



Building Better Futures

Important progress has been made in the past few years to improve the self-reliance of people of concern to UNHCR and to promote their inclusion in national systems. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with its promise to “leave no one behind”, and the Global Compact on Refugees, including the comprehensive refugee response framework, have showcased the determination of the international community to enhance the socioeconomic conditions of refugees and host communities, while also reinforcing the search for durable solutions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the vulnerabilities faced by displaced populations, who in many countries have been disproportionately impacted by its socioeconomic consequences. Increased support to refugees will be required to ensure that their basic needs are met, while simultaneously working towards their self-reliance and inclusion. More support for livelihoods, in particular, is needed to respond to the socioeconomic challenges faced by people of concern, including in urban settings. While the pandemic has necessitated changes in the way UNHCR operates, ensuring that the displaced are included in national systems whenever possible will remain a guiding principle.

In 2021, UNHCR will promote the positive impact of education, livelihoods, access to energy and inclusion on the resilience and well-being of refugees and their host communities during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. The Office will expand its use of data and evidence to guide multi-year programming, inform advocacy efforts, and improve decision-making.

A Yemeni refugee takes part in a hybrid mechanics class as part of his diploma at Luminus Technical University College in Amman, Jordan.

© UNHCR/Mohammad Hawari

UNHCR has bolstered its work through partnerships with governments, development agencies and research institutions, which are investing heavily in measuring and monitoring the health and socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic and making the business case to provide financial services to refugees. Efforts to further the inclusion of refugees in social protection schemes whenever possible will be pursued.

In parallel, UNHCR will support the search for durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation, resettlement and complementary pathways for admission to third countries, as well as local integration and other local solutions. This work will be in line with the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees, bolstered by mobilization of specific support platforms including for Afghanistan, the East and Horn of Africa and the Americas, as well as “The three-year strategy (2019-2021) on resettlement and complementary pathways”. While the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to continue to impact access to solutions in 2021, UNHCR will work with States and partners to adapt, including through modified processing and departure modalities for those accepted for resettlement, and the provision of cash and other assistance, including transport and appropriate reception arrangements, for those wishing to return home.

In this chapter

- Access to quality education
- Livelihoods and economic inclusion
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ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION



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A young asylum-seeker from Afghanistan attends class near the Vial reception and identification centre on Chios, Greece.

2021 TARGETS

 405,000 children aged 3-5 will be enrolled in early childhood education.	 2 million children will be enrolled in primary education.	 250,000 students will be enrolled in lower and upper secondary education.
 15,000 people of concern will be enrolled in tertiary and higher education.	 500,000 refugee children and youth will be supported with distance or home-based learning.	

Coming together for refugee education



In 2021, UNHCR will work to reduce the enrolment gap between refugee and host community children at primary-school level, where only 77% of refugee children were enrolled in 2019. With an estimated 1.8 million refugee children and youth out of school due to mandatory school closures in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic (as of September 2020), primary education programming will be closely aligned with national responses, in order to support the safe reopening of schools and the

resumption of in-person school-based learning.

Targeted interventions will focus on enrolling out-of-school children in certified accelerated, alternative and non-formal education programmes that support transition into formal education, as well as re-enrolment of children who dropped out of school due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There will also be increased focus on access to quality primary education and creating safe learning environments for

displaced girls, children with disabilities and over-aged children. Efforts to reopen schools will be informed by needs identified in a 2020 water, sanitation and hygiene survey, to ensure that school facilities are safe for teachers and students, particularly girls.

Just 31% of refugees were enrolled in secondary education in 2019 and, due to COVID-19, half of refugee girls in secondary school were estimated to be at risk of dropping out in 2020. UNHCR will significantly increase programming to boost enrolment and retention rates for adolescent girls in national school systems in 2021, leveraging strategic partnerships with ministries of education and other key actors through platforms such as the Secondary Education Working Group.

The German Albert Einstein Academic Scholarship Programme for Refugees (DAFI) will not see significant new enrolments in 2021 due to funding limitations and COVID-19-related closures, delaying completion of studies for many refugee tertiary students. In 2021, UNHCR will maintain levels of support and funding to ensure that DAFI scholarship students can continue their studies.

Refugees have been disproportionately excluded from accessing national continuous learning programmes due to a growing digital divide, which has been

exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic in some countries. In 2021, UNHCR will advocate the inclusion of refugees in national COVID-19 response plans, as well as increased investments in connected education in low-resource communities. Actions will include: increasing access to digital learning content and the internet in schools through the expansion of the Instant Network Schools programme, in partnership with Vodafone Foundation; and increasing access to nationally aligned, offline education content platforms like Kolibri, in partnership with Learning Equality.

In 2021, the Humanitarian Education Accelerator will continue to support promising education innovations as these are developed to scale. By investing in research and supporting a growing community of practice, UNHCR will build evidence on what works in humanitarian education, informing efforts by the Office and other key stakeholders.

In 2019, the Global Refugee Forum resulted in 204 education pledges, which are being mapped against the “Global framework for refugee education”. The implementation of these pledges will be supported at the country, regional and global levels in 2021 through the Education Co-Sponsorship Alliance, with task teams advancing strategic goals and identifying matched and continual investments.

Supporting continuous access to education during COVID-19: Emerging practices



Humanitarian Education Accelerator



Global framework for refugee education



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Displaced out-of-school children access education with the support of Educate A Child

UNHCR and Educate A Child, a programme from the Education Above All Foundation, have renewed their long-standing partnership and commitment to expanding access to quality primary education for displaced children globally. The comprehensive programme, supported by the Qatar Fund for Development, will allow over 115,000 out-of-school children to enrol in primary school in 14 countries in 2021.





LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION



© UNHCR/Dunja Adam Khan

A Congolese refugee in Uganda who has become the sole breadwinner for her family following the COVID-19 pandemic. Trained as a tailor with UNHCR's support, she has started making non-medical, washable masks out of the African fabric Kitenge.

2021 TARGETS

- 3** regions where UNHCR will “step up” and roll out livelihood strategies, taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 50%** of people of concern aged 15 or older will hold a basic financial account (a mobile money account or an account with a financial institution).
- 50,000** refugee and host community households will be supported through the “graduation approach” to poverty alleviation by the Poverty Alleviation Coalition.
- 2,700** refugees and host country artisans in 20 countries will maintain an income through UNHCR's MADE51 project.

COVID-19: Emerging practices on livelihoods and economic inclusion



A UNHCR pre-COVID-19 survey (2019) revealed that 70% of refugees live in countries with restricted rights to work, 47% in countries with restricted access to bank accounts, and 52% in countries with restricted rights to own a business. Against this background, UNHCR's support for livelihoods will be strengthened in 2021 to mitigate the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on people of concern. UNHCR and partners will work to: protect livelihoods and income-generating assets; expand data on and assessments of the impact of the pandemic; advocate

refugee inclusion in national fiscal and socioeconomic responses; strengthen evidence-based programmes; and facilitate joint resource mobilization efforts together with other UN agencies and partners.

Financial inclusion

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, some financial service providers serving refugees have restructured or placed a moratorium on refugee loans. UNHCR will advocate refugee access to financial services and work with financial institutions—such as the International

Financial Corporation—to create blended finance projects, enabling financial service providers and investors to include people of concern in their operations.

Cash assistance will be deployed to facilitate refugee access to broader financial services whenever possible. New partnerships with financial service providers will be pursued, and key programmes will be expanded and serve as models for other contexts: for example, the partnership between UNHCR, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and Grameen Credit Agricole Foundation to promote access to financial and non-financial services for refugees and host communities in Uganda.

To strengthen refugee access to credit, UNHCR will pilot a credit history project in the Middle East, North Africa and Africa regions, using a technology platform that supports digital identification and a verifiable credit history for refugees. Together with the United Nations Capital Development Fund, UNHCR will convene the private sector and policymakers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to expand access to affordable remittances and other financial services for people of concern.

Inclusion in employment and entrepreneurship

UNHCR's MADE51 project offers refugees and host community members a sustainable income and a fair trade route-to-market for their handmade products. Partnering with global private sector companies and local social enterprises, UNHCR will further facilitate market access for refugee-made products through a new MADE51 online store.

UNHCR will also work with a number of UN agencies to expand livelihood opportunities for refugees, including: with UNDP, to create a consortium of the world's largest digital employers and providers of technology to improve the inclusion of people of concern in digital jobs and skills development; with the FAO, to improve resilience and self-reliance in displacement settings in the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes, expanding to West and Central Africa in 2021; with the ILO, on a joint pilot to facilitate refugee access to employment services under the inclusive national employment services initiative in Mauritania; and with UNITAR, to promote entrepreneurship opportunities for refugees through an e-learning curriculum, supporting the operationalization of a UNHCR-UNCTAD-IOM “Policy guide on entrepreneurship for refugees and migrants”.

Sida, UNHCR and Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation join hands to promote access to financial services for refugees and host communities in Uganda



© UNHCR/Andrew McConnell



IKEA pledges to support employability skills for 2,500 refugees worldwide

UNHCR supports IKEA across 30 countries in its efforts to provide a minimum of 2,500 refugees with skills for employment, thus enabling them to contribute to their host communities. Through this initiative, IKEA aims to help change the narrative on refugees, with the hope that other businesses will join their efforts.



ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



A refugee pump operator cleans the cells that power the solar pump in Um Gargour camp, Sudan.

2021 TARGETS



1.7 million people of concern will have access to clean cooking fuel.

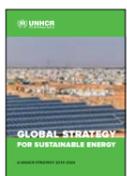


2.9 million people of concern will have access to sustainable sources of electricity for lighting, power and productive use.



5,000 hectares of degraded land will be rehabilitated through reforestation activities in refugee-hosting areas.

Global strategy for sustainable energy 2019-2024



Ensuring that refugees have access to clean, affordable and reliable energy is an integral part of humanitarian responses. Meeting energy needs can provide significant benefits in terms of protection, gender equality, food security, water, sanitation and hygiene, education, livelihoods, connectivity and environmental protection.

In 2021, UNHCR will continue to deploy its “Global strategy for sustainable energy 2019-2024”, focusing on four areas:

addressing refugee households’ energy needs from the onset of an emergency; improving access to sustainable, safe and affordable household cooking energy; expanding sustainable household electrification; and expanding sustainable electrification of community and support facilities, while limiting overall consumption.

The strategy also foresees strengthened collaboration with various energy actors to meet refugees’ energy needs,

while minimizing environmental impact UNHCR and GIZ, the German Agency for International Cooperation, are working in partnership to reduce the carbon footprint of, and improve access to sustainable energy by, UNHCR operations, while also providing clean and sustainable energy sources to populations of concern in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. With the support of Sida, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, UNHCR is establishing a revolving fund to help operations partner with the private sector to transition to clean energy and phase out fossil fuels.

Together with the Global Plan of Action for Sustainable Energy Solutions in Situations of Displacement, UNHCR is leading the Clean Energy Challenge, a worldwide effort to replace unsustainable energy use in displacement settings with clean, modern energy sources for households, community services and humanitarian operations. The “marketplace” is an innovative matching tool developed within the Clean Energy Challenge to connect energy demands in displacement settings with resources supplied by donor and business communities.

More broadly, the Office is using market-based approaches, including power purchase agreements and leasing solutions, that channel donor funds towards developing self-sustaining local market capacities. UNHCR will also work with refugees and host communities to build community resilience through sustainable environmental management: notably, in partnership with Land Life Company, UNHCR will expand its reforestation efforts on degraded land in refugee-hosting areas.

In 2021, UNHCR and partners will harmonize energy and environmental data collection and analysis, aiming to develop a robust baseline and database to support

project proposals and implementation. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR is working to increase the resilience of refugees and reduce the environmental impact of health facilities by using renewable energy solutions in Burundi, Colombia, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan. Building internal capacity within the organization to undertake environmental monitoring will also continue to be a priority, in order to assess progress and identify opportunities for improvement.

SUPPORTING THE URBAN DISPLACED

2021 TARGETS



80% of people of concern living in cities will have access to primary health care through the national system on the same basis as nationals.



70% of people of concern living in cities will have access to secondary and tertiary health care through the national system on the same basis as nationals.



80% of households in urban areas will pay rent through cash assistance received from UNHCR.



SPOTLIGHT: Strengthening city networks

The Global Compact on Refugees recognizes the important role of local authorities as frontline responders to displacement, including in identifying housing and shelter solutions and providing essential services and protection. Mayors play an important role in encouraging community activities and promoting public messages which celebrate diversity and inclusion.

Launched on World Refugee Day in 2018, the Cities #WithRefugees initiative will continue to encourage more local authorities and municipalities to welcome and include refugees in their communities. To date, the initiative has brought together more than 250 cities in 50 countries.

Concerted engagement with city networks, including the Mayors Migration Council and United Cities and Local Governments, led to pledges at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum by the cities of Bristol (the United Kingdom); Durban (South Africa); Milan (Italy); Sao Paulo (Brazil); and Strasbourg (France). UNHCR will work with these networks to support implementation of these city-led pledges in 2021.

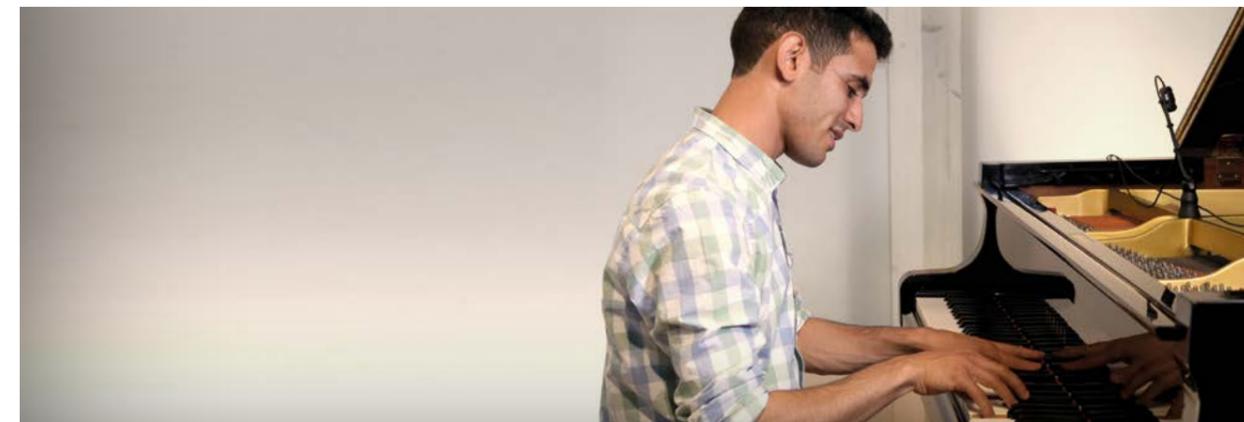
Some 70% of UNHCR's people of concern live in urban settings. Many live in poor shelters where health care, water, sanitation and hygiene, education services and national social safety nets are overstretched or inaccessible, even where the legal framework is enabling. COVID-19 has exacerbated this situation, notably affecting the livelihoods of people of concern who are often in low-wage informal employment and have little or no savings or access to loans.

In 2021, UNHCR will prioritize the inclusion of the urban displaced in national systems and services, including for health, education, protection and livelihoods, as well in preparedness and response plans for COVID-19. The Office will continuously assess the overall well-being of people of concern in urban areas and monitor their inclusion in national plans, their access to basic services and the availability of cash assistance through

national social safety nets. The Office will also advocate laws and policies that enable inclusion of people of concern, including reduced restrictions on access to services and the right to work; monitor minimum standards in service provision across sectors; and increase community outreach and community-based protection.

Operationally, UNHCR will invest in shelter interventions and livelihood opportunities, and significantly scale up cash assistance for those in urban areas, not least to mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable. Partnerships with urban communities, local and national governments, development actors, humanitarian organizations, the private sector, academia and civil society will be key to increasing support for people of concern in urban settings and building the capacity of national services and local partners.

LOCAL INTEGRATION AND OTHER LOCAL SOLUTIONS



Aeham, the 'Pianist of Yarmouk', recording a Nansen performance 2020 in Kassel, Germany.

2021 TARGETS



15 refugee situations where local integration will be advanced, including as part of the implementation of pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum.

UNHCR will continue to support governments opting to provide local integration or other local solutions to people of concern. At the Global Refugee Forum, a number of States pledged to advance the legal and socioeconomic integration of refugees and former refugees, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Mozambique and Zambia. Where needed, UNHCR will support efforts by States to implement pledges, including through direct technical support and by facilitating the matching of available financial, material and technical assistance.

In certain countries in the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region, legal pathways to local integration are accessible to refugees under existing legislation. As such, several local integration efforts are being pursued for long-staying refugee populations in Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

UNHCR is also enhancing activities regarding the issuance of residence permits to ensure

lawful stay and pathways to naturalization. In Zambia, UNHCR is advocating the issuance of residence permits for 10,000 former Angolan refugees and 4,000 former Rwandan refugees as part of the legal local integration process. UNHCR is also supporting efforts by governments, including in the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau and Namibia, to formalize residency and naturalization for refugees.

In the Americas, efforts to support local integration will build on the "Cities of solidarity" initiative, which is embedded in the 2014 Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action and aims to enhance operational, multi-stakeholder responses in urban settings, with a view to advancing integration and building institutional responses. The initiative was rolled out in the first quarter of 2020 in municipalities across four countries. In Mexico, UNHCR will continue supporting on-site interventions aimed at facilitating local integration, including home visits, as well as naturalization and cash assistance.

 **RESETTLEMENT AND COMPLEMENTARY PATHWAYS**



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A Syrian refugee plays with his daughter on the rooftop of their house in Barja, Lebanon. They are awaiting resettlement to Norway, however the COVID-19 pandemic suspended international resettlement for refugees worldwide in 2020.

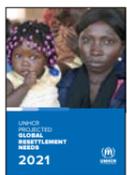
2021 TARGETS

 **80,000** refugees will be resettled through UNHCR.

 **33** countries will receive UNHCR resettlement submissions.

 **160,000** refugees will be admitted through complementary pathways to third countries.

UNHCR projected global resettlement needs 2021



The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on capacity to provide resettlement, complementary pathways and other third-country solutions to refugees in need in 2020. After surpassing the first year’s target of resettling 60,000 refugees to 29 countries in 2019, as set out in “The three-year strategy (2019-2021) on resettlement and complementary pathways” (the 3YS), 2020’s target of resettling 70,000 refugees to 31 countries will not be met.

UNHCR estimates that over 1.4 million refugees will be in need of resettlement in 2021. Governments, NGOs, UNHCR and other partners remain committed to the more than 80 activities included in the global action plan to implement the 3YS. UNHCR has adopted new ways of working to reach the ultimate goals of providing resettlement to more than 1 million refugees and facilitating complementary pathways for

2 million individuals by 2028. This includes innovations adopted in response to the COVID-19 situation: facilitating video interviews with refugees for country selection missions; remote communication and counselling with refugees and refugee communities; and online training for staff.

In line with the 3YS, UNHCR and IOM launched the Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative (CRISP) in early 2020. The CRISP is supporting States and other key actors to establish or expand third-country solutions through tailored capacity-building activities. CRISP emphasizes building quality, sustainable programmes and enhancing coordination and partnerships.

The Global Task Force on Education Complementary Pathways is fully operational with two chairs in place. The State-led Network on Family Reunification, launched in October 2020, and the Task Force on Labour Mobility, chaired by Canada in February 2021, are critical to stepping up achievement of the 3YS goals. All three will be key platforms for sharing good practices and advocating refugees’ increased access to these solutions.

The UNHCR Opportunities Platform, launched in September 2020, is a resource tool to help refugees find scholarships for higher education, and will be expanded to include third-country employment opportunities.

The Priority Situations Core Group will remain the primary vehicle for resettlement countries and other stakeholders to maximize the impact of resettlement and other third-country solutions, such as humanitarian admission programmes. The group’s focus remains on the Syria and central Mediterranean situations, which are at the forefront of global resettlement needs.

The Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative will support States and civil society to make community sponsorship available in more places and for more refugees. Community sponsorship is an important tool not only to increase resettlement opportunities, but also to foster welcoming societies, the third goal of the 3YS.

UNHCR will continue to implement secure methods of transferring personal data in the context of resettlement, and complete data sharing agreements with States and partners in line with its data protection policy.

Sustainable Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Initiative



UNHCR Opportunities Platform



VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION



Burundian refugees prepare to board buses at Mahama camp in Rwanda to voluntarily return home after living in exile since 2015.

2021 TARGETS



Support conditions in countries of origin to enable voluntary return in safety and dignity, in line with the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees.



Provide adequate return assistance to refugees wishing to repatriate.



Strengthen access by returnees to legally recognized documentation and credentials.

By the end of 2019, nearly 317,200 refugees had repatriated voluntarily, a decrease of 46% compared to 2018. While voluntary repatriation remains the solution preferred by many refugees, the most common obstacles to return remain fragile or faltering peace processes; continuing insecurity; limited inclusion and participation of refugees in peace processes and repatriation plans; failure to address root causes; destruction

and confiscation of housing, land and property; severely overstretched service provision in home locations; and the lack of viable livelihood opportunities.

The absence of conditions conducive to return will continue to challenge voluntary repatriation prospects globally in 2021. With the number of displaced people rising each year, efforts to bolster short-term humanitarian support in countries of origin

will be needed to sustain return over the long term. Development action is critical in this regard, but depends on security and stability in areas of return to be delivered effectively. In addition, in 2020, voluntary repatriation operations have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in widespread suspension of organized return travel. While some operations resumed voluntary repatriation activities in the last trimester of 2020, it is expected that the pandemic will continue to affect return arrangements into 2021.

UNHCR will continue to work with UN-Habitat and other partners to address housing, land and property grievances in the context of return, and with the ILO to support the economic inclusion of returnees. Cooperation will also be strengthened with UNDP to promote an integrated approach to development in at least 13 countries through a global partnership on rule of law and local governance, a critical component of inclusion to sustain returns.

UNHCR will continue to play a catalytic role to assist the three regional support platforms under the Global Compact on Refugees, namely: the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) support platform for long-term solutions to the refugee situation in the East and Horn of Africa; the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR); and the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework in Latin America (MIRPS). Strengthening prospects for voluntary repatriation is part of the core work of all three platforms.

In 2021, the Office will provide counselling and information on return, including organizing “go-and-see” visits for refugees

to observe conditions in countries of origin. Intention surveys will be undertaken to explore the short- and longer-term intentions of IDPs and refugees regarding return. UNHCR will also promote access to civil documentation in the context of return.

Furthering the humanitarian-development-peace nexus in countries of origin will be a priority for the Office, building on its operational footprint and competencies in key thematic areas. In Sudan, for example, UNHCR is building on strategic global and regional development partnerships; ensuring continuity between protection and peace interventions in displacement-affected contexts and communities; and supporting the capacity of national and local authorities to address displacement as part of the ongoing political transition.