

# REBUILD

Boosting Livelihoods



In partnership with:

## Re:BUiLD in Action

Year 3, Quarter 4, 2023 Newsletter

the IKEA Foundation



[www.rebuild.rescue.org](http://www.rebuild.rescue.org)



## MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

*Priscilla Dembetembe*



### Dear Re:BUiLD Family,

Welcome to this edition of the Re:BUiLD in Action newsletter where we highlight some of the significant steps we took as we approached the end of the third year of our program in 2023. I am excited to see how our collective efforts continue to make a meaningful impact, and I am delighted to share a few key moments.

One of the highlights of this quarter was our [preparation and ultimately contributions at the Global Refugee Forum](#) where there were over 300 refugees in attendance. The spotlight fell on the East African refugee situation with key leaders spotlighting urban areas as the future avenues for refugees to achieve self-reliance. Through our engagement and partnership, I am proud to share that Nairobi and Kampala, where Re:BUiLD operates, made [joint pledges](#) that are garnering attention and support.

In November, we came together with other partners funded by the IKEA Foundation to share lessons learned over nearly three years at the first ever in-person [gathering of the IKEA Foundation partners](#) supporting the economic self-reliance of urban refugees and vulnerable hosts during the [#IkeaFoundationWeek23](#).

In October, together with the Judiciary in Uganda we launched the [handbook on refugees access to Justice in Uganda](#). Leaders and stakeholders in the justice system have hailed the handbook as a critical resource offering a ray of hope to the more than 1.5 million refugees in the country.

This quarter ushered in the [second wave of our Randomized Control Trials \(RCTs\)](#). This initiative is a testament to our commitment to evidence-based practices and innovative solutions. By targeting 8000 clients, we are expanding our reach and deepening our understanding of the impact of our microenterprise interventions. This data-driven

approach will not only guide our future endeavors but will also contribute valuable insights and learnings to the broader humanitarian community.

As we move forward to the fourth year of implementing the Re:BUiLD Program, we will focus more on the documentation, packaging and [dissemination of lessons](#) coming out of the program's interventions. Be on the lookout for various publications and initiatives that will showcase voices and experiences from our clients, partners, staff and Principal Investigators as we seek to build a strong footprint at the community, national, regional and global stages.

In closing, I extend my sincere gratitude to each member of the Re:BUiLD Program, our research partners, IRC colleagues and our friends at the IKEA Foundation for your unwavering dedication and hard work. Together, we are making a difference in the lives of those we serve, and I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead.

**Wishing you all blissful year 4, 2024!**



16th November 2023 – Nairobi, Kenya. Mandereni Mwamba, leads Tusonge Mbele USLA group members in an engagement with IKEA Foundation partners visit to Kawangware, Nairobi. (PHOTO: Nathan Ijjo Tibaku/TheIRC)



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3rd November 2023 – Nairobi, Kenya. CBOs and RLOs representatives participate in the forum to discuss Refugee Networks roles and their current state in terms of representation. (PHOTO: Edgar Otieno/TheIRC)

In a bid to boost meaningful participation of refugees in the planning, implementation and coordination of livelihood interventions, the Re:BUILD Program held a consultative session in November 2023 with diverse stakeholder groups across Nairobi. The program brought together Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Refugee-Led Organizations (RLOs), and partners including the government's Department for Refugee Services (DRS) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to deliberate on enhancing the effectiveness of the existing refugee networks and the ideal forms of representation for refugee communities in various forums and coordination platforms.

## Current landscape and challenges

Refugee and host community leaders in attendance emphasized the importance of being part of the decision-making process from program or intervention design. Active participation from the onset, can lead to more relevant and effective policies and impact in programming. Participants stressed the importance of collaboration between different CBOs and RLOs appealing for joint efforts and working towards common goals to amplify voices and their collective impact.

The interactive sessions underscored IRC's approach, reflecting on the sector-wide commitment and efforts to advance the meaningful participation of and accountability towards people affected by crisis in the of livelihoods services for the urban refugees and vulnerable

hosts. Officials from the Department of Refugee Services (DRS) at the event commended the endorsement of urban refugee and host networks as ideal structures for effective engagement of refugees with governments and international partners.

## Automated registration and certification for groups

Refugee leaders were encouraged to take advantage of the recent modernization and automation of government services at the State Department of Social Protection to register groups and upgrade to societies through the Community Development Management Information System (CDMIS) unveiled in September 2023. CDMIS is poised to offer equal access to government services for all people. It seeks to reduce bureaucracy, eliminate red tapes, and make services more accessible and efficient.

Joyce Mugure, an officer at the State Department of Social Protection asked refugee and host groups to consider registering as societies saying this would enhance their scope and grow the network.

"I recommend that during the registration of networks, we consider registering them as societies. By doing so, it would enable you to extend your geographical coverage, in contrast to working as CBOs, which are often limited to specific communities. This broader registration approach would empower your networks to have a more substantial impact on a wider scale," elaborated the officer.



3rd November 2023 – Nairobi, Kenya. Joyce Mugure – Department of Social Protection gives an update on the CDMIS platform that is designed to digitize Group Registration among other services. (PHOTO: Edgar Otieno/TheIRC)

The meeting provided a renewed commitment to strengthening efforts for the representation of refugee communities in various forums such as working groups. With a clearer vision of ideal representation and expanded reach, CBOs, RLOs, and partners are actively working to implement these recommendations, promising a future with improved representation and coordination that will positively impact the lives of urban refugees in Kenya.





13th December 2023, Geneva, Switzerland. Delegates attend the Global Refugee Forum where discussions on evolving needs, challenges and experiences of refugees were addressed. | IN-SET: Priscilla Dembetembe, the Program Director for Re:BUiLD speaks at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in Geneva. (PHOTOS: Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative/Abby Woodhouse)

In the week between 11th and 16th December 2023, Geneva was the hub for the [Global Refugee Forum 2023](#) (GRF), where a diverse array of stakeholders - international humanitarian organizations, governments, refugee representatives, and United Nations bodies - convened. Their discussions centered on the evolving needs, challenges, and experiences of refugees worldwide, painting a troubling picture unveiled by UN statistics. The number of refugees worldwide increased [from 27.1 million in 2021 to 35.3 million at the end of 2022](#).

Aid agencies and over 300 refugee representatives highlighted dwindling donor support. The consensus among most stakeholders, including the UNHCR Commissioner General Filippo Grandi, was that confining refugees to camps is no longer sustainable. The resounding call was for refugees to be supported to settle within host communities, supported in accessing self-reliance to regain control of their lives.

Urban areas emerged as key hosts for refugees globally, with mayors from Africa, Asia, America, and Europe sharing their [experiences in adapting](#) to accommodate refugees and provide essential services. The Mayor of Koboko in Uganda Hon Sanya Wilson emphasized in one of the panel discussions that; "Refugees have become a resource in our city, contributing through taxes and aiding economic development," appealing for greater inclusion of cities in refugee policy discussions and management.

The spotlight also fell on the East African refugee situation. Uganda, as a GRF co-convenor, in their [statement](#) highlighted compelling model of refugee

integration, spanning from the settlement areas to Koboko municipality and Kampala City. Urban areas were rooted as the future avenues for refugees to achieve self-reliance. Discussion on Human Settlements and Kenya's Shirika plan aimed to transform camps into municipalities, representing a groundbreaking shift in refugee management.

Kenya's Principal Secretary for Citizen Services Ambassador Julius Bitok made a fervent appeal for donor support for the [Shirika plan](#). The successful implementation of this plan is anticipated to necessitate over \$1.5 billion in funding over the next four years. Ambassador Bitok emphasized the crucial role of donor support in realizing the ambitious goals of the Shirika plan. The UNHCR High Commissioner for Refugees lauded the Shirika plan as a transformative model that provides refugees with an opportunity to regain their dignity and break free from humanitarian dependency. The plan is designed to empower refugees and enable them to build sustainable lives.

Demonstrating their commitment, donors showed their support, with Denmark leading the way by pledging \$70 million USD over the next three years to aid in the implementation of the Shirika plan. This contribution reflects the international community's recognition of the plan's significance in fostering positive change and supporting those in need.

Read more on [www.rebuild.rescue.org](http://www.rebuild.rescue.org)



31st October 2023 – Nairobi, Kenya. Kennedy Swara 47, poses with motherboards from e-waste materials gotten from the streets of Nairobi. He collects electronic waste products for recycling at WEEE Center. (PHOTO: Edgar Otieno/TheIRC)

In 2020, when COVID-19 struck, 47-year-old Kennedy Swara, a father of two lost his only source of livelihood. The logistics company he was working for closed business due to reduced cargo traffic at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport. At the time, Swara was living at a two-bedroom apartment with his family at the nearby Utawala Estate, Nairobi.

The job loss left him with no options but using up all his savings to cater for the family needs. He also opted to venture into vegetable farming but suffered yet another setback. The unreliable rainfall patterns left him with little produce from the piece of land he had leased to try a hand in farming.

To the former airport worker, each day brought new challenges and he embraced them eagerly. He learned to diagnose and repair a wide range of devices, from laptops and smartphones to gaming consoles and home appliances. A new path that has led him to e-waste management, finding respite, thanks to the International Rescue Committee (IRC's) Re:BUiLD Program skilling and apprenticeship intervention targeting refugees and vulnerable Kenyans in Nairobi and Kampala.

After receiving support to study hardware maintenance, his dedication saw him retained as at the WEEE Center where he is earning a living by helping address Kenya's electronic waste menace. According to the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA, 2022),

the country is grappling with over 50,000 metric tons of e-waste. This is an equivalent of Kenya's coffee export volumes for 2022 but many are yet to tap the opportunity which Swara is determinedly making the most of. In November 2023, Swara told Re:BUiLD in Action he is able to earn on average Kshs 42,000 monthly from e-waste collection.

He says: "Everything from an electronic device is very important. As I have come to learn, we should not throw anything to our beautiful environment. It either has plastic, glass, copper, or a hard disk. At least every fraction of an item has a function."

Swara decries dumping of electronic waste and hopes more people can learn to responsibly dispose household electronics. He engages young people in low-income settlement areas in the city collect and sell damaged electronic gadgets for a living.

"E-waste, currently I call it a business. In the early days people used to look down on people carrying sacks on their backs saying that they are collecting garbage. In the real sense, most of these people have gone deep into this field of e-waste. People should be educated to have an idea of what it means to venture into e-waste and they can earn a living," concludes Swara.

You can [watch Swara's story](#) on the Re:BUiLD Program YouTube channel.



**Mitchelle Nthambi, 26-year-old business owner- Kingship Beauty Palor**

*"The IRC Re:BUiLD Program really helped me. They gave me a business grant which I used to grow my business and I also got mentorship. My mentor was very nice, and she really helped to know my business well. She showed me tricks on how to make more money in the business and taught me about customer service and how crucial it is for business."*

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**Tina Kalitani, Senior Protection and Rule of Law Officer - IRC**

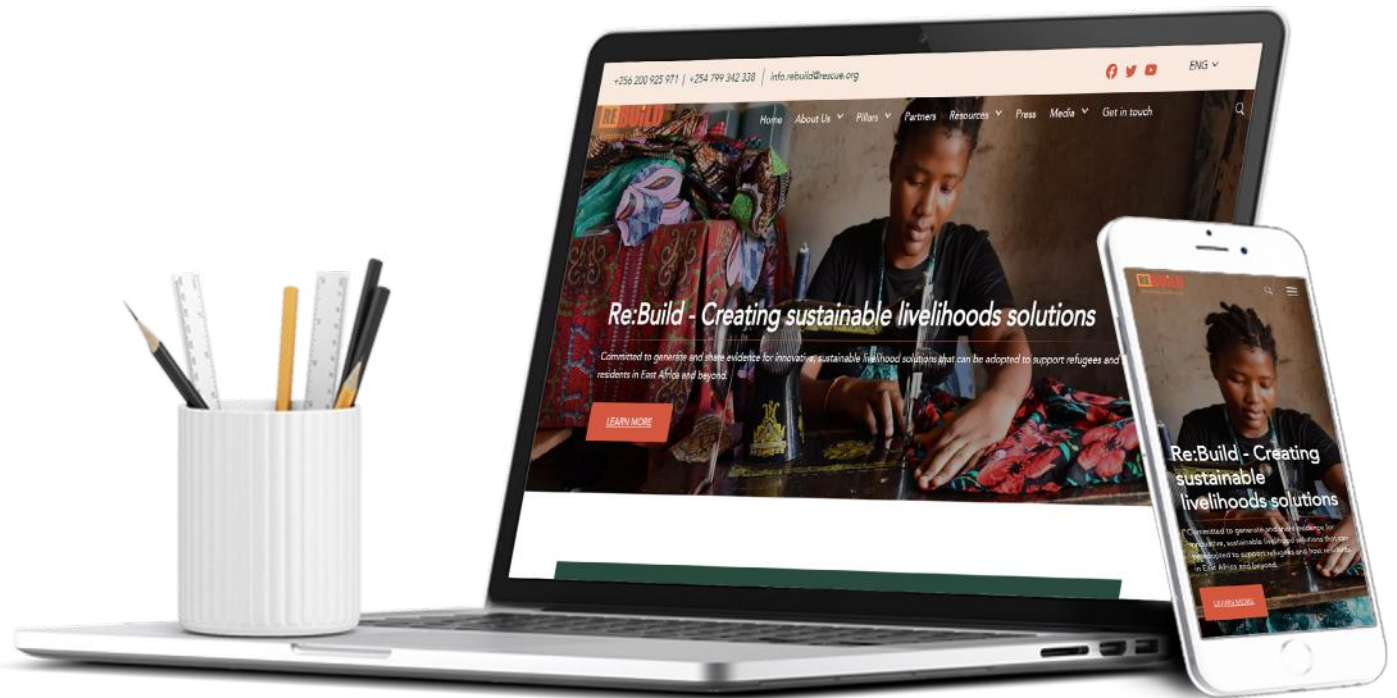
*"Re:BUiLD has been empowering women. Our program interventions target 60 percent women. We are trying to build the resilience of women. Testimonies have come up that because of what we are doing, whether it is engaging women to learn the savings culture, financial inclusion, access to microenterprise grants or skilling have empowered women to be financially stable and has given them a voice in decision making in their families."*



**Hanan Mori, Kampala, Re:BUiLD Client**

*"There are many solutions to gender-based violence. It should come from us. We, the women. Sometimes we see love from the appearance of a person. They will come to you with nice words and you believe them and even when they are mistreating us, we see it as love. I understand the meaning of love and violence. One must be careful to differentiate between the two."*





We are excited to share the latest updates, news, and resources from our program with you.

To stay connected and informed, we encourage you to follow our social media accounts and visit our website regularly.

By doing this, you will receive engaging content and valuable insights about the program. We share key program visibility materials, change stories and events that we get to be involved in.

Connect with us on:

**Website:** <https://rebuild.rescue.org>

**Youtube:** <https://www.youtube.com/@ReBuildEastAfrica>

**Rescue.org:** <https://www.rescue.org/topic/irc-partners-ikea-foundation-build-opportunities>

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to engaging with you on our platforms.



## Key Moments/Days

- **Sexual Abuse & Sexual Violence Awareness Week 2024** - 5th - 11th February
- **International Women's Day 2024** - 8th March
- **Release of Re:BUiLD RCT Wave 1 Results** - February/March 2024
- **World Refugee Day** - 20th June
- **Urban Refugee's Symposium** - 20th June