



Re:BUiLD - Refugees in East Africa: Boosting Urban Innovations for Livelihoods Development

A multifaceted approach to support urban refugees to build sustainable livelihoods in East Africa and to inspire evidence-based systemic change globally.



Challenge

Globally, more than 117 million people are displaced, the majority of whom are making their way to cities, which are beacons of economic opportunity. Yet these opportunities are frequently out of reach for refugees and other vulnerable residents. As a result, urban refugees struggle to build sustainable livelihoods and achieve long-term self-reliance. At the same time, programs to support them lack investment and evidence to show “what works.”

In 2021, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) with funding from the IKEA Foundation launched Re:BUiLD. The Re:BUiLD program is providing solutions and generating evidence and learnings through piloting innovations & responding to urban refugees’ needs. At €30 million over five years, this is one of the single largest investments in this space. Since its inception, Re:BUiLD has offered livelihood services to **12,346 clients** in Kampala and Nairobi comprising of **7,245 refugees and 5,101 nationals**. Of these **7,589 were female** and **4,757 male** as of August 2024.

Initially focusing on Kampala (Uganda) and Nairobi (Kenya), Re:BUiLD is working to expand the evidence base on innovative and sustainable livelihoods solutions that can support refugees and host communities in East Africa and beyond.

Re:BUiLD approach

Re:BUiLD Pillars

1

Livelihoods Services

Supporting 20,000 refugees and other residents to find employment by attaining the skills most sought out by employers, or by starting/growing their own small businesses.

2

Evidence & Learning

Gathering evidence and learning through testing with randomized controlled trials, pilots, monitoring data, etc to illustrate what works to improve urban livelihoods.

3

Influence & Adoption

Establishing a bold influencing agenda aimed at challenging policies, practices and investments at national, regional and global levels.

Core Principals: Flexible & Adaptive | Continuous Experimentation | Client-Centered | Local Partnerships

Business Grants

A business grant from the Re:BUiLD program has enabled Eric Kimarungu, a Congolese Refugee in Nairobi, to start his tailoring shop despite being disabled while fleeing war in Congo. Eric supplies his suits to clients in Canada, Australia, and the US.

“The business grants are meant to support clients to start their own business or improve on existing ones to provide lessons on what works or doesn’t work for micro-enterprises targeting urban refugees and hosts,” said David Musiime, the Re:BUiLD Research Coordinator.

The business grant is part of the ongoing RCT approach. In Kampala, there are **2230 clients** participating while there are **2,226 clients** enrolled in Nairobi.



Re:BUiLD grant offers Eric an opportunity to dress men from all over the world.

"I realized I can't pity myself because no one is going to pity me. I have to rely on myself. Just because I am disabled doesn't mean that life stops. I must struggle with life.

I don't know where I would be. I would've been in a bad situation. But for today, I am very grateful to IRC - Re:BUiLD because they supported me, and I used that support well, and you can see for yourself where I have reached."

- Eric Kimararungu, 45-year-old tailor.

Re:BUiLD Services

Re:BUiLD is flexible and adaptive by design, informed by continuous experimentation and learning. Its implementation is tied to a commitment to delivering livelihood services and community-driven market-based improvements targeting **20,000 refugees** and host residents in low-income neighborhoods in Kampala and Nairobi.

Through experimentation, Re:BUiLD has gathered valuable knowledge supporting clients get jobs or start/grow their own businesses, while managing financial risks by offering:

- Apprenticeship opportunities secured for refugees and vulnerable hosts that have undergone skills development and vocational training.
- Skills certification through recognition of prior learning
- Supporting Urban Savings and Loans (USLAs) groups by providing clients with a gateway to financial inclusion
- Loan Guarantee Fund to cushion financial service providers, unlocking the challenge hindering lending for refugees
- Clients reached with micro-enterprise support under RCTs
- Clients trained on green energy, preparing them for green energy livelihood opportunities



Our Results as of August 2024

12,346 clients
accessing
services

7,589 female clients
offered services

7,245 refugees
offered services

1,992 clients
accessing
vocational training

4,456 clients
reached with
microenterprise
Support

618 clients
accessing climate
resilience and
livelihood services

624 clients
reached with
apprenticeship

382 clients
offered catalytic
fund

110 clients
prior skills
certified

3,869 clients
accessing USLA
services

To learn more about Re:BUiLD, please contact

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