

# REBUILD

Boosting Livelihoods



## Re:BUiLD in Action

Year 4, Quarter 3, 2024 Newsletter



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

**REBUILD**  
Boosting Livelihoods



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. This platform allows us to share insights, learnings, and progress each quarter. As we approach the last quarter of the program's fourth year, we are delighted to share more milestones and key moments from 2024.

In this quarter, Re:BUiLD reached its target of placing 20,000 clients in service. We are serving 12,159 refugees and 8,579 hosts, 60% being female and 40% male in both Nairobi and Kampala. The microenterprise, financial inclusion, and vocational training service tracks account for the most clients placed for service: 12,492, 4,250, and 1,992 respectively.

At the beginning of September, we hosted the Leadership from the [IKEA Foundation in Kampala](#) following their visit to Nairobi in May. This edition carries highlights of the team's interaction with clients supported through the microenterprise grants and financial inclusion service tracks of the program. In September, we started the implementation phase of the second wave of the Randomized Control Trial (RCT), which will run until November 2024.

This edition also highlights the [Research and Policy Symposium](#) convened by the Re:BUiLD program in collaboration with the IKEA Foundation and the World Bank, in partnership with the UNHCR and other development agencies in Nairobi. The symposium brought together researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers from Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia to discuss how best research evidence could be used to inform policies to support the livelihoods of displaced people in the East and Horn of Africa region. Additionally, we bring you highlights from the youth urban refugee marathon in Kampala, organized in partnership with the Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA) and other partners to commemorate the 2024 International Youth Day.

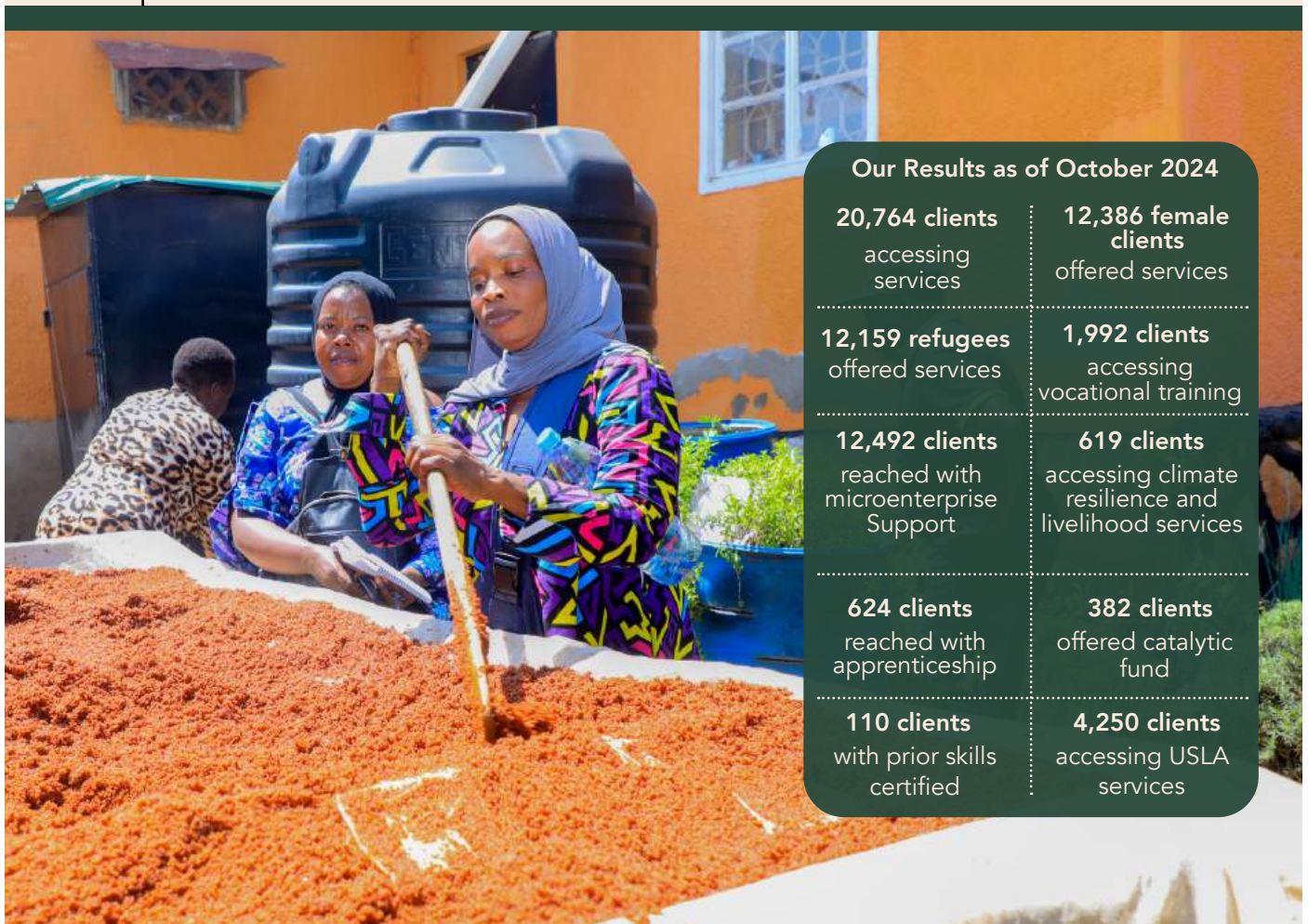
In the coming edition, we will feature the dissemination of policy briefs based on findings from the first wave of the RCT. We also look forward to sharing highlights from the World Urban Forum in Cairo, where the Re:BUiLD program and IMPACT have organized a side event on supporting the integration of refugees in cities. The 16 Days of Activism will also headline the next edition of the newsletter. Stay tuned to the Re:BUiLD website for various publications and initiatives that will highlight the voices and experiences of our clients, partners, staff, and researchers as we strive to make a significant impact at the community, national, regional, and global levels.

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 significant difference in the lives of those we serve. I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead.



August 18, 2024, Kampala, Uganda. His Worship Salim Saad Uhuru, Mayor of Kampala Central Division(center), joins refugees and host community members at the Refugee Marathon to celebrate International Youth Day. (PHOTO: Jonathan Ssekitondo for The IRC)

04	<b>Bridging Research and Policy: Enhancing Refugee Livelihoods in East Africa</b>
05	<b>Re:BUiLD Launches Wave 2 RCT Intervention</b>
06	<b>The IKEA Foundation Inspired by Re:BUiLD Opportunities in Kampala</b>
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### Our Results as of October 2024

**20,764 clients**  
accessing services

**12,386 female clients**  
offered services

**12,159 refugees**  
offered services

**1,992 clients**  
accessing vocational training

**12,492 clients**  
reached with microenterprise Support

**619 clients**  
accessing climate resilience and livelihood services

**624 clients**  
reached with apprenticeship

**382 clients**  
offered catalytic fund

**110 clients**  
with prior skills certified

**4,250 clients**  
accessing USLA services

The International Rescue Committee's Re:BUiLD Program, the IKEA Foundation, and the World Bank, in partnership with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Labour Organization, Refugees and Returnees Services – Government of Ethiopia, Department of Refugee Services – Government of Kenya, Office of the Prime Minister Uganda, Kampala Capital City Authority, Nairobi City County Government and Refugee-led Research Hub, convened a high-level research and policy [symposium](#) in Nairobi, Kenya where policymakers, researchers, donors, I(NGO), private sector practitioners, and refugees from Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia discussed research informing policies to support the livelihoods of displaced persons in urban areas of the East and Horn of Africa.



Brian Ssebunya, Senior Technical Director, Economic Recovery & Development at IRC (far left), Priscilla Dembetembe, Program Director for Re:BUiLD, His Lordship Erias Lukwago, Mayor of Kampala & Precious Zikhali, Senior Economist, World Bank's Poverty & Equity Global Practice in a discussion at the symposium. (PHOTO: Edgar Otieno for The IRC)

## Voices from the symposium

"Achieving meaningful impact comes when we pursue evidence-based interventions and commit to policies that enhance the lives and livelihoods of displaced populations and host communities." **Banchiamlack Dessalegn, Regional Vice President for East Africa, International Rescue Committee.**



"As development partners and researchers, we produce a wealth of research, but does it ultimately reach the desks of policymakers?" **Priscilla Dembetembe, Program Director, the Re:BUiLD Program.**

"As institutions working on displacement and with refugees, we must ensure inclusion of voices of those with lived experience in research and policy-making." **Rediet Kassaye, Program Manager for the Refugee Livelihoods portfolio at the IKEA Foundation.**



"Education programing is producing a lot of educated refugees, but are livelihoods programs planned for these educated refugees? There is a need to confront the systems that has been built over the decades which excludes refugees," **Mohamed Hassan, refugee researcher at the Refugee-Led Research Hub.**

"Current policies must be grounded in research and tailored to address the challenges faced by refugees effectively. Our goal is to bridge the gap between research and policy and facilitate the implementation of effective, evidence-based strategies." **Patrick Okello, Commissioner for Refugees Management in Uganda.**



"Addressing the needs of refugees and host communities demands collective action from both humanitarian and development actors, grounded in crucial analytical work by researchers." **Miguel de Corral, Senior Operations Officer at the World Bank's fragility, conflict, and violence group.**

"Our focus is on strengthening refugee self-reliance and integrating them into Ethiopia's labor market, enabling their participation in employment pathways through close coordination and cooperation." **Anteneh Mekasha, Livelihood and Job Creation Team Leader, Refugees and Returnees Services, Government of Ethiopia.**



To read more about the symposium, [visit our website.](#)



Re:BUiLD clients take part in a session during the RCT wave 2 intervention in Nairobi. The study aims to reach 8000 clients in both Nairobi & Kampala. (PHOTO: Edgar Otieno for The IRC)

The International Rescue Committee’s Re:BUiLD program in partnership with The IKEA Foundation, Georgetown University, Stanford University’s Immigration Policy Lab (IPL) and Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) has launched a second wave (Wave 2) of Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) in Nairobi and Kampala. The study, which will include 8,000 individuals (4,000 in each city), aims to connect entrepreneurs from refugee and host communities through business networks to improve social cohesion, self-employment, and business outcomes.

Urban refugee entrepreneurs face significant challenges and the study aims to address some of these, for example, the lack of access to social and business networks. The study seeks to directly address this challenge by creating opportunities for refugees and host community members to build both “strong” and “weak” network ties with other entrepreneurs. Fostering these connections can help refugees and host community members overcome the disadvantages they face due to limited networks, enabling them to establish and sustain businesses, access information and resources, and better integrate into the local market. The study will tackle refugee exclusion from informal economies by facilitating interactions and relationship-building between refugee and host entrepreneurs through structured business groups.

*“Although refugees generally face significant challenges integrating into host country labor markets – typically performing worse than locals or other migrants... urban markets in Kampala and Nairobi are particularly challenging because refugees lack the personal and professional networks to establish and sustain micro-enterprises or engage in entrepreneurial activities,”* said David Martin Musiime, Re:BUiLD’s Research Coordinator. He added, *“These local markets rely heavily on interpersonal relationships and trust and are characterized by various forms of informal exchange, meaning that economic activities are deeply embedded in – and shaped by – local networks, which refugees often struggle to access.”*

Recognizing that business and social networks can significantly contribute to business success, the study also seeks to provide refugees and hosts with the tools and connections they need to thrive as entrepreneurs. By facilitating networking and collaboration, the study aims to equip refugees with resources and support systems that can improve their chances of business success, promoting their economic self-reliance and integration. Social networks can play a crucial role in building social cohesion between refugees and host communities, the study intentionally designs interventions to bring together entrepreneurs. This approach aims to break down barriers, foster understanding, and promote social cohesion, ultimately leading to a more inclusive and supportive environment for refugees in their new urban settings.

## The intervention

The study’s intervention consists of two main components, business network groups and business grants. The business groups, designed to facilitate relationship-building and networking, are the core element of the intervention and aim to address the challenges of network access and exclusion from informal economies. All participants, including those in the control groups, receive a business grant of approximately 435 USD. This grant is intended to provide a financial boost to the participants’ entrepreneurial activities, complementing the networking opportunities offered through the business groups. The business grant is paid out after week 7 of the intervention for all groups except for the “pure control group,” which receives the same business grant after the endline.

The study aims to evaluate the impact of both the business network groups and the business grants on the economic and social outcomes of the participants. This evaluation will help determine the effectiveness of these interventions in addressing the challenges faced by urban refugees.

You can read more about the study in the public registry [here](#).



Re:BUiLD clients take part in a session during the RCT wave 2 intervention in Kampala. (PHOTO: Nathan Ijjo Tibaku for The IRC)



September 6, 2024, Kampala. The IKEA Foundation CEO, Jessica Anderen(center) interacts with Jonathan Fama an IRC client who received a business grant under Re:BUiLD. (PHOTO: Edna Kyokunzire for The IRC)

On September 6, the Re:BUiLD program hosted the Leadership from the [IKEA Foundation in Kampala](#). The team led by Jessica Anderen the Foundation’s CEO, visited clients the program has enrolled under microenterprise and financial inclusion programs to learn how the program is impacting their lives.

The Kampala visit comes after a similar learning visit to the program in Nairobi in May.

The team was taken around by the Re:BUiLD team led by Priscilla Dembetembe, Program Director, Brian Ssebunya, IRC Senior Technical Director, Economic Recovery & Development, and Moses Odonkonyero, the Re:BUiLD Program Manager for Uganda.

One of the clients visited is Jonathan Saidi Fama who fled his home country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, (DRC) as a child. While interacting with the visitors, Jonathan, now 24 and a business enthusiast talked about how he ventured into poultry with a business grant of €500 (2 million Ugandan shillings) and 6 months of business mentorship he received under the Re:BUiLD microenterprise program.

“I already had an idea of what to do, so when Re:BUiLD gave me the money, I immediately initiated the business,” said Jonathan.

Jonathan is supporting his sibling’s education with the income from the business. He also plans to join university to study Business Administration.

“I am using the profits to support my family especially paying fees for my young brother and to meet my mother’s medical bills,” Jonathan said while explaining his dreams.

Marilia Bezerra, the Chief Program Officer at the IKEA Foundation commended the Re:BUiLD program on the impact is creating for entrepreneurs who are rebuilding their lives after displacement.

“Seeing someone who has incredible talent be given the opportunity to thrive was just great. We are leaving super inspired and excited to see what is going to come out of this program (Re:BUiLD),” said Marilia.

The visiting team also interacted with vibrant members of the Union for Community Development, one of the 109 Urban Saving Loans Associations (USLAs) that the Re:BUiLD program is facilitating to access credit from formal financial institutions in Kampala. The group comprising of 30 members (20 female, 10 males; 5 nationals, 25 refugees) has received training on group formation, finance and savings management has also been linked with UGAFODE Microfinance Ltd where members have been able to access business credit worth 10 million(about 2500).

Jessica on her part commended the group for showing a spirit of togetherness and creating a sense of belonging.

“The power of community is so important for people to thrive,” said Jessica. Adding that, “ and I think what you have created here is just true belonging and I wish you best of luck in taking it forward.”

Molly Baiga, 37, is a Ugandan mother of five who also cares for her sister's child, making a total of six children under her care. They all go to school, and she fends for them by providing food, housing, school fees, and general upkeep, thanks to her bakery business in Kampala.

In 2021, at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, Molly lost her husband to cancer, leaving her with the huge responsibility of running the young family. Alone and vulnerable, Molly made a difficult decision: to use UGX 500,000 from the bereavement money she received from well-wishers to buy a cooker with an oven in the hope of starting a baking business. Unfortunately, the oven did not perform as expected, and she later discovered that she had made a loss, compounding her misery.

However, shortly after the Covid-19 wave, Molly's hope was restored. She registered for an apprenticeship placement under the International Rescue Committee's (IRC) Re:BUiLD program. Between 2021 and 2022, Re:BUiLD partnered with private sector businesses to enable 151 urban refugees and vulnerable hosts in Kampala to learn hands-on business skills, such as baking, catering, tailoring, and welding. Molly was placed in a bakery business where she learned how to bake and design cakes. Upon finishing her apprenticeship, she invested UGX 1.3 million start-up kit she received from the program to open a bakery business.

As the business grew, Molly turned the house she was renting in Nsambya (a Kampala suburb) into a bakery, while the family moved to Busabala.

"I was able to buy a dough mixer, cake molds, and a charcoal oven to boost my baking. I decided to shift to Busabala and let the bakery stay and still operate from Nsambya," said Molly.



Molly Baiga, loading a baking tray into the oven at JP Management Foundation where she utilizes advanced baking equipment to meet the demand for bread in schools. (PHOTO: Nathan Ijjo Tibaku for The IRC)

In 2023, at one of her children's schools, Molly sniffed an opportunity to supply freshly baked bread for the school. She approached the teachers and was asked to bring samples.

"I took about four packets. I gave the teachers, the bursar, and even the headteacher. They liked it; they told me my bread is soft," Molly recalls.

In a week, Molly supplies about 80 packets of freshly baked bread to Cinderella Nursery and Primary School. However, Molly soon realized that her capacity was limited to keep her supply consistent. She said that being a supplier requires a lot of capital and machinery to produce in large quantities.

Luckily for her, Re:BUiLD's partnership with JP Management Foundation offers clients an opportunity to increase their production capacity. Clients in the bakery and catering businesses can access specialized baking equipment such as electric mixers and electric bread provers at the Foundation's facility in Nsambya. Molly says she is not only benefiting from using the equipment at the Foundation but also expanding her recipe knowledge.

"These people's (JP Management) recipe is the easiest. The person who first taught me to bake bread told me to make a pre-dough, then the main dough. It was so tiresome even if I was using 1kg of baking flour," Molly said, praising her working relationship with JP Management Foundation.

Molly is expanding her business. Two other schools get their breakfast bread from Molly. She says the times of being a housewife are behind her because she can afford rent and basic needs for the family.

"I get some support from the children's aunts, but I can buy school requirements and pay my rent. I no longer need to call someone if I need 10,000 shillings. Those days as a housewife, looking for 10,000 was so difficult," said Molly.

She hopes to set up a shop and train other bakery enthusiasts in the future. "I also hope to open up a pastry shop where my products can be on display for customers. At home, not many people are aware of the products I sell," she says.

She tips aspiring entrepreneurs to love what they do. "You first have to love it. This business has its challenges, but when you love it, it is really good. You have to be persistent and be open to learning more because new recipes come into the market every day," Molly advised.



August 13, 2024, Nairobi. IRC's Dorcas Mwangi leads a SGBV session in Eastleigh, Nairobi. These sessions provided dialogue, education, and empowerment, helping participants acquire tools to prevent and respond to SGBV. (PHOTO: Nancy Mwangi for The IRC)

In July and August 2024, community discussions on Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) were held in Eastleigh, Rongai, and Kawangware/Kabiria, with 80 participants (46 women and 34 men), including 69 refugees and 11 host community members from 8 USLAs. These sessions provided dialogue, education, and empowerment, helping participants acquire tools to prevent and respond to SGBV.

Re:BUiLD has been offering wraparound services specifically designed for women in targeted neighborhoods, focusing on protection and legal support.

For livelihood programs to work effectively with urban refugees and host communities, recognizing the unique challenges and restrictive gender norms within both groups—especially among women—is essential. Beyond meeting basic needs, these efforts promote women's participation through community dialogues that challenge limiting socio-cultural and gender norms.

Participants first explored definitions and impacts of SGBV, which laid the groundwork for discussing prevention strategies focused on community-based approaches. The forum highlighted how men and women could contribute to creating safe spaces and networks. The call to prevent SGBV emphasized that everyone plays a role in fostering a safer community.

Response mechanisms were also covered, including the importance of timely reporting and the role of USLAs as a support system for survivors. The sessions outlined

available medical services, legal rights, and psychosocial support, giving participants a clear understanding of accessible resources.

A summary of Nairobi's SGBV response systems provided information on contacts and procedures for accessing help. Participants gained insight into how SGBV relates to human rights and broader issues like women's empowerment and economic challenges. Promoting gender equality, challenging stereotypes, and ensuring timely responses emerged as vital for justice and community well-being.

In conclusion, these SGBV discussions underscored the importance of community involvement in combating SGBV. By sharing knowledge and fostering collaboration, Re:BUiLD supports communities in addressing SGBV and promoting gender equality.



August 13, 2024, Nairobi. IRC's Caroline Boke interacts with clients during the SGBV session in Eastleigh. (PHOTO: Nancy Mwangi for The IRC)



# Steps of Hope: Refugees and Hosts Run Together for a Smart City in Kampala

The Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) Youth Urban Refugee Marathon, organized to commemorate International Youth Day, brought together both refugee and host communities in a remarkable display of unity, resilience, and hope. This event was created to celebrate the shared strength of young people from diverse backgrounds while highlighting the importance of community support and youth empowerment.

Held on August 18, 2024, just after International Youth Day, the marathon under the theme “Solidarity with Refugees for a Smart City” took place in old Kampala Secondary School, Kampala Uganda. Runners followed a scenic route through key areas of the city, symbolic of the journey many young refugees undertake as they navigate their lives in host communities. The route highlighted the interconnectedness of the refugee and local populations and served as a powerful reminder of Kampala’s role as a city of refuge and resilience.

The marathon was attended by both refugee and local youth, community leaders, and representatives from various organizations, all united by a shared commitment to inclusivity and solidarity. Running together, participants demonstrated their belief in the transformative power of community and the potential of youth as agents of change.

The event concluded with an award ceremony honoring participants and recognizing the organizers, who worked tirelessly to make the marathon a success. The IRC’s Re:BUiLD program supported by the IKEA Foundation played a key role in the marathon’s success by providing 500 running gears, enabling participants to unite in this powerful celebration of community and youth resilience.



August 18, 2024, Kampala, Uganda. Refugees and host community members at the Refugee Marathon to celebrate International Youth Day. (PHOTOS: Jonathan Ssekitondo for The IRC)



Naome Mpunze, Congolese refugee in Uganda.

*“ My business needs a lot of money to make a profit, I wish the bank could give me more money. But so far the business runs, I will keep borrowing.”*

Naome Mpunze, a Congolese refugee running a boutique business in Kampala. Naome established connections in Turkey to supply her products.

Gentile Nyankema, Congolese refugee in Kenya.

*“I believe that after completing my training, I will have the skills to start my own sewing business or work for someone else when the chance comes up.”*

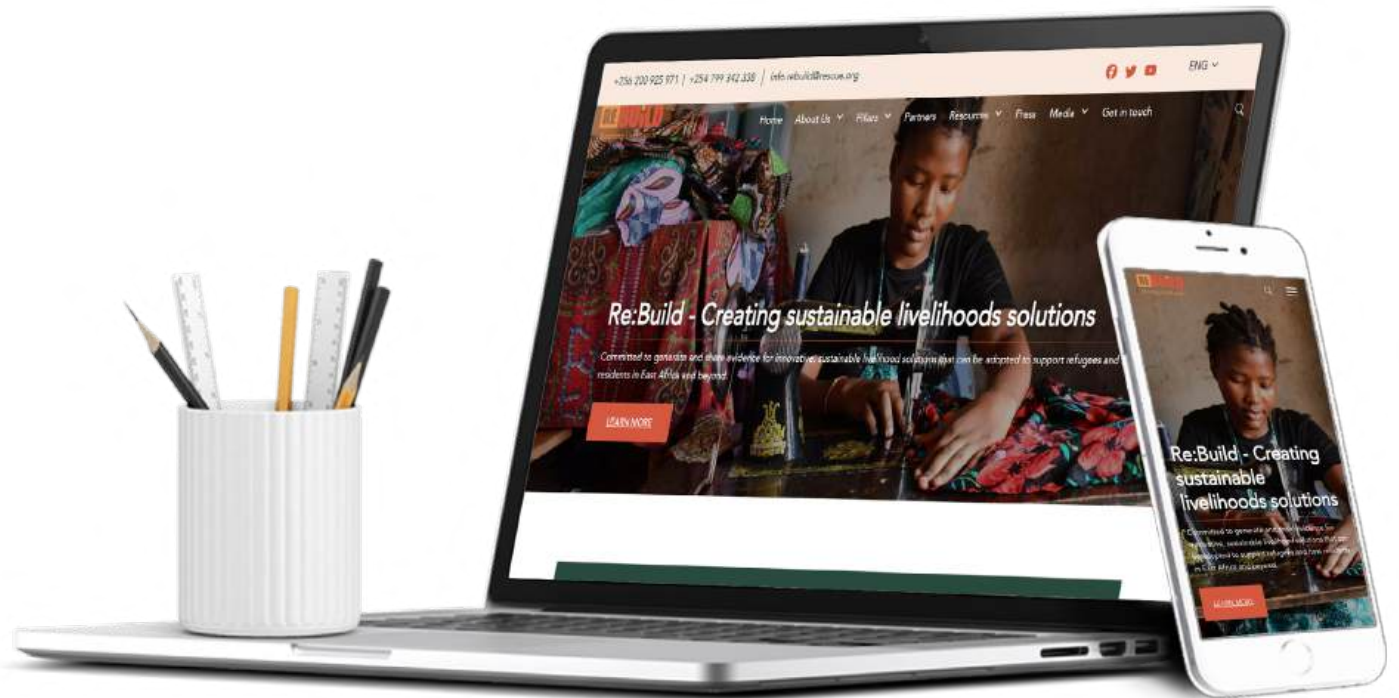
Gentile is one of the impacted clients from Patrick Gisore’s (Re:BUiLD client) tailoring enterprise that offers training classes to widows for FREE, he expanded the classes to the vulnerable community members by offering affordable classes to them when the demand soared. Gisore is part of Port of Manna USLA group that is facilitated by Re:BUiLD with the aim of making members financially independent.



Loice Oliver, South Sudanese refugee in Uganda.

*“Nowadays everyone makes liquid soap, even some customers do it themselves. So, I want to add another business. The market is crowded,”*

The mother of three is one of the Re:BUiLD clients enhancing their bakery skills at JP Management Foundation. Re:BUiLD and JP Management Foundation are piloting the catalytic innovations approach to boost client transition to business and employment using the ‘skilling on-the-go’ methodology and the ‘Peta Pesa Ukiwa Ujuzi’ concept in Kampala. This approach upgrades skills, improves products, and builds business competencies for about 175 refugees and hosts.



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

- **World Cities Day** - 31st October
- **16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence** - 25th November - 10th December
- **World Urban Forum** - 4th - 8th November

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KAMPALA, UGANDA  
International Rescue Committee  
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[www.rebuild.rescue.org](http://www.rebuild.rescue.org)

Re:BUiLD brings together  
The International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Center for Global Development (CGD),  
Open Capital (OC), Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA)  
Nairobi City County Government (NCCG) and local partners. Re:BUiLD is committed to generate  
and share evidence for innovative, sustainable livelihoods solutions that can be adopted  
to support refugees and host residents in other cities in East Africa and beyond.