

# REBUILD

Boosting Livelihoods



" We now have USLA groups where we can save & take loans" - Josephine

## Re:BUiLD in Action

Year 4, Quarter 1, 2024 Newsletter



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



In partnership with the IKEA Foundation

## MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Priscilla Dembetembe



### Dear Re:BUiLD Family,

Welcome to this edition of the Re:BUiLD in Action newsletter, a platform we use to share insights, learnings, and progress in each quarter. As we march on further into the fourth year of the program, we intend to share more milestones and key moments from the first quarter, 2024.

Our team in collaboration with partners successfully conducted mass registration of clients for the second wave of the Randomized Control Trial (RCT). The program onboarded an additional 4,867 clients in Kenya and 6,701 in Uganda. Of these, 58% were female and 42% were male representing both refugees (62%) and hosts (38%) for the Wave 2 RCTs whose pilots kicked off in Nairobi and Kampala.

As part of our collaboration with the Centre for Global Development (CGD), we released the [Donor Support for Urban Refugees paper](#). The publication which the IRC's Re:BUiLD team, co-authored with CGD explores how donors are supporting urban refugees, including highlighting specific notable projects. Also featuring are the key recommendations on how donors and multilateral development banks can best support the growing number urban refugees around the world. The dissemination of these insights through a physical engagement with key donors has been highlighted in this edition.

We remain keen on the commitments from the global refugee forum in December 2023. Together with Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA), we conducted a workshop bringing together stakeholders to brainstorm on effective mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating these commitments. Out of this engagement, KCCA will pursue enhanced partnerships with RLOs and NGOs in advocating for refugee rights and leading policy development to encourage safe and fair market spaces for refugees within Kampala.

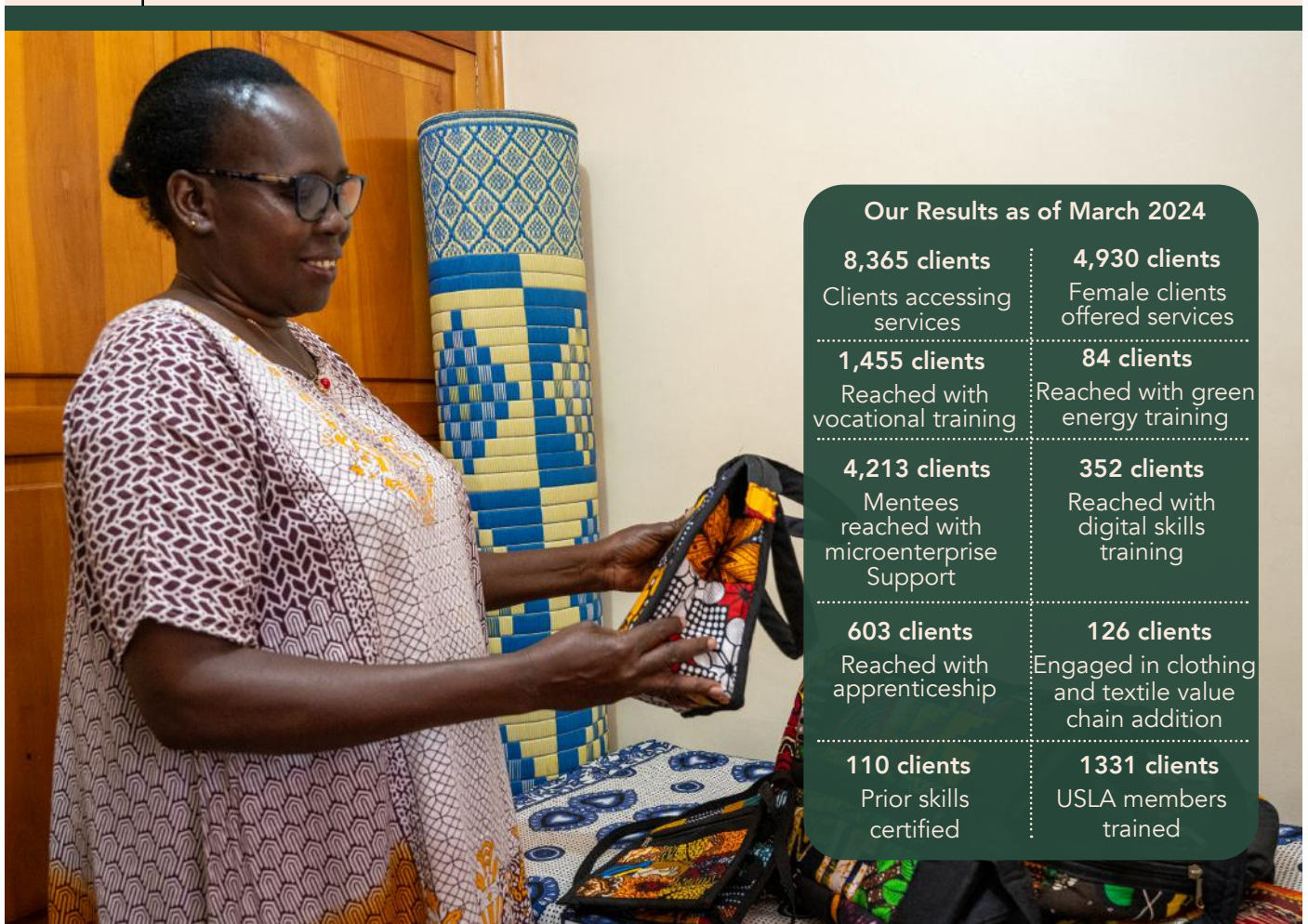
Additionally, the 2024 International Women's Day (IWD) was a special occasion for our clients, partners, and the team. The occasion provided our clients an opportunity to share their perspectives on the significance of the day and the program's impact on their journey toward financial freedom and self-reliance. Take a look at the [2024 IWD Photobooks](#) for Kampala and Nairobi as we continue to celebrate our clients' milestones and resilience.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to each member of the Re:BUiLD Program, our research partners, IRC colleagues, and our colleagues at the IKEA Foundation. Your unwavering dedication and hard work are making a difference in the lives of those we serve.



March 6, 2024 Nairobi. Re:BUiLD clients (refugees and host communities) displaying some of the group work that they had done to reflect on the theme of this year's International Women's Day at Kenya Christian Industrial Training Institute (KCITI). (PHOTO: Edgar Otieno/TheIRC)

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05	Re:BUiLD clients, staff join partners in marking International Women’s Day 2024
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### Our Results as of March 2024

<b>8,365 clients</b> Clients accessing services	<b>4,930 clients</b> Female clients offered services
<b>1,455 clients</b> Reached with vocational training	<b>84 clients</b> Reached with green energy training
<b>4,213 clients</b> Mentees reached with microenterprise Support	<b>352 clients</b> Reached with digital skills training
<b>603 clients</b> Reached with apprenticeship	<b>126 clients</b> Engaged in clothing and textile value chain addition
<b>110 clients</b> Prior skills certified	<b>1331 clients</b> USLA members trained



March 6th, 2024, Nairobi. Montassir Mohammed, IRC Kenya Country Director, speaks during the donor breakfast meeting on how donors can better support urban refugees. (PHOTO: Edgar Otieno/TheIRC)

The IRC’s Re:BUiLD program in Nairobi on March 6, 2024 engaged donors on the plight of urban refugees in the region. The deliberations at the donors’ breakfast meeting that brought together by the program focused on ways to enhance assistance to urban refugees.

At the meeting, the IRC launched the [donor support paper co-authored with the Center for Global Development \(CGD\)](#). The paper highlights challenges occasioned by funding gaps in urban refugee programming hence demonstrating the need for enhanced donor support to programs supporting them.

In East Africa, Kenya’s capital Nairobi, and Uganda’s Kampala are [top destinations for refugees](#) seeking to settle and explore economic opportunities. According to UNHCR, Nairobi hosts about 100,000 of Kenya’s 744,747 refugee population whereas Kampala is among the top five refugee districts in Uganda, hosting about 8% of the country’s 1.6 million refugees. Unlike their settlement/camp-based counterparts to whom the majority of donor support is directed, urban refugees are expected to fend for themselves in accessing social services, food, and health services.

The Re:BUiLD program, with funding from the IKEA Foundation, in partnership with city authorities seeks to ensure sustained self-reliance through multiple approaches such as impacting the culture of group savings, facilitating linkage of savings groups to formal financial services, and giving microenterprise grants for urban refugees and vulnerable hosts.

“Since 2014, IRC has been supporting urban refugees in livelihood support, advocacy, and government engagement even in light of limited funding in the space to achieve self-reliance. Re:BUiLD is one of our flagship programs in Nairobi and Kampala and we continue to witness the need for more support and funding for urban refugee integration. We thank our donors for their continued support” said Montassir Mohammed, IRC Kenya Country Director.

## Ongoing Local Initiatives and Advocacy Efforts

Acknowledging these challenges, local authorities shared their ongoing initiatives aimed at supporting urban refugees. These efforts include programs for recognizing refugee identification documents for business licensing and fostering social cohesion through public early childhood centers. However, refugee-led organizations (RLOs) stressed the significance of systemic changes, advocating for government recognition of diverse refugee documentation and streamlined work permit application processes.

## Donor commitments, collaboration

Donors expressed appreciation for the insights provided during the meeting and pledged their support toward addressing policy gaps and program implementation challenges. They emphasized the importance of engaging in national advocacy efforts led by local governments and RLOs, with a focus on overcoming specific obstacles to refugee inclusion. Furthermore, the donors called for private sector involvement and bridging the gap between policy formulation and implementation.



March 6th 2024, Nairobi. Donors participating in the Donor Breakfast Meeting to discuss the challenges faced by refugees and strategies to enhance their assistance. (PHOTO: Edgar Otieno/TheIRC)



March 8, 2024 Nairobi. The acting Deputy County Commissioner Ms. Metrin Wafula of Rongai addressing participants who joined the International Women's Day march from Nairobi Women's Hospital, Rongai, to St. Faith Anglican Church. IN-SET: March 6, 2024 Nairobi. Re:BUiLD clients (refugees and host communities) working on some of the group work to reflect on the theme of this year's International Women's Day at Kenya Christian Industrial Training Institute (KCITI). (Photo: Edgar Otieno for IRC)

Every year on March 8, the world celebrates International Women's Day (IWD), a day dedicated to recognizing women's contributions and advocating for gender equality. This year's theme, **"Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress"**, was echoed in two vibrant events held at Kenya Christian Industrial Training Institute (KCITI) located in Eastleigh and St. Faith Anglican Church located in Kajiado North Sub-County.

26 Re:BUiLD clients from refugee and host communities in Nairobi on March 6, 2024 gathered to share experiences and strategize actions to enhance women's economic empowerment and social protection. The women reflected on the historical roots of IWD, its role in advocating for gender equality, and the need to recognize women's achievements while addressing gender-based derailing factors affecting women's economic growth.

"We are supposed to celebrate a woman because a woman is a wonderful person. And among women, we have different demographics, there are our mothers, our grandparents, our aunts, and our sisters. These are the people we celebrate. And why do we celebrate them because a woman is like a mirror for the community. A woman is a person people look up to, to create a community." said Josephine Muchina, a Re:BUiLD client.

### Refugee and host women call for increased livelihood interventions

At the event, women called for increased livelihoods funding to improve access to financial services. They

also cited training opportunities, and support to have more women in leadership roles to enhance women's representation in decision-making. They also emphasized the need for increased awareness of IWD's significance through storytelling, community building, and improved social cohesion between refugee and host communities.

At St. Faith Anglican Church on March 8th, 2024, a spirited procession marked the start of International Women's Day celebrations in Ongata Rongai. The march was flagged off by Ms. Metrin Wafula, the acting Deputy County Commissioner of Rongai. Participants marched from Nairobi Women's Hospital, Rongai, to St. Faith Anglican Church, where the day's activities unfolded. Attendees were treated to an array of informative sessions and entertainment.

Speaking at the event in Rongai, the Re:BUiLD program's Protection Officer Dorcus Mwangi, highlighted the services the program offers, such as facilitating urban savings and loans associations and microenterprise grants that encourage women's economic growth.

Government officials reiterated their commitment to invest in women's social, financial, and educational advancement, emphasizing the pivotal role women play in driving economic growth. They encouraged refugee women in particular to take advantage of government programs and services tailored to their needs.



13 February 2024, Nairobi. Zamzam Ibrahim showcases samosas that she has prepared for delivery, at their home in Nairobi. She extensively uses social media to get customers for her food & snacks. (PHOTO: Edgar Otieno/TheIRC)

Zamzam Ibrahim, a 27-year-old Congolese refugee discovered her love for cooking as a high school student in Nairobi. At the time, Zamzam was only 15. She learned cooking and the ropes of running a successful business from her mother's eatery.

At the time, earnings from her mother's hotel in Nairobi's Eastleigh area sustained the family. The family business suffered a major setback after the COVID-19 pandemic and was forced to close shop in 2020, just a year into business.

Amidst this crisis, as a first-born daughter, Zamzam had to step up and care for her family, including her school-going sister, as her mother was taken ill. Drawing inspiration from her ailing mother, Zamzam started cooking at home and selling snacks outside the mosque and to neighbors and friends.

***"In my spare time, I set up shop outside our door, selling my products to those passing by. I also catered at weddings and other events when I was needed. I had to do this for us to survive because my mother was sick,"*** narrates Zamzam.

In 2022, Zamzam started selling her snacks in a shop, but she had trouble paying the rent and had to shut down. This necessitated her to join Tawakal urban loans and savings group (USLA) which she says has helped her save money and get loans to help stabilize her business.

***"Sometimes, I receive orders but don't have enough money to fulfill them. That's when the loans from the group really help. Thanks to this safety net, now I can pay our family bills, cover my sister's school fees, and expand my business."***

With a borrowing kitty support of Ksh70,000 from the IRC's Re:BUiLD program, USLAs such as Tawakal have helped refugees and vulnerable hosts manage financial risks. The groups encourage members to save more and grow their loan portfolio and access quick loans that help run their small businesses.

Despite being members of these groups, refugees like Zamzam encounter difficulties accessing formal financial services and end up relying on supportive friends for digital payments.

The Re:BUiLD program in partnership with Equity Bank has intervened and helped refugees to access and also save through the bank. Zamzam, now a bankable small-business owner, hopes to access loans through careful savings with Equity Bank to actualize her culinary business dream.

***"Most of our group members are doing small business. We get loans from the group, stock up items and sale. Right now, I can now save with Equity as well, service my loan and take care of my client needs. I am grateful for all the support we have been offered."***

In 2024, the Re:BUiLD program is upscaling the USLA financial inclusion activities to reach more clients as a result of the progressive uptake of the intervention. Further, oversight of the USLAs was shifted to implementing partners to enhance program sustainability.



Joyeuse Maombi - Nairobi, Re:BUiLD Client

*"Many women are afraid to start a business, but I think being strong and flexible is very important. I believe my business can succeed. My goal is to see it grow into a big business."*

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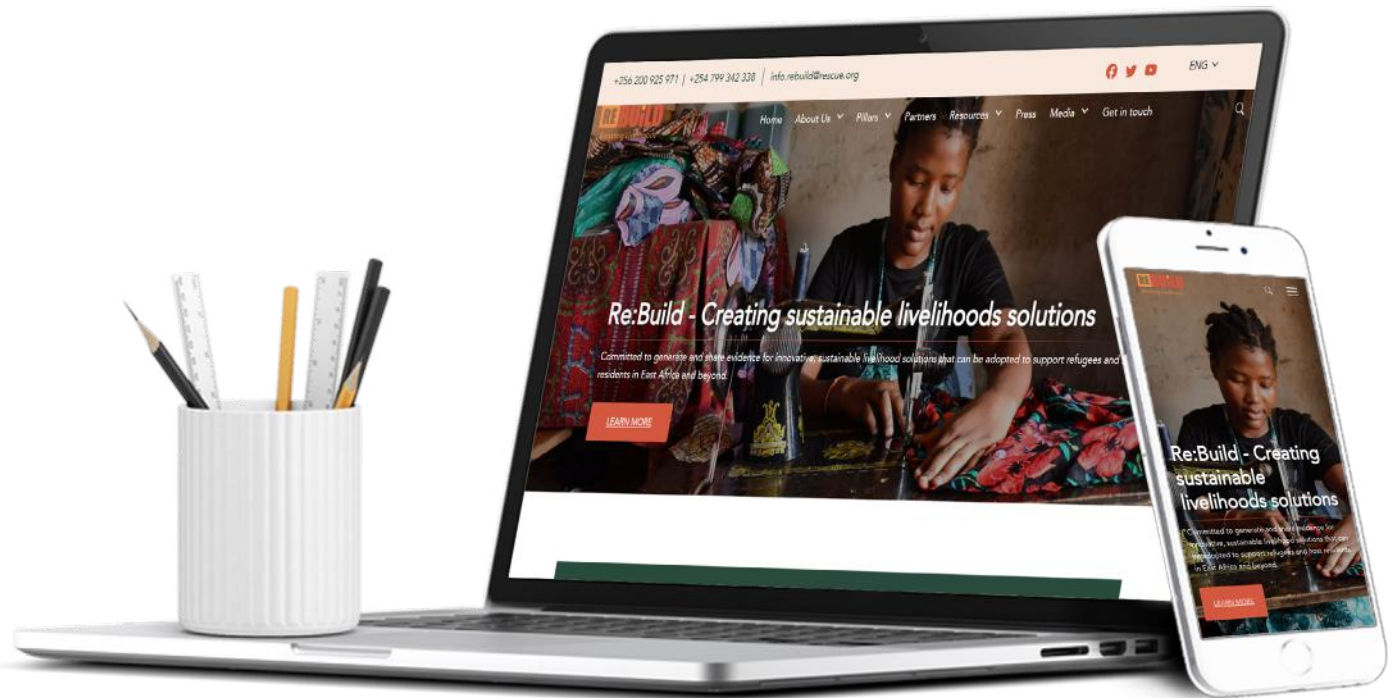
Apalang Yak - USLA Officer, KOWED

*"Re:BUiLD is playing a vital role in encouraging refugee women to adopt the group saving culture and strengthening their position to approach formal financial institutions. Moreover some of the groups are investing in joint income generating ventures such as liquid soap making."*



Nicole Bahizi, Kampala, Re:BUiLD Client

*"I used to be home and do nothing, but now by making briquettes, I not only earn money but I am avoiding using charcoal which is expensive to buy, and instead I save that money in my savings group."*



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

- **Release of Re:BUiLD RCT Wave 1 Results - May/June 2024**
- **World Refugee Day - 20th June**
- **Urban Refugee's Symposium - October 2024**
- **World Entrepreneurs' Day - 20th August**