

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

Nearly 100 million people are displaced worldwide, 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 **8,371 clients** in Kampala and Nairobi comprising of **4,677 refugees and 3,693 nationals**. Of these **4,935 were female and 3,420 male** as of February 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 & mentorship sessions from the Re:BUiLD program has enabled Michelle Nthambi, a Kenyan in Nairobi, to revitalize her business which was struggling to get customers by enabling her to buy new equipment and learn effective strategies in advertising her services online.

“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 **2109 mentees** participating while there are **2,007 mentees** enrolled in Nairobi.



Re:BUiLD grant & mentorship revitalizes Mitchelle's salon business

"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."

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

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
- Mentees reached with micro-enterprise support under RCTs
- Clients trained on green energy, preparing them for green energy livelihood opportunities



Our progress as of Feb 2024

8,371 clients Clients accessing services	4,935 clients Female clients offered services
1,455 clients Reached with vocational training	84 clients Reached with green energy training
4,116 clients Mentees reached with microenterprise Support	352 clients Reached with digital skills training
603 clients Reached with apprenticeship	137 clients Engaged in clothing and textile value chain addition
110 clients Prior skills certified	107 USLA groups formed & trained

To learn more about Re:BUiLD, please contact

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