

REBUILD

Boosting Livelihoods



Re:BUiLD in Action

Year 4, Quarter 4, 2024 Newsletter



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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.

In this edition, we share highlights of the progress the program has made since embarking on the mission in 2021 to support the livelihoods of urban refugees and vulnerable host communities in Nairobi and Kampala.

The edition also brings you highlights from the [World Urban Forum](#) where the International Rescue Committee, (IRC) through the Re:BUiLD and other partners organised a side event [“Supporting the Integration of Refugees in Cities.”](#) This event brought together policymakers, practitioners, refugees, researchers, and donors to discuss the unique challenges urban-based refugees face and explore how various actors can better support them.



November 27, 2024, Nairobi. IRC staff take part in a march launching the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence in Mukuru kwa Reuben (PHOTO: Edgar Otieno for The IRC)

This edition also brings you highlights from our 16 days of activism activities. You will also read the recommendations from our 12th Stakeholders' Reference Group meeting where we provide updates and receive feedback from diverse partners.

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.



November 18, 2024, Nairobi, Kenya. Re:BUiLD clients take part in a session during the RCT wave 2 intervention. (PHOTO: Edgar Otieno for The IRC)

04	Where are We: Re:BUiLD Program Progress
05	What the 12th World Urban Forum Means for People Affected by Conflict in East African Cities
07	Patrick Gisore gives hope to refugee widows through skilling, jobs
08	IRC, Re:BUiLD Join Forces for 16 Days of Activism in Nairobi and Kampala
09	12th Stakeholder Meeting highlights Re:BUiLD remarkable progress in empowering refugees
10	Re:BUiLD in Action Voices
11	Re:BUiLD Online



Our Results as of January 2025

20,732 clients
accessing
services

**12,392 female
clients**
offered services

12,163 refugees
offered services

1,992 clients
accessing
vocational training

12,440 clients
reached with
microenterprise
Support

619 clients
accessing climate
resilience and
livelihood services

624 clients
reached with
apprenticeship

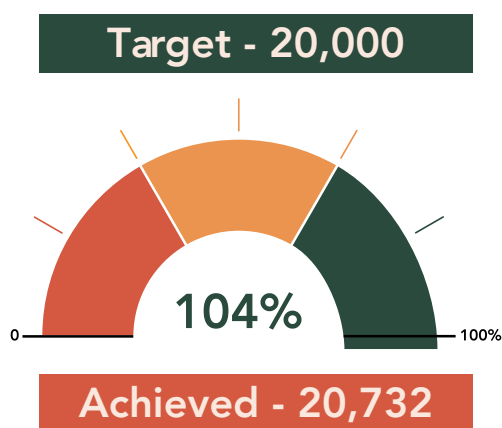
382 clients
offered catalytic
fund

110 clients
with prior skills
certified

4,251 clients
accessing USLA
services

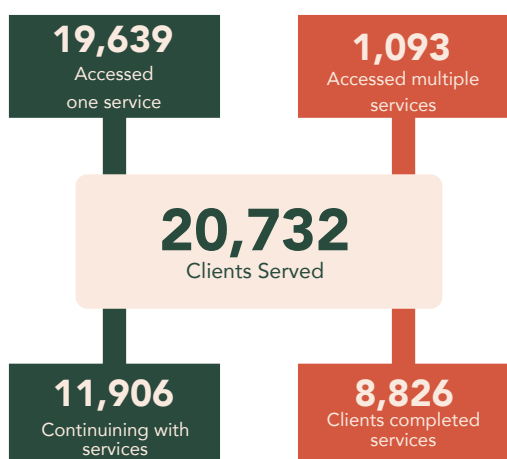
Surpassing Expectations

We are excited to announce that we have exceeded our client placement target, achieving an impressive **104%** against our **20,000 people target**. This success is a testament to the dedication and hard work of our team and the unwavering spirit of our clients.



Engaging Clients in Meaningful Ways

Our engagement with clients has been profound. A total of **19,639 clients accessed at least one service**, while **1,093 explored multiple services**. In total, we served **20,732 clients**, with **11,906 continuing their journey** with us and **8,826 completing their services**. Beyond direct engagement, our program has **indirectly impacted 103,660 individuals**, spreading hope and resilience far and wide.



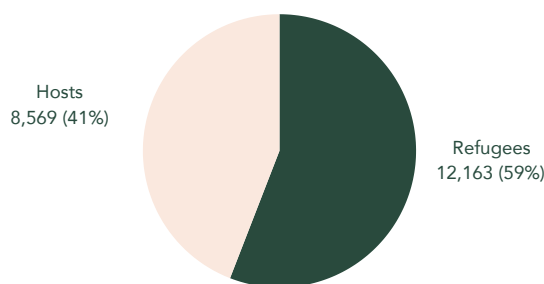
Diverse Service Offerings

Our services are as diverse as the needs of our clients. Microenterprise services have been the most sought-after, with **12,440 clients served**.

Notably, our financial inclusion services have shown remarkable consistency, with **4433 clients placed into service** and **1355 completing service**.

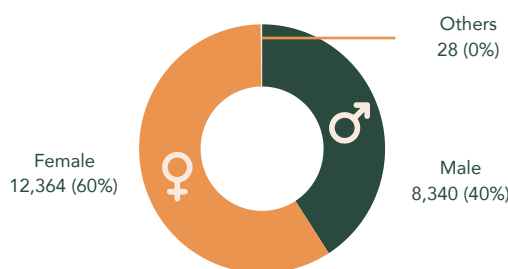
Supporting Refugees and Host Communities

Re:BUiLD set out to serve 60% of refugees and 40% of hosts in Kampala and Nairobi. In achieving that goal, **12,163 refugees** found support through our services. Host community members have also greatly benefited, with **8,569 individuals reached**. This blend of support highlights our commitment to uplifting all members of society.



Reaching Out to Women and Men

We have successfully reached a diverse group of clients. Women have been the largest group, with **12,364 accessing our services**. Men have also benefited significantly, with **8,340 receiving support**. Together, we are creating a more inclusive future.



Focusing on the Youth

Young adults are at the heart of our program. With **15,012 individuals aged 18-35 years** accessing our services, we're nurturing the leaders of tomorrow. Additionally, **5,720 individuals aged 35 and above** have also benefited, proving that it is never too late to grow and thrive.

As we step into the new year, we remain dedicated to our mission of building sustainable livelihood solutions for urban refugees and vulnerable hosts in Nairobi and Kampala.



November 7, 2024, Cairo, Egypt. Jamin Kusuania, IRC Advocacy Manager, moderating World Urban Forum side event focusing on supporting the integration of refugees in cities during the 12th World Urban Forum. (PHOTO: Irene Shiundu for The IRC)

The Twelfth Session of the World Urban Forum (WUF12), held from November 4-8, 2024, in Cairo, Egypt, was a landmark event that brought together over 63,000 participants from 182 countries. This forum provided a critical platform for discussing sustainable urbanization and the challenges urban communities face worldwide. WUF12 offered significant insights and potential pathways to East African cities on improving living conditions and integrating urban displacement communities into urban governance by providing key lessons from across the globe on displacement inclusion.

Learnings from IRC side event

The IRC's Re:BUiLD program hosted a side event during the WUF12 titled ["Supporting the Integration of Refugees in Cities."](#) This event brought together policymakers, practitioners, refugees, researchers, and donors to discuss the unique challenges urban-based refugees face and explore how various actors can better support them. One of the key points raised during the event was ensuring that refugees have a genuine voice in shaping policies and accessing services that directly affect them.

The forum acknowledged that East African cities, such as those in Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia, host large populations of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to ongoing conflicts and instability with Uganda and Kenya hosting about 2.4 million refugees.

The forum highlighted the potential for migration and displacement to boost productivity and enhance local economic development with discussions focusing on establishing scalable, sustainable solutions for integrating displacement affected communities into urban development strategies.

Refugees in East African cities face numerous challenges, including housing insecurity, limited access to services, social integration issues, and economic vulnerability. Many live in informal settlements with inadequate housing conditions and struggle to access essential services like healthcare, education, and employment. Additionally, refugees may face discrimination and social exclusion, making it difficult for them to integrate into the local community.

Urban planning plays a crucial role in addressing these challenges. Effective urban spatial planning and integrated territorial planning can improve housing conditions by developing inclusive housing policies and upgrading informal settlements. It can enhance access to services by ensuring that essential services such as healthcare, education, and public transportation are accessible to all residents. Inclusive urban planning can promote social cohesion by creating public spaces that encourage interaction and community building. Additionally, urban planning can boost economic opportunities by facilitating economic development and supporting local businesses.

Re:BUiLD commitment to Scale Systems

At the beginning of this year, a team from the Re:BUiLD program, Nairobi City County Government (NCCG), and Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA) visited Koboko Municipality, in North Western Uganda and a rapidly growing destination for refugees in West Nile. Koboko Municipal Council (KMC) is spearheading great **initiatives** to ensure access to services and social cohesion among residents and refugees. During the WUF12 side event, the Mayor of Koboko Municipal Council, Dr. Wilson F. Sanya, shared insights on successful collaboration between local and national governments. He highlighted efforts and transition plans to integrate refugees into Koboko's five-year development plans, demonstrating how development actors can ensure their interventions are effective for displaced populations. Re:BUiLD is fast-tracking the sharing of lessons from KMC for adoption by city authorities like NCCG and KCCA, focusing on partnerships with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Refugee Leaders Organizations (RLOs), capacity strengthening for partners, and direct investment in city authorities.

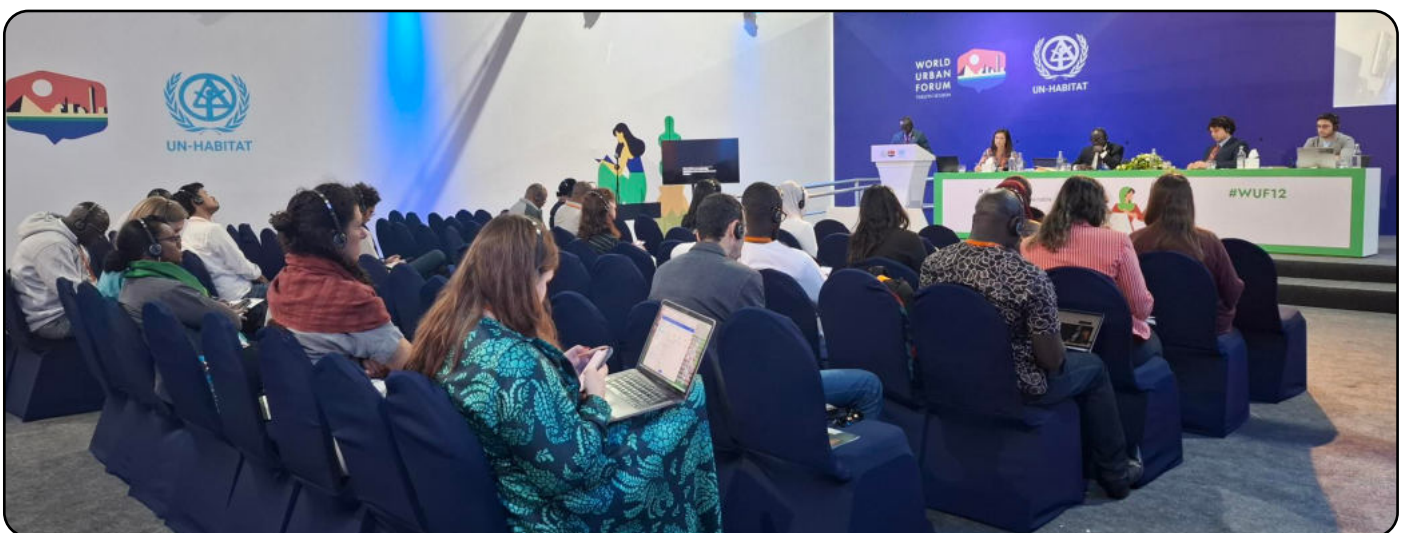
"The fifth year of the Re:BUiLD program presents a critical opportunity for NCCG and KCCA to operate as direct implementing partners to assume direct responsibility for key activities that will embed refugee support within city structures, systems, and policies, assuring sustainability and scalability," said Irene Shiundu, Public Engagement and Advocacy Coordinator for the Re:BUiLD. She added, "Scaling requires reaching more refugees by various city sectors, fostering economic empowerment, social cohesion among refugees and host communities, and policy engagement, and institutionalizing capacity building within city platforms."

By integrating refugee services into Kampala's and Nairobi's governance and social systems, the cities will better manage growing demands, enhance service delivery, and provide refugees with the tools for long-term self-reliance. To actualize this goal, NCCG and KCCA have developed a strategic concept and work plan to implement the key activities:

Key takeaways relevant to East African cities

The WUF12 emphasized several action points. There is an urgent need to manage the housing crisis and secure financing for better urban planning, land use, and sustainability. Sharing and learning from existing practices can accelerate action, and partnerships are crucial for influencing policy change and creating an enabling environment for sustainable urban development. The forum also highlighted the importance of promoting social cohesion and inclusivity through urban planning and design, addressing environmental sustainability concerns, and ensuring that displaced populations have access to adequate housing and services.

The WUF12 concluded with the Cairo Call to Action, reaffirming the commitment to promote sustainable urbanization through the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For East African cities, this call to action urges empowering local actors through effective localization and meaningful collaboration among all stakeholders. It also emphasizes the importance of participatory urban planning to deliver resilience, accessibility, and sustainability in cities, and the need to unlock finance to address the urgent financing gap for urban development.



November 7, 2024, Cairo, Egypt. Participants listening in at the World Urban Forum side event organized by IRC and partners, focusing on supporting the integration of refugees in cities during the 12th World Urban Forum. (PHOTO: Irene Shiundu for The IRC)

Patrick Gisore gives hope to refugee widows through skilling, jobs

Patrick Gisore is a 36-year-old Congolese refugee living in Nairobi. When violence uprooted Gisore and his family from their home in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), they were immediately hit with the challenges of starting over in a new country.

“When we came to Kenya, we were but foreigners. There were no documents issued and we faced challenges linked with living in this new place because we didn’t have people to support us,” Patrick said.

Patrick initially took odd jobs, first working as a security guard and then at a hotel so that he could provide for his family. He reveals that he had no experience in neither of the jobs.

“For most of these jobs we did, we didn’t have any knowledge. It’s just that we didn’t have much of a choice. You get to Kenya, you find work and you just do it. I took security and hotel jobs that I knew nothing about. However, by the end of three years I had mastered them. But I never felt it to be my passion.”

In the DRC, Patrick’s wife worked as a tailor, but didn’t have the space to continue her work in Kenya. When they learned about the IRC’s and the IKEA Foundation’s Re:BUiLD program that provides business-skills training, apprenticeships, and grants to entrepreneurs, they took the opportunity to not only help themselves, but the community around them too.

“When we met the IRC, they were looking for groups and at that time, we had groups of widows and vulnerable people. We were helping them with food and I would preach to them.”

The program connects participants to job opportunities in sustainable industries and helps them access financial services like banking and micro-loans. “We learned a lot about budgeting. We learned a lot about putting together proposals and saving. That knowledge of saving helped us a lot. You may find money, but you have issues saving.”

Since Patrick’s wife had experience working as a tailor, they started training others in their group how to sew. Soon, they were able to start their own small business and help others start their own as well.

When we started the business, we couldn’t leave these widows behind because we had started with them. We said, ‘Let’s see how we’d elevate them too...’ and

that’s what motivated me most strongly to organize the training—because I was doing my own business. But we resolved to bring those widows along with us and help them acquire knowledge.”

The business continues to grow, now with two permanent employees from Burundi and Rwanda. To stay connected with their trainees, Patrick set up a WhatsApp group, keeping them informed about new opportunities.

Their monthly income has grown from Ksh 16,000 to Ksh 25,000, and the individuals they’ve trained have also brought in customers, further boosting their earnings.

“Many have been helped by the training. Some have entered Export Processing Zones Authority (EPZ) and others have opened their own business around the area. So, now, they can be their own boss because they’ve been trained. And those who are still learning, we believe they will be able to open their businesses too.”



Patrick Gisore assessing tailoring trainee Gentile Nyankema’s skills on a sewing machine during a session led by trainer Justine Vyukusenge (PHOTO: Nancy Mwangi for The IRC)

Patrick has big plans for the future of their business, but first he needs to find a bigger space to grow. “We’re now thinking about having larger premises. Business and training are jammed into this tight space. We’ve had to limit attendance numbers. But in our vision, we want to bring all those people and have a bigger space. We need larger premises for those who didn’t find the space to be able to join in.”



November 27, 2024, Nairobi. Esther Passaris, Women Representative for Nairobi County (far right), Rosemary Kariuki, CECM, Inclusivity, Public Participation and Customer Service Nairobi County (middle) and Maryam Dahir, County Chief Officer, Gender and Inclusivity, Nairobi County launch a new helpline for reporting Gender Based Violence cases. (PHOTO: Edgar Otieno for The IRC)

IRC and Re:BUiLD participated in the 16 Days of Activism activities in Nairobi and Kampala, engaging communities in important conversations about gender-based violence (GBV) and women's rights. Through awareness campaigns, and community dialogues, organizations highlighted the urgency of ending violence against women and promoting gender equality.

On November 27, 2024, the Mukuru kwa Reuben community in Nairobi officially launched the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign. This significant event brought together local residents and refugees, underscoring the unity and shared commitment to addressing and preventing GBV within the community.



December 10, 2024, Kampala, Uganda. Commissioner Equity and Rights, MoGLSD, Benard Mujuni inspects products on display during celebrations to mark Human Rights Day at Pope Paul Memorial Hotel in Rubaga, Kampala. (PHOTO: Edna Karyne Kyokunzire for The IRC)

At the central venue, the event continued with a speech from Nairobi County Women Representative, Esther Passaris, who launched **a new toll-free helpline, 1508**. This service, provided by the Nairobi County Government, offers a range of support services for GBV survivors, including medical, psychological, legal, and referral services. The launch of this helpline adds to the **already existing 1195 helpline**, operated by the National Government.

In Kampala, to conclude the activities, a march was held from from Kabusu Access Centre to Pope Paul Hotel in Rubaga to commemorate the International Human Rights Day on December 10, 2024.

Representatives from Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MoGLSD); Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR, ILO, UN Women, local and international organizations working on refugee rights and GBV prevention took part in the march and proceeding day's activities.

Speaking during the event, Commissioner Equity and Rights, MoGLSD, Benard Mujuni, said "Violence against women and girls affects their economic wellbeing and potential to engage in activities that would positively contribute to the country's Gross Domestic Product, on top of incurring costs to treat physical and psychological 'wounds'", calling on stakeholders to join forces and fight and end GBV

On December 4, 2024, stakeholders from diverse organizations and communities gathered at The Monarch Hotel, Kilimani in Nairobi, for the 12th Stakeholder Reference Group Meeting (SRGM). This pivotal gathering showcased progress, partnerships, and plans under the Re:BUiLD program, highlighting efforts to empower refugees and host communities in Kenya.

Key Highlights of the Meeting

• Program Achievements and Updates

Claudius Maghanga from IRC shared a major milestone: Re:BUiLD has reached over 10,000 clients in Nairobi, surpassing its target. Of these, 57% are refugees, while 43% are host clients, emphasizing the program's commitment to inclusivity. Significant grants amounting to Kshs 205 million were distributed to 3,400 clients, fueling small businesses and fostering economic resilience.

Additionally, Re:BUiLD partners Pamoja Trust and SHOFCO presented progress in capacity-building, entrepreneurship training, and green economy initiatives. SHOFCO's engagement with 55 savings groups (USLAs) led to an accumulation of Kshs 7.1 million in savings and disbursements of Kshs 5.3 million in loans, directly supporting vulnerable groups, including refugees and people with disabilities.

• Policy Advocacy and Inclusion

The Department of Refugee Services (DRS) provided updates on refugee documentation and integration efforts. Key highlights included the issuance of refugee

IDs, plans for streamlining access to critical services, and discussions on Shrika Plan—a transformative initiative focused on transitioning from humanitarian support to self-reliance and integration for refugees.

• Community Voices and Concerns

Stakeholders raised critical issues such as domestic violence, defilement, and the need for stronger outreach to marginalized communities. They also emphasized the urgency of addressing violence against women and children, calling for actionable steps to protect vulnerable groups.

• Collaboration and Future Directions

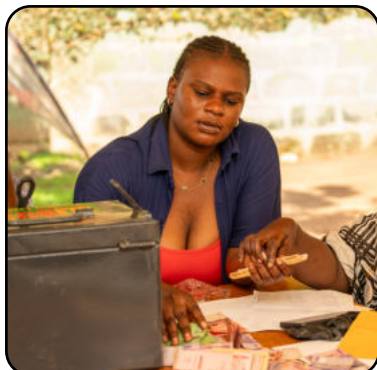
Equity Bank, Re:BUiLD's financial partner in Nairobi, outlined plans to measure the impact of its loan programs on refugee businesses, while National Government Administration Officers (NGAO) applauded Re:BUiLD's efforts in economic training and expressed eagerness to expand partnerships. The IRC Communications team encouraged stakeholders to contribute to blog posts and newsletter content, emphasizing the importance of storytelling in documenting Year 5 milestones.

Looking Ahead: Year 5 and Beyond

"The year 2025 will focus on documentation, monitoring, and assessing the long-term impact of Re:BUiLD" stated Boniface Odhiambo, Economic Recovery Development Coordinator at the International Rescue Committee. Stakeholders committed to amplifying their collective efforts, ensuring sustainable outcomes for refugees and host communities alike.



December 4, 2024, Nairobi. Re:BUiLD partners engaging in discussions during the 12th Stakeholder Reference Group Meeting (SRGM). (PHOTO: Nancy Mwangi for The IRC)



Monica Assumani, Congolese refugee in Uganda.

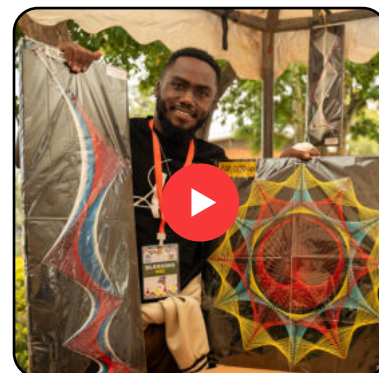
“ We are sharing out today. I am happy that I am getting my money, and since it is Christmas time, I am going to buy clothes for my baby and me, too.”

Monica Assumani, hair products retailer and member of Vital Solidarity savings group

Watch 30-year-old Blessing Chikonza, a talented string artist, participate in the 2024 Refugee Christmas Market event in Kampala.

Organized by UNHCR, this event brought together around 40 refugees from across Uganda to exhibit their products over three days.

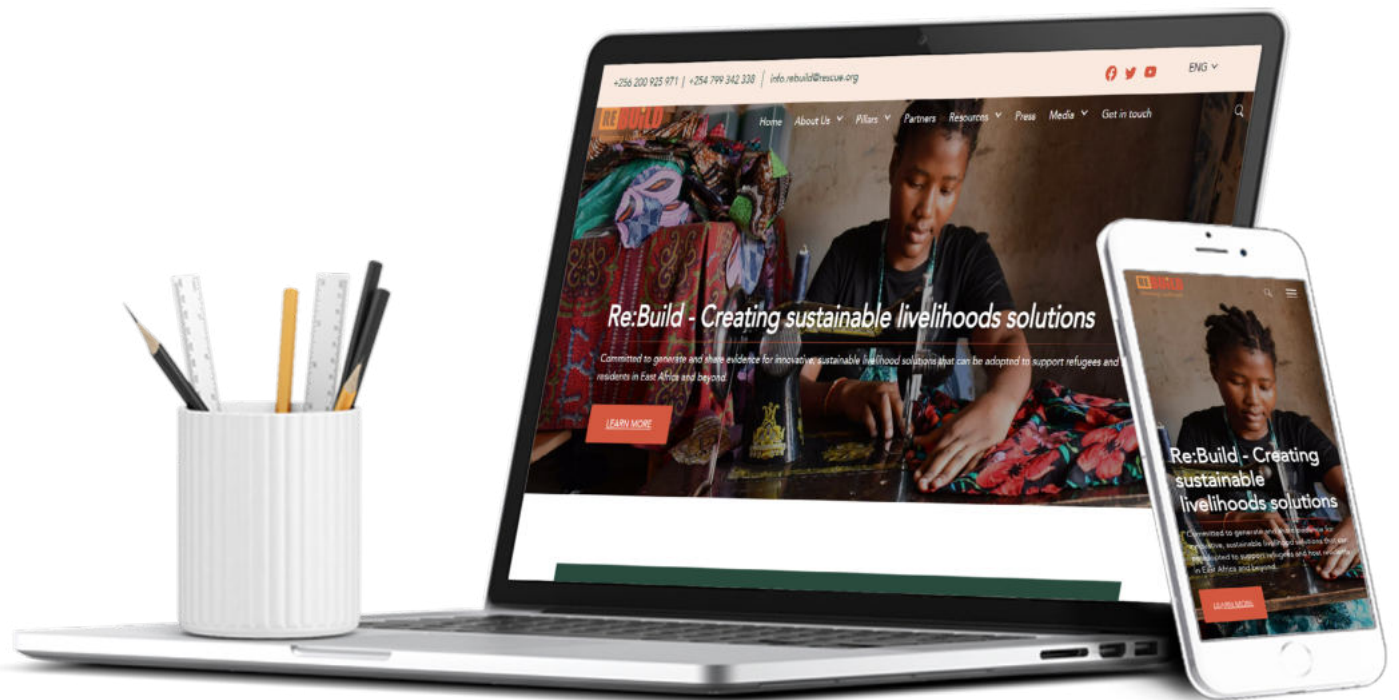
Blessing, an urban refugee in Kampala, is one of the clients supported by IRC who took part in the exhibition. In 2024, Blessing received a business grant from the Re:BUiLD program, which enabled him to purchase more materials and create over 20 art pieces.



Esther Passaris, Women Representative, Nairobi County.

“Everyone has a role to play in ending gender based violence, let us all protect our women and our girls”

Esther Passaris was speaking during the launch of 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence in Mukuru kwa Reuben, Nairobi.



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 2025 - 5th - 11th February**
- **International Women's Day 2025 - 8th March**

NAIROBI, KENYA
International Rescue Committee
Merchant Square, 4th Floor, Block C
Riverside Drive, Nairobi

KAMPALA, UGANDA
International Rescue Committee
Plot 7 Lower, Naguru East Road, Kampala



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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.