

Refugee Component

Supporting peaceful coexistence among refugees and host communities

The challenge

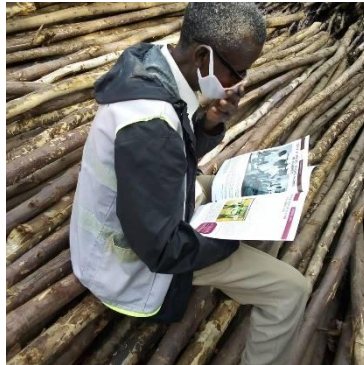
The recurring rebel atrocities against the local population in eastern Congo and the 2015 election crisis in Burundi have led thousands of Congolese and Burundian citizens to flee their homes and seek refuge in Rwanda. As of June 2020, the population in the country's six refugee camps is 149,149.

As a result of the extraordinary times through which they are living, coupled with the need to adapt to a new environment, refugees face unexpected challenges and a number of vulnerabilities, such as insufficient resources and living space, restrictions on some of their rights and unemployment. This situation sometimes leads to conflicts and violence both within refugee camps and between refugee camps and hosts communities.

Refugees and Rwandans live in close coexistence and often share the same infrastructure and few resources at their disposal, while prejudice and mistrust due to inequality and unequal treatment exist on both sides. Against this backdrop, in cooperation with the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) and UNHCR, GIZ/ZFD focuses its interventions on contributing to peaceful coexistence through violence prevention.

Our approach

The refugee project started in 2014 and is a component of the GIZ Rwanda Civil Peace Service programme. Its two fields of activity contributing to SDG 16 are:



Project Name	Promoting peaceful coexistence through psychosocial support, peace education, and non-violent conflict resolution for refugees and host communities
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Rwanda
Lead executing agency	GIZ Civil Peace Service (ZFD by its German acronym)
Project duration	2014–2022

- Peace education and conflict resolution
- Psychosocial support

Working with its partner organizations UNHCR, Vision Jeunesse Nouvelle (VJN), Ejo Youth Echo (EYE), Église Evangélique des Amis au Rwanda (EEAR), Legal Aid Forum (LAF), and Rwanda Red Cross (RRC), GIZ/ZFD builds on its proven experience in peacebuilding to strengthen a culture of peace among refugees and host communities with the aim of contributing to peaceful coexistence both within and outside refugee camps. In this vein, through the use of creative and interactive methods, such as conflict sensitive media production, *Cineduc* (educational cinema), forum theater, and sports, the youth can practice constructive ways of dealing with conflicts, develop dialogue, and build mutual understanding. Additionally, GIZ/ZFD trains service providers and works with refugee leaders on conflict resolution techniques and mechanisms. With regard to psychosocial interventions, GIZ/ZFD supports its partner

Two refugees from Kigeme refugee camp read the magazine produced by young refugee and host community journalists with the support of Ejo Youth Echo.

organizations, namely Association Rwandaise des Conseillers en Traumatisme (ARCT Ruhuka) and Life Wounds Healing Association (LIWOHA) to strengthen their community-based psychosocial mechanisms through capacity development, psychoeducation, advocacy and networking. The Do-No-Harm approach is fundamental to framing these interventions.

In terms of the personnel involved in the GIZ/ZFD, a team of four GIZ national staff and two international peace advisors supports partners organizations' peacebuilding activities in the refugee component.

Impact

Kigeme, Mugombwa and Mahama refugee camps were selected as the GIZ/ZFD refugee component's project implementation area. Located in the Southern and Eastern Provinces, these camps currently host 92,484 Congolese and Burundian refugees.

In 2020:

- 333 identified peace education youth facilitators from the camps and host communities use theatre, cinema and sports to raise awareness on conflict issues and how they should be dealt without violence. They also organize community work commonly known as *Umuganda* to support both refugee and host communities' members who are vulnerable;
- 1,300 copies of "Nyiramubande", a magazine published by 45 Refugee and Rwandan youth, have been distributed in the three refugee camps and host communities. In 2020, it is expected to distribute the magazine in the remaining 3 refugee camps in Rwanda.
- 112 Community Psychosocial Workers (CPWs) trained in trauma, active listening and community based sociotherapy approaches offered psychosocial services to 497 refugees. Testimonies of improved psychosocial wellbeing are monitored, evaluated and published;

- "Peace Dialogue", a monthly forum in which refugee and Rwandan leaders exchange and take actions on conflict issues affecting both camps and host communities, was extended from Kigeme to Mugombwa and Mahama refugee camps.

Outlook

Capacity development for local leaders and the community contributes to long-term peaceful coexistence and constructive reintegration of refugees in their country of origin. In 2020, due to Covid-19, some of the planned activities were not implemented. Currently, we are exploring how to organize our interventions using on-line platforms.



On top, young refugees and Rwandans build together the house of a vulnerable family in the community with the support of the Rwandan Red Cross. Under, the house that house finalise.

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