



Making Inclusion Real

Results and experiences of the SUN global programme
in piloting and implementing new approaches to inclusion for refugees

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Co-creating perspectives
for people forced to flee.

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Why We Started

Worldwide, the number of displaced persons has risen by more than 50% over the last 10 years: by the end of 2024, there were more than 123.2 million people forced to flee.¹ Most of these people live in countries of the Global South and are often displaced for more than five years.² At the same time, there is a trend towards reduced financing available globally to support displaced populations. Nevertheless, it remains an important task for the international community to protect displaced persons and their hosting communities, create opportunities for them, and enable their self-reliance. Actors in development cooperation and humanitarian aid have great potential to develop lasting solutions for refugees.

To address this, the United Nations launched the Global Compact on Refugees in 2018 to bring together different actors to enhance refugee's self-reliance and ease the pressure on host countries. To support its implementation, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, initiated a Global Programme in 2018.

This programme linked the work of humanitarian organisations, development cooperation, and peacebuilding to create sustainable solutions for people forced to flee. Host country governments were supported to make existing services for the local community available to refugees rather than isolating them in camps.

Over six years (2018–2024), projects have been carried out as part of the Global Programme in eleven countries, focusing on key social and economic areas such as:

- enrolling refugee children in schools,
- participating in the labour market,
- living as neighbours in the same communities,
- accessing electricity and running water,
- and obtaining membership in health and social insurance systems.

These measures helped displaced persons better provide for themselves, reducing their dependence on humanitarian aid. As a flagship initiative, the Global Programme improved the situation for 700,000 displaced persons and the host communities that received them.

GIZ and UNHCR will continue this work together in the coming years (2025–2027), for example in Ethiopia and Mauritania. A new Global Programme was initiated which builds on the foundations of the former programme. The aim is to strategically support the inclusion of refugees into national systems in education, social protection and economic sectors.



1 Global Trends 2024 | UNHCR 2024

2 Mid-Year Trends | UNHCR 2024

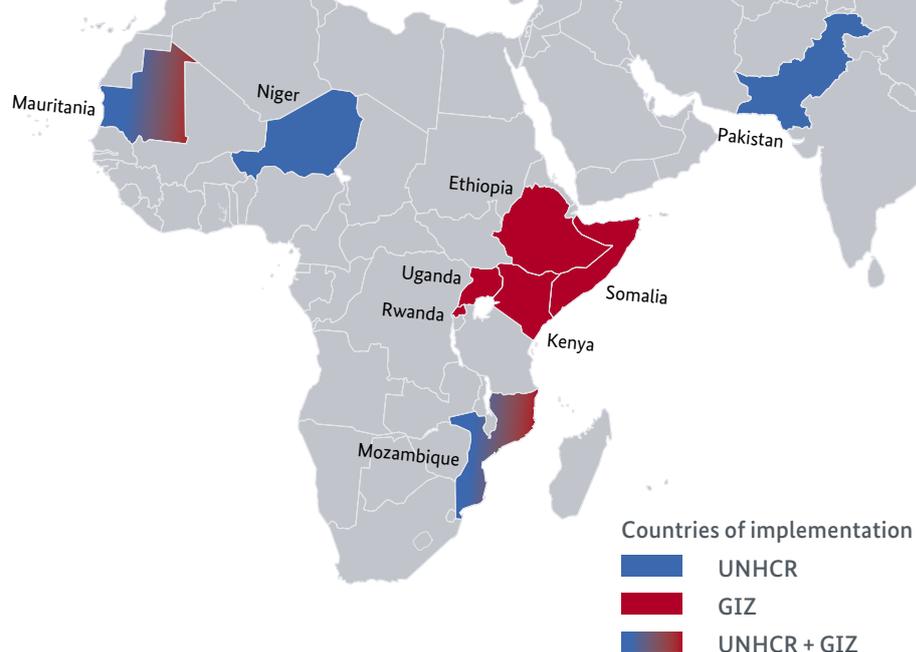
REFUGEE INCLUSION AS A Guiding Principle

Piloting, testing & implementing new approaches

The Global Programme (2018–2024) piloted and tested new approaches towards the inclusion of refugees in national systems. For example, the programme supported the national and local government in Mauritania to improve refugees' and host communities' access to employment, education and healthcare. In Ethiopia, GIZ supported the national government to develop a strategic energy plan that includes refugees and host communities alike.

This way, they have access to affordable and sustainable energy. In Niger, GIZ and UNHCR supported the national and local government to construct houses with and for refugees as well as the host community.





GIZ cooperated with UNHCR to varying degrees to integrate humanitarian – development and peace perspectives (HDP Nexus) in displacement contexts. Three different models of engagement were piloted:

- Joint GIZ-UNHCR Projects (Mauritania, Mozambique, Mexico): GIZ and UNHCR jointly implemented the projects.
- GIZ implemented a project, with close cooperation of UNHCR in a specific sector, e.g. in sustainable energy (Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Pakistan).
- Secondment of GCR advisors into relevant host government ministries, supporting the national government with the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees (Ethiopia, Mexico, Mauritania, Rwanda, Somalia, Uganda).

How can the HDP Nexus help to support the inclusion of refugees in national systems? Based on the experiences from joint cooperation between UNHCR and GIZ in the Global Programme, a joint global study was commissioned. Over the course of three years, the study sought to garner a detailed understanding of what has worked well in the cooperation between UNHCR and GIZ. It focused on extracting lessons learnt, gaps, and opportunities for future cooperation. The results are outlined in this report (p.13).

Niger

Inclusive Housing

In Niger, UNHCR and GIZ supported Malian refugees in the Tillabery region to change their way of living. They used to live in separate refugee camps outside the host communities. Now, they live next to each other with locals in the same villages.

The project supported national and regional governments in urban development planning to construct 2,500 houses, available for refugees and host community members alike.

“Thanks to this project, refugees and Nigerien households live peacefully and in harmony, ”

said Mr. Seydou Moumouni, Secretary General of the Tillabéri Governorate, during the handing over of the keys of the houses to the beneficiaries.

The project also supported the economic recovery of the host and refugee community. UNHCR provided trainings and employment in brick production and housing construction to more than 10,000 people in the Tillabery region.



THE STORY OF AGALI AMINA

Amina is a 40-year-old single mother of six. She had to flee from her village in Mali six years ago due to the armed conflict in the North. Many were killed by armed groups and all her cattle was stolen, Amina left Mali empty-handed with her children.

On the other side of the border, in Niger, she decided to register as a refugee in the camp of Mangaise. Having lived many years in a temporary shelter, Amina and her children were last year relocated to the village of Ouallam and provided a house.

She is one of the beneficiaries that has been reached by the Global Programme. In Niger, UNHCR is supported to build sustainable houses with environmentally friendly bricks. The aim of the project is to build a new village where refugees and Nigeriens can live together. This approach supports the inclusion of refugees into national systems and the peaceful coexistence of people in the village.



Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda

Access to Energy

According to UNHCR, 90 percent of refugees living in rural settlements have very limited access to affordable and sustainable energy.³ To this end BMZ supported UNHCR in implementing its Global Strategy for Sustainable Energy⁴ to enable refugees and host communities to meet their energy needs. As part of the Global Programme, projects were launched in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda to support national governments in developing strategic energy plans that include refugees and host communities.

Further, the projects improved refugee households' and social institutions' (e.g. health centres) energy access via market-based and sustainable solutions. For example, a solar mini-grid was built with the support of GIZ and private companies, providing electricity to around 2,000 households, 275 businesses, and 17 social institutions.

As a result of the projects, 500.000 people have a better life, as they can use electric appliances such as refrigerators and cooking stoves at home. The local economy is strengthened by access to electricity and new income opportunities are created. People have access to better healthcare systems, as health centres were electrified with the support of the project. Further, the private sector is established in the market and participates in shaping the energy landscape.



³ Clean Energy Challenge | UNHCR

⁴ Global Strategy for Sustainable Energy 2019-2025 | UNHCR

The projects are an example of successful cooperation in the HDP Nexus. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, commended the project in Kenya:

“ People talk a lot about the HDP Nexus. They should visit the solar power plant in Kalobeyei to be able to understand what the Nexus is about in 30 minutes. ”

As part of the energy projects, GIZ also supported UNHCR to green its critical infrastructure in displacement settings. This results in an annual reduction of more than 6,000 tons of CO₂ equivalents and will save up to 1.3 Mio USD per year in operational costs.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF SAUDA MELI

The Kalobeyei Integrated Settlement is a unique refugee settlement in Turkana County, Kenya. It is a settlement that promotes the inclusion and self-reliance of refugees. GIZ and UNHCR partnered to install a solar power plant as well as mini-grid to serve refugees and host communities.

Sauda Meli is an entrepreneur who lives in the Kalobeyei Settlement. She owns a kiosk with household goods for her neighbours. She also runs a small bar next to the kiosk, selling a variety of drinks. Sauda used to be connected to an independent power producer. She would spend a lot of money on electricity from this source.

The electricity supply was also constrained to early morning and late evening hours. This also meant that whatever drinks Sauda had in her refrigerators would be barely cold throughout the day.

Through the installation of the solar power plant by GIZ and UNHCR, Sauda now enjoys the reliable always-on power that costs less than a third of what she was paying to the independent power producer. Her customers enjoy access to chilled drinks, making her shop a popular stop for her neighbours seeking to escape the afternoon heat.

The end of the day is an opportunity for Sauda and her family to gather and discuss the events of the day.



Mauritania

Social Protection

TWO YOUNG WOMEN JOIN FORCES

More than 100,000 refugees, mostly from neighbouring Mali, are currently finding protection in Mauritania. Most of them live in precarious conditions and hardly have access to regular employment.

A joint GIZ-UNHCR project supported the national government of Mauritania and the local administration in the socio-economic inclusion of refugees and host communities. The project helped to register more than 3,000 refugees and 9,000 host community members which enables them to access public services such as education, healthcare and work.

With the support of the project, the national employment agency (Techghil) in Mauritania opened centres in Nouadhibou and Bassikounou to help refugees and members of host communities to find employment.

Fatimetou Mint Taleb and Fatimetou Zahra Brahim, two entrepreneurs from the Mauritanian Host Community in the Hodh El Chargui Region, benefited from the project's initiative. They launched their own businesses in 2022. One specialises in cattle farming and milk production, while the other ventured into clothing retail. They explain:

“Through our registration at Techghil, we learned about the entrepreneurial programme and applied to develop a sustainable income-generating activity.”



During the coaching sessions, organised as part of the programme, the two women met and quickly formed a strong bond. After several months of hard work, a joint idea emerged: to combine their efforts and open a store that would sell both food products and essential goods. Today, their joint business is thriving. They are planning to expand their offerings and open a second store in the city center to gain better visibility. They are proud of the journey they have taken together, supported by their spirit of collaboration, determination, and shared will to succeed.

“We are proof that unity is strength. Together, we created something bigger than what we could have done alone,” concludes Fatimetou Zahra.



Mozambique

Employment

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY OF BERTINA

Around 30,000 refugees and asylum seekers and more than 850,000 internally displaced people live in Mozambique. Bertina is one of them. In 2021, she was forced to leave her hometown of Palma in the north of the country after violent attacks by armed groups. The experience was traumatic: Bertina lost a family member, and her sister and niece were abducted.

Bertina now lives with her family in the Pemba region. What those forced to flee especially lack are employment opportunities. This is a major challenge because work is not only fundamental to starting a new life, but also crucial for integration.

But Bertina has succeeded in starting a small business. She now runs a shop selling foodstuffs such as rice, coffee, sugar and juice and has up to 50 customers a day, including many regulars. At the end of each month, she has enough money left over to put something aside for her children's education.

Entrepreneurship training as part of the GIZ-UNHCR project helped Bertina to set up her business. The programme in Mozambique aims to improve living conditions for internally displaced people, refugees and host communities.

Although Bertina still misses her home, she is happy to have the chance to rebuild her life.

“ I'd like to go back home to Palma, but my heart just can't cope with the trauma we experienced there. ”

For her and many others uprooted by violence, working is a way of finding their way back to life.

Looking AHEAD

The Refugee Inclusion Accelerator

In order to continue and further develop the successful work of the SUN global project, the BMZ has launched the follow-up project “RISE – Refugee Inclusion Accelerator”. It builds on the successes of SUN to promote the global agenda for the inclusion of refugees in national systems. The global project RISE focuses on the inclusion of refugees in the areas of education, social security and economic participation.

The programme will be implemented through advisory services to national governments as well as innovation spaces that co-create tailor-made approaches for refugee inclusion. By doing so, the project will benefit both refugees, host communities and governments.

The RISE global programme at a glance

1. Vision

Refugees are included in their host communities as valued members of society.

2. Mission

RISE promotes the transition from parallel humanitarian refugee aid to sustainable solutions for refugee inclusion.

3. Approach

RISE works together with like-minded countries and international organisations to develop solutions and shape inclusive future prospects for refugees and host communities. The three central pillars of RISE are:

Innovation Labs: RISE brings together governments, communities, and international partners to co-create practical solutions tailored to local realities.

Embedded Advisors: RISE places international and national experts in partner countries to provide advice for creating better perspectives for refugees and host communities.

Coalition Building: RISE fosters global coalitions and creates synergies for the inclusion of refugees in host communities and government systems.







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