivation. Given the contextual challenges facing refugees in Kenya, the online freelancing sector provides a channel through which refugees can earn income through self-employment. RESI trained 100 competitively selected participants and provided an extended mentorship and coaching period, allowing trainees to apply their newly acquired skillsets and get their first interviews and jobs. RESI supports the connection to international clients through leading freelancing platforms.

HOME DÉCOR

Demand for artisanal goods is high in the design sector – be it in fashion or home décor, consumers are looking for a handmade touch. Working with artisans to fine-tune their skills and upgrade their business knowledge can help them professionalise and increase their trade. In Dadaab, many women use their hands to make products which they sell on the local market to earn additional income. RESI selected five groups of women to work together and improve their product offering to reach markets outside of Dadaab. RESI provided tailored training and connections to the Nairobi market.



CASE STUDY:

Digital jobs break barriers in Dadaab

Online freelancers are sought out by companies around the world who outsource tasks such as data entry, translations, transcriptions and web searches, etc. To succeed at online freelancing, a high level of digital literacy is necessary. As such, the online freelancing component of RESI offers participants the chance **to upgrade their skillsets through targeted digital skills training**. In 2018, training was delivered in partnership with Samasource, a leading social enterprise based in Nairobi.

The training consists of an intensive course focused at upgrading technical skills and building capacity to operate online. At the end, **online freelancers are supported to upload their profiles on online platforms and start bidding for work**. Post-training, the online freelancers have three months of **mentorship and coaching to assist them in applying the knowledge learnt and actively start working online**.

The mentorship consists of workshops and training sessions to **help the freelancers develop an effective mindset and**

approach to finding work and earning income. Online freelancers enhance their life skills, learn how to keep their motivation high and discover the joys of self-made success. **A dedicated whatsapp group combined with regular feedback from mentors helps the trainees succeed in obtaining their first interviews and job offers**.

NRC and ITC contribute the infrastructural and equipment necessities for the programme: fast speed internet, computers and coworking spaces. Connections to national and international markets are facilitated by developing relationships with prominent online business process outsourcing platforms, such as Upwork, one of the largest platforms in the industry.

In addition, RESI supports the creation of an online agency coined "the Dadaab Collective". Operating on the Upwork platform, the agency represents a group of online freelancers. This larger workforce enables the agency to pitch for jobs that have a heavier workload and which can be completed as a coordinated team of online freelancers.

RESULTS

1. Over \$2,908 USD was earned by online freelancers trained under the RESI project.
2. 46 online jobs were obtained by online freelancers.
3. Over 100 interviews for potential online jobs were received by online freelancers.
4. 21 online freelancing starter kits containing a laptop and headphones were issued to the highest performing and dedicated online freelancers.
5. Four dedicated coworking spaces equipped with computers, headphones and high-speed internet were opened in each of the three camps and in Dadaab Town.



'I got the opportunity to learn online freelancing. I have learned so many things, like how to create a profile and how I can protect my profile. During this project, I received knowledge and skills, which I can share with colleagues who have not managed to get this opportunity. I received training and mentorship that I can successfully use to work on online platforms.'

- Safiya, Online freelancer

CASE STUDY:

Contemporary professionalisation of artisans in Dadaab

In the home décor component of RESI, Somali refugees and Kenyan artisans receive training to **upgrade their skills and expand their product repertoire based on current market trends and aesthetics**. Creating a covetable product line facilitates market access and, ultimately, income generation.

After a competitive assessment of skillsets, RESI selected five groups of 10 artisans for the programme. Following a “training of trainers” (TOTs) learning process, RESI trained 15 women to transmit their newly acquired knowledge and production methodology to their subsequent groups of artisans – a sustainable loop of learning.

Kenyan social enterprise, Tosheka Textiles, and Master Artisans from Isolo, carried out **hands-on training to refine and adapt skillsets and produce a contemporary collection of home décor items**. A special focus went to **professionalising the artisans** who learnt the concepts

of quality standards, order guidelines, sizing and colour requirements etc. **Introducing this new production methodology represents an important shift to enable artisans to work professionally with clients.**

RESI supported the **organisation of the artisans as a collective – called NYOTA FARSAMO** – and provided them with marketing and branding inputs. Crucially, RESI helped establish the first market-linkages and **the RESI team of experts offered mentorship, guiding the group to correctly apply their newly acquired business knowledge**. As they received their first orders, NYOTA FARSAMO artisans were pushed to learn on the spot: apply their learnings about quality, standardisation, respect of deadlines and responsive communication. RESI experts acted as mentors to guide the artisans through this process. NYOTA FARSAMO is made up of 48 women and two men.

RESULTS

1. Over \$ 1,600 USD earned by the artisans.
2. 15 TOTs were trained by Tosheka Textiles to improve their handskills and production management.
3. Five orders for the Nairobi market were successfully completed.
4. Two retail distributors were secured in Nairobi (Goodie’s African Interiors and Gifts and Afrika Handmade).
5. Artisans participated in their first craft fair in Nairobi.
6. The NYOTA FARSAMO collective was created by 50 artisans. Marketing materials including flyers, a banner, product tags, business cards and digital platforms:
 - nyotafarsamo.com
 - instagram.com/nyotafarsamo
 - facebook.com/nyotafarsamo

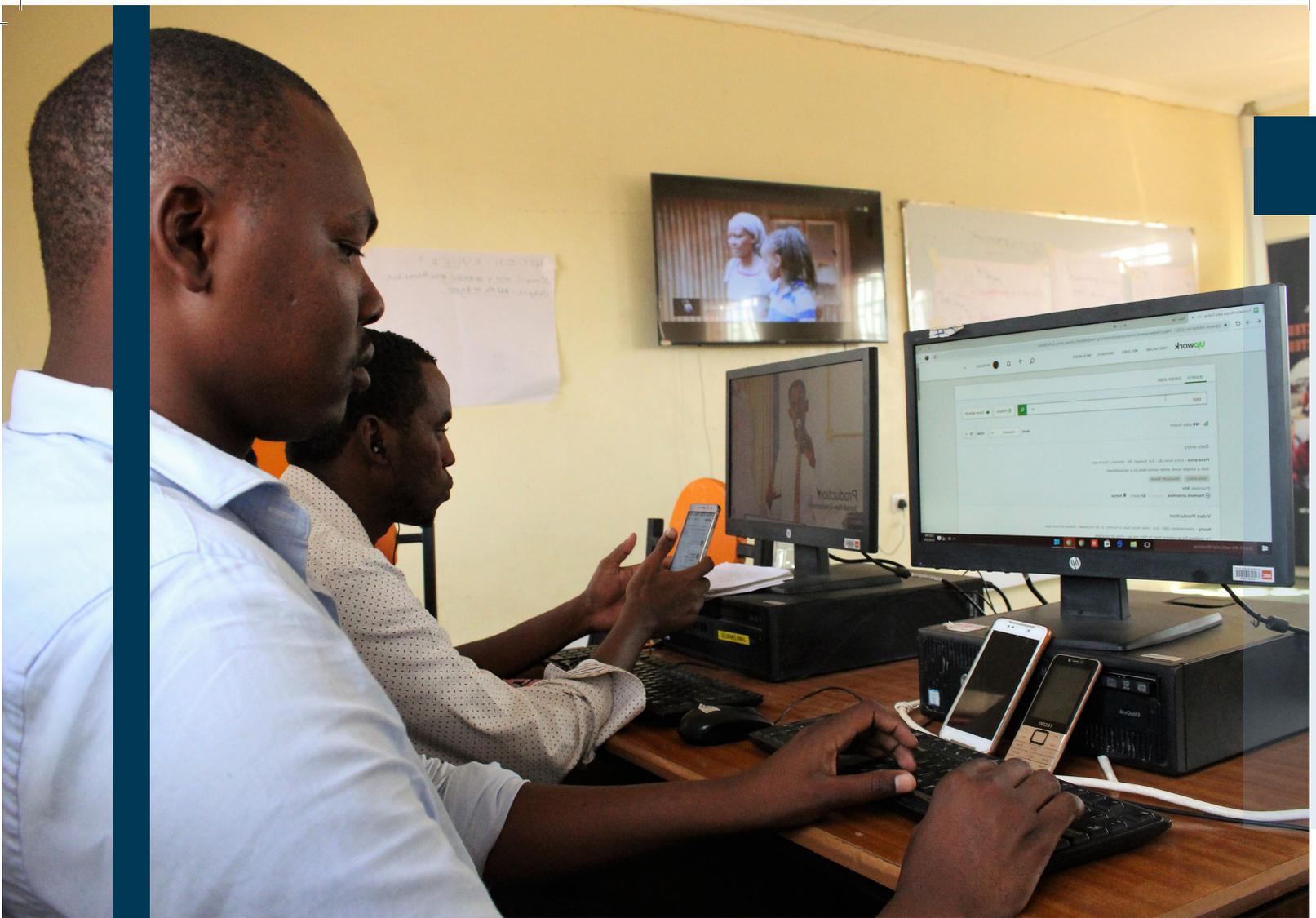
‘At the UNKLESA fair, I found some beautiful rugs and baskets made by the women of Nyota Farsamo.’

Griet Dierckxsens,
NYOTA FARSAMO customer

A portrait of a woman wearing a black hijab, smiling slightly. The background is blurred, showing green foliage and a blue structure. The text is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

'Visiting artisans and home décor shops in Nairobi, I have seen many products and it has been a good experience. With hard work we can reach the quality and results seen.'

- Hawa, NYOTA FARSAMO artisan



RESI in Kakuma

After the successful implementation of RESI in Dadaab, ITC further expanded its unique model of developing economic opportunities in the sector of online freelancing in the Kakuma refugee camp in Turkana West County, Kenya.

The Kakuma refugee camp was established in 1992 in response to thousands of people fleeing civil war in Sudan. The camp has since become a protracted crisis, with a population of approximately 183,000 refugees, along with a local host population, who require updated solutions to meet growing needs and challenges. Introducing tailored job creation and income generation opportunities is crucial to support sustainable self-reliance, particularly within a context of decreasing funding.

In Kakuma, RESI aims to invest in **business growth and inclusive and self-sustaining market development for online freelancing**. ITC findings revealed that many refugees in Kakuma already had creative digital skills, such as journalism, photography and film editing. However, the knowledge of how to market these services and develop a business were not present. To address this, ITC piloted a project, in coordination with NRC, focused on **promoting access to online freelancing opportunities that are tailored to the mid-level creative sector talent present in Kakuma**.

12

Partnering with the online marketplace GrowthBond, RESI brought an online “learn & earn” platform to Kakuma to upskill refugees and host community members in the much in-demand sector of digital marketing. Building on their already existing skillsets, participants could learn how to translate these into real work opportunities. The programme taught the trainees how to earn money on digital freelancing portals and RESI mentorship provided necessary coaching on how to engage with new clients.

The platform allowed new freelancers to test their skills by working with local companies on small projects. Partnering local companies received financial credits to hire the freelancers through the platform and were invited to attend business management workshops to expand their businesses. By working with the local businesses, the freelancers gained experience for their work portfolios to increase their competitiveness on international markets.

RESI partnered with the Upwork Foundation to bring additional training for the freelancers through a five week bootcamp. This offered freelancers the opportunity to build their online profiles on Upwork and receive feedback from online freelancing experts.

RESULTS

1. Over \$720 USD was earned by online freelancers trained under the RESI project in four weeks.
2. 396 proposals were submitted on Upwork by Kakuma freelancers.
3. Over 170 interviews requests for potential online jobs on GrowthBond were received by online freelancers in one month.
4. One freelancing competition was launched with six winners, each receiving \$350 USD cash prizes.
5. One dedicated co-working space activated with computers, headphones and high-speed internet were opened in Kakuma.

'I have come across different opportunities, but the Kakuma (online freelancing) boot camp is the best and I believe it will change our lives and mindsets. Since we are talented in different areas and have many skills, but we didn't know how to sell them online. The boot camp we have undergone was a great opportunity for us to learn new things and work beyond the refugee status. First and foremost, being taught on how to work online made me feel rejuvenated despite my refugee status.'

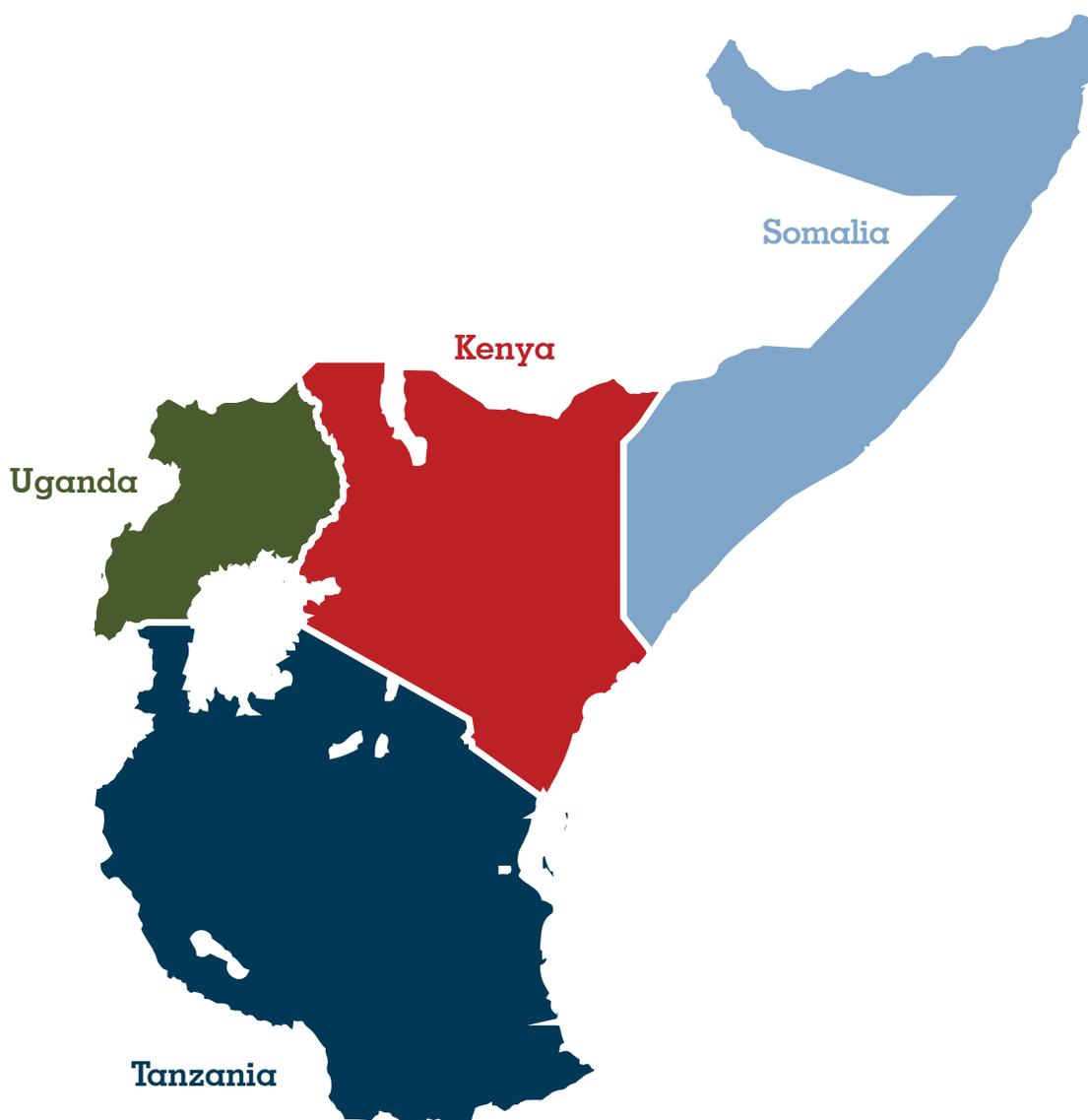
- Jean-Marie Ndikumana , winner of the online freelancing Kakuma competition



East Africa connections: RESI in a regional dimension

Since the 1990s, the region of East Africa has faced continuous forced displacement challenges. Populations from countries affected by crisis - such as Somalia, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi, Eritrea or the Democratic Republic of the Congo - embark on journeys seeking out safety in neighbouring countries such as Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania or Uganda. **Host countries are often peaceful, but also experience their own economic and social development growing pains. This makes the management of refugee populations in the area a delicate balancing act.** Yet, the presence of refugee populations cannot be ignored

As with any population, **displaced people are needing and wanting opportunities for growth, development and self-resilience.** Through its work, RESI encourages host countries to see the economic opportunities that can come with a refugee population. An important aspect of the RESI approach is the inclusion of both refugee and host communities in initiatives. In seeking to provide assistance to the complex refugee situation, **RESI focuses on harnessing talent and developing potential for refugees and their host communities, in turn, promoting harmonious living.**





Regional Highlights: Somalia and the United Republic of Tanzania

Somalia linkages: Supporting returnees access work opportunities

The RESI Dadaab project works primarily with Somali refugees. Over the past years, movement of people back to Somalia has been observed. Yet, the number of former refugees who find their way back to Dadaab has also been high. Behind this phenomenon is the lack of opportunities in Somalia for returnees.

It is necessary to **build market and community linkages between Dadaab and Somalia to support the economic integration of Somalis in their home country.** If refugees return to Somalia, they will **need support to adjust to a new environment.** If resettled, trained returnees should be able to **apply their competitive skillsets gained while in displacement.** This means strong linkages with the targeted sectors in Somalia must be fostered.

Mogadishu already boasts a growing digital entrepreneur community, including tech hubs, innovation labs and coworking spaces. **Building contacts and linkages with existing organizations and entrepreneurs can create a support network that RESI participants can tap into when they return to Somalia.** This type of network will offer economic opportunities for returnees: supporting their reintegration, access to new markets, and expansion of their professional network.

In 2019, RESI launches its activities in Somalia supporting economic opportunities for returnee refugees and their local host communities in major urban centers in the country.



'I hope to become one of the top Somali online freelancers. I am thinking of developing my own agency on Upwork so that I can do more. I can work from anywhere in the world as long as I have a computer and internet.'

- Mohamed, Online freelancer



RESI Tanzania: Refugee and host community Integration

The region of Kigoma is one of the poorest regions in the United Republic of Tanzania and is the largest receiver of refugees from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With increasing numbers of refugees, humanitarian and developmental support is needed for the refugee population and host communities to cope with and adapt to this heavy flux of refugees.

Through the ONE UN initiative in the Kigoma camp, RESI supports refugee and host community integration by **facilitating job creation and income generation in the agricultural value chain**, focusing on cassava, maize and

bean production. The agriculture development programme **enables farmers to plant, harvest and sell enough high-quality crops to boost their income and increase food security**.

RESI helps farmers **establish market linkages with crop buyers, access fair harvest contracts and obtain agricultural inputs and credit to increase yields**. By increasing the quality and quantity of the agriculture sector in Kigoma through smallholder farming practices, both the refugee and host community will access better work and income opportunities.

Partners for skills and market access

Partnerships are integral to the RESI model and collaboration with diverse actors is needed develop tailored innovative solutions for market-based and trade-led economic opportunities in displacement scenarios.

Current partners in Kenya include:



International
Trade
Centre



NORWEGIAN
REFUGEE COUNCIL



Government of the Netherlands



TOSHEKA TEXTILES



Afrika Handmade

New partnerships are constantly being developed. If your organization is interested in working with RESI, contact ITC today!

The Refugee Employment and Skills Initiative in Kenya would not be possible without the support of its partner, The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

For more information on how to partner with RESI please contact:

Refugee Employment and Skills Initiative

T: +41-22 730 0111

E: resi@intracen.org

<http://www.intracen.org/resi>

Division of Country Programmes

Street Address:

International Trade Centre

54-56, rue de Montbrillant

1202 Geneva, Switzerland

Postal Address:

International Trade Centre

Palais des Nations

1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

© International Trade Centre 2018

The International Trade Centre (ITC) is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations.



International
Trade
Centre



Street address
International Trade Centre
54-56 Rue de Montbrillant
1202 Geneva, Switzerland

P: +41 22 730 0111
F: +41 22 733 4439
E: itcreg@intracen.org
www.intracen.org

Postal address
International Trade Centre
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland