



International  
Trade  
Centre

TRADE IMPACT  
FOR GOOD

# RESI

## The Refugee Employment and Skills Initiative

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





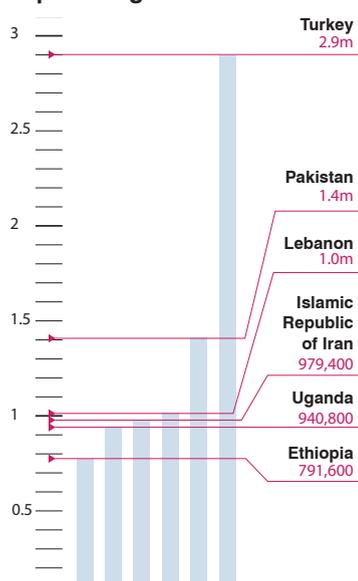
**Through innovative, trade-led and market-based solutions, ITC's Refugee Employment and Skills Initiative (RESI) raises incomes and creates jobs for refugees their hosts, building self-reliance and fostering economic resilience.**

# Understanding Forced Displacement

In 2018, the number of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons exceeded **68.5 million**

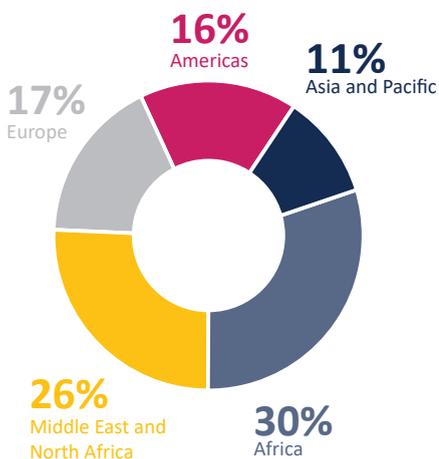
– UNHCR, 2018

## Top hosting countries



Source: UNHCR

## Where the world's displaced people are being hosted



Source: UNHCR

In 2018, the number of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons forced<sup>1</sup> to leave their home due to conflict, persecution or natural disasters, has reached 68.5 million. The expectation is that these displacements are temporary, but in reality, many of them become protracted situations<sup>2</sup>, lasting five years or longer.

Refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons in protracted displacement require both immediate and continued support. Many have lost their assets and livelihoods and suffer from after-effects of the conflict or persecution from which they have fled. Building capacities and market linkages enables people to build livelihoods, create income and be self-reliant while also building transferable skills that can be important when they return to their country of origin.

The movement of refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons can also be challenging for the host countries and communities. Today, the majority of those affected by forced displacement are living in developing countries – with some of the world's poorest countries hosting almost 30% of the world's refugees. In these scenarios, the challenges of hosting a large displaced population comes in addition to the already significant difficulties facing host countries, placing a heavy burden on economies struggling to grow and with few extra resources to support new incoming populations.

As such, both refugees and host communities require targeted support to encourage inclusion and resilience and to focus on how displaced populations can contribute to the local economy.

As an emergency situation stabilizes, particularly in contexts of protracted conflict, affected communities should be supported to access economic opportunities and to build sustainable livelihoods. Shifting towards livelihoods development will help grow the ability of both forcibly displaced persons and host communities to generate much needed income, as well as to respond to both current and future challenges.

The International Trade Centre (ITC), the joint trade development agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations, works to bring market and trade dimensions to livelihoods in protracted displacement scenarios for long-term solutions.

<sup>1</sup> Forced displacement refers to situations of persons who leave or flee their homes due to conflict, violence, persecution and human rights violations.

<sup>2</sup> A protracted situation is one in which refugees find themselves in a long-lasting and intractable state of limbo. These situations are assessed as refugee populations of 25,000 persons or more who have been in exile for five or more years.

# A combined humanitarian and development approach

To support refugees and host communities, ITC supports trade-led, market-based livelihood solutions that offer lasting opportunities for income generation and job creation by meeting the needs of displaced communities while fostering impactful market linkages for long-term development.

To respond to the complexities of working in contexts of forced displacement, ITC leverages the strengths and resources of both humanitarian and development partners. Our humanitarian partners have the existing on-the-ground knowledge and infrastructure to best respond to the immediate needs of refugees and displaced persons, while ITC brings expertise in designing and implementing initiatives to foster sustainable employment and income generation opportunities for vulnerable populations.

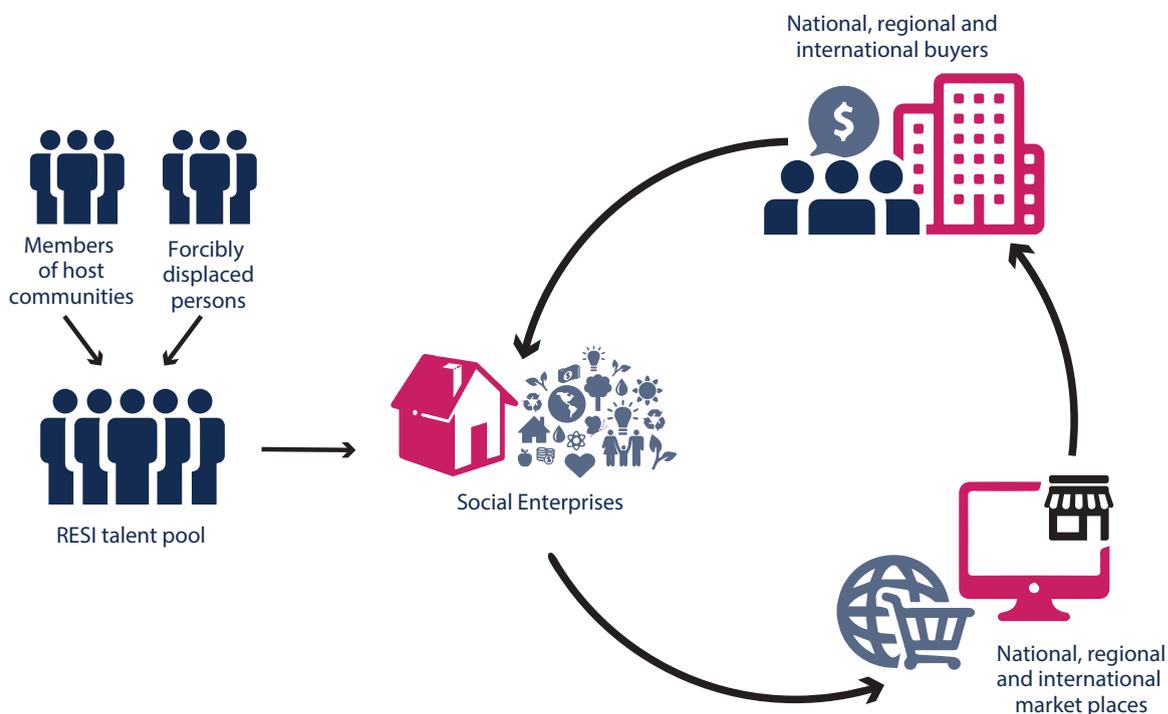
In a combined humanitarian and development approach, ITC facilitates the engagement of local, national, and international private actors, for the development of solutions, linking the supply of skills, goods and services of displaced populations to the global demand through the market and fostering strong connections for shared growth.

Working together with the common goal of building livelihoods, the impact on the refugees and host communities is greater and more sustainable.

The nexus between market-based and trade-led initiatives and humanitarian approaches is at the core of the **Refugee Employment and Skills Initiative (RESI)**.



# ITC's Refugee Employment and Skills Initiative



The Refugee Employment & Skills Initiative (RESI) deploys innovative ways to address sustainable livelihoods development in protracted displacement scenarios.

Central to RESI's approach is its two-fold intervention; the initiative promotes the development of commercially valuable skills and market-linkages for refugees and host communities alike while supporting small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) to grow and create value and employment for displacement affected populations through increased business. The skills and connections that participants gain are relevant for the local economy and for their country of origin for when they are able to return home.

To this end, ITC works with a diverse range of partners to solve key challenges related to the displacement context and develop long-lasting market-based, traded solutions. At the heart of this effort is RESI's engagement of leading social enterprises and market partners to harness opportunities for refugees and local communities, especially to unlock access to much needed local, regional and global value chains.

RESI ultimately aims at increasing income generation and job creation opportunities for refugees and their hosts and hence at contributing to self-reliance and increased resilience that would eventually support voluntary returns and help build a better tomorrow.

Launched in 2017, the project currently works with Somali youth and women refugees in the Dadaab camp in north-east Kenya, as well as with Syrian refugees and Jordanian youth in Jordan. RESI presently focuses on capacity building and market linkage creation in the digital online freelancing and home décor sectors. In 2019, the initiative will expand to the Kigoma region in Tanzania to work in the agribusiness sector.



## RESI in practice

Building income generation and job creation opportunities for displaced populations requires collaboration to overcome challenges and break barriers.

Across the globe, there are significant discrepancies in the treatment of displaced persons. Partially, this reflects the lack of international consensus when it comes to hosting these populations. Yet, it also reflects the different patterns of displacement and the specific conditions of each hosting country.

While in some countries refugees live in urban areas and benefit from relatively high levels of education, in other places they live mostly in rural areas and have few skills they can employ to improve their conditions. Similarly, in some places they are allowed the freedom to move and access employment, while in others they are subject to an encampment policy and are unable to engage in income generating activities. Based on their host location, some refugees are able to integrate and live a self-reliant life. Yet, in others they must rely heavily on humanitarian actors, who also face challenges from complex and long-lasting displacement scenarios.

This is why, when it comes to building livelihoods opportunities for displacement affected populations, every displacement scenario is different and each requires a targeted response.

RESI works to fill gaps and create sustainable livelihoods and greater self-reliance amongst forcibly displaced communities, while also supporting host countries to strengthen their capacity to cope with the challenge of hosting an increased population. RESI also partners with humanitarian partners to bring market-based solutions to protracted situations that can pave the way to long-term solutions.

To this end, RESI adopts a holistic approach that includes the development of skills and market connections for displaced persons and their hosts. To achieve this, RESI works with

- the development of support systems for entrepreneurship and business growth in displacement affected scenarios;
- the strengthening of value-chains with high potential for employment and self-employment for displacement affected populations and;
- support to the adaptation of policy and regulations that enable displaced persons and their hosts to be self-reliant and resilient through markets and trade.

For instance, in Jordan, Gaza and Kenya, RESI is exploring the potential of the digital market to break barriers for income generation for displaced persons, supporting the engagement of digital workers and freelancers in global digital jobs platforms. In this work, RESI works with market partners for skills development and support services, such as tech hubs, co-working spaces, incubators and accelerators.

In addition, RESI advocates for the engagement of market partners, such as leading global companies worldwide, to generate solutions for refugees and their hosts. For instance, RESI is working with Samasource to adapt digital skills training curriculums to account for the specificities of displacement scenarios and with Upwork to support the verification of identification of refugee freelancers through locally emitted documents.



# Kenya

**Refugee Employment and Skills Initiative – Dadaab, Kenya**

**Time Frame**  
September 2017 – December 2018

**Funder**  
The Government of Netherlands

## The RESI-Dadaab project provides employment opportunities through online freelancing and home décor



Dadaab is one of the world's largest refugee camps with a population of over 300,000 refugees. Having existed for over two decades, the population, as well as the local host community, require new, flexible opportunities to generate income or gain employment. To meet these needs, the RESI-Dadaab project provides opportunities for young people in Dadaab to work in the online freelancing and home décor sectors.

Implemented jointly with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the project allows refugees and host community members to gain commercially viable skills through targeted training enabling them to join either the online freelancing or home décor value chain.

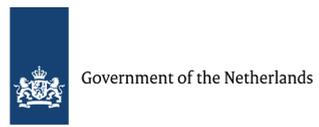
Samasource Digital Basics, a leading digital training firm based in Nairobi, delivers the online freelancing training to selected participants in Dadaab, allowing them to upgrade their existing skillsets, as well as gain follow-up support to enable them to become

entrepreneurs and find work as online freelancers. Connections to national and international markets are facilitated by developing relationships with prominent online business process outsourcing platforms, such as Upwork.

For home décor, Tosheka Textiles, a Kenyan-based social enterprise specializing in textile production, provides training to artisans, especially women, in Dadaab camp on home décor product development and assists them to improve their business management. These artisans are supported to enter social enterprise value chains and to supply higher-end markets in Nairobi and beyond.

By enhancing the ability of refugees and host community members to connect to domestic and international value chains, RESI provides sustainable income-generating opportunities for youth and women in Dadaab and improves their abilities to be self-reliant.

Funded by:



In partnership with:



In collaboration with:





# Jordan

## Jordan: Refugee Employment and Skills Initiative

### Time Frame

December 2017 – December 2018

### Funder

Japan

## The RESI-Za'atari project provides employment opportunities for young people through online freelancing

As of 2015, Jordan's population was estimated to be 7.9 million, with approximately 1.3 million Syrian refugees. The magnitude and impact of the Syrian crisis is causing constraints on Jordan's economy and hindering economic growth. The rapid increase in population causes Syrian refugees and Jordanians alike to be highly vulnerable to poverty.

In this context, there is an urgent need for initiatives seeking to support Jordan in improving economic resilience of refugees and equipping them with the right skills to be able to return home when peace is restored. To address this, the project delivers a vocational training programme to help youth and refugees to work as freelancers of specific online services, such as Graphic Design and Web Development. As a result, it is expected that refugees and youth will be capacitated to transact high quality services through on-line markets.

During the training, youth and refugees are guided on how to register for digital platforms, boost their activities on online marketplaces, and manage online transactions and sales. In addition to



building skills, the project will seek to generate sustainable sources of income for participants by providing on-line coaching and one-on-one mentoring.

Furthermore, ITC partners with a selected group of Jordanian enterprises to include specific inputs from Syrian refugees to integrate them into existing BPO services export value chains. In parallel, the project assesses Jordan's positioning and overall offering for BPO services for export, analyzes the structure of the sector, and identifies specific gaps in relatively low skilled areas that can be complemented using the capacity of Syrian refugees assisting Jordanian nationals.



Funded by:





# Tanzania

## Tanzania: Refugee Employment and Skills Initiative

### Time Frame

June 2018-June 2019

### Funder

One UN Fund, Tanzania

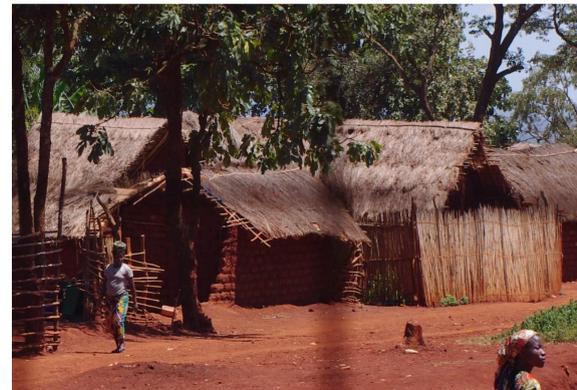
## Kigoma Joint Programme: Refugee and Host Community Integration

The region of Kigoma is the largest recipient region of refugees and displaced person in Tanzania, both from Burundi and Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The numbers continue to increase from both countries to the Kigoma region.

As a result of these challenges, there is the need to support the refugee population through humanitarian response, and also increase the long-term development support to the host communities in the closest districts, through bridging the gap between refugees and the host communities.

RESI Tanzania will support closer integration between refugees, displaced persons and host community members through facilitating job creation and income generation in the agricultural value chain, focusing on cassava, maize and beans. The agriculture development program will make it possible for farmers to plant, harvest and sell enough high-quality crops to boost their income and increase food security.

This is done by linking farmers to maize and beans buyers through a Market



Centre and facilitating access to fair harvest contracts, obtaining agricultural inputs and credit to increase yields, and offering other forms of support from consortium members or other providers. The programme will connect farmers to various market players that are interested in engaging with small farmers to ensure a sustainable and resilient agriculture sector. By increasing the quality and quantity of the agriculture sector in Kigoma both the refugee and host community will be able to access better work and income opportunities.



Funded by:



# Partnerships for training and market access

Partnerships are integral to the RESI model and collaboration with various actors is actively sought to develop new and innovative solutions for market-based and trade-led livelihoods in displacement scenarios.

Current partners include humanitarian agencies, institutional and governmental partners, social enterprises, and other private actors operating in the host community or country, as well as leading global companies.

New partnerships are constantly being developed, so if your organization is interested to work on RESI, get in contact today!

“Samasource is excited to be partnering with ITC and NRC. We are looking forward to supporting refugees onto online work platforms as freelancers as we believe that it represents a huge opportunity for bringing employment to remote refugee camps.”

Phillip K Chikwiramakomo, Samasource

## Funders:



Government of the Netherlands



外務省  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
of JAPAN



German Federal Ministry  
for Economic Cooperation  
and Development

## Implementing Partners:

NORWEGIAN  
REFUGEE COUNCIL



United Nations  
TANZANIA  
Delivering as One



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

## Collaborating Partners:

sama SOURCE

TOSHEKA DESIGNS

CT

upwork™



“I am lucky to have been part of a follow-up mentorship programme that aimed at exposing us to real life job experiences by someone we can relate to.” “One day I will go back to my home country Somalia. I will equip a room with computers and open it to the public while training people on how to earn money from the internet. Through that, I will have given back to my community, the same way the Refugee Employment & Skills Initiative has given to me for free.”

– Ali, RESI Kenya Freelancing Programme Graduate



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