



Year 4 Annual Report



INTRODUCTION

The International Rescue Committee's (IRC) Refugees in East Africa: Boosting Urban Innovations for Livelihoods Development (Re:BUiLD) program is pleased to present the year 4 annual report. As we focus on the fifth year of our implementation, we would like to share the progress we have made, learnings, and adaptations from the year ending December 31, 2024. Launched by the IRC and the IKEA Foundation in 2021, Re:BUiLD is one of the largest private investments (€30 million) for urban refugee livelihoods in East Africa. By the end of year 4, the program had served 20,732 clients in Kampala and Nairobi.

Throughout Year 4, the Re: BUiLD program team has been dedicated to advancing economic inclusion and self-reliance among refugee and host community members in Nairobi and Kampala. This year, we focused on scaling the program's strategic intervention areas, including microenterprise support, Urban Savings and Loans Associations (USLAs), and financial linkages, which have contributed to tangible improvements in economic self-reliance for the communities we serve.

In this report, we highlight the significant milestones, key moments, and program changes that have emerged from our strategic client responsiveness strategy and continuous monitoring of the delivery of our interventions across our three pillars. Indeed, we geared year 4 efforts to document, and amplify client voices, share change stories, and more importantly share learnings and evidence throughout our spheres of influence at local, national, regional, and global.

Re:BUiLD PROGRAM PILLARS



Service Provision

Supporting over 20000 refugees and other residents to find employment by attaining the skills most sought out by employers, access to financial resources or by starting/growing their own small businesses.



Evidence & Learning

Gathering evidence and learning through testing with randomized controlled trials, pilots, monitoring data, etc to illustrate what or doesn't work to improve urban livelihoods.



Influence & Adoption

Influencing policies, practices and investments at the local, national, regional and global levels

Looking ahead, I am deeply grateful to our clients, staff, partners, and the IKEA Foundation for their immense intrinsic contributions to the transformation of urban economies, enabling access and building sustainable livelihood opportunities for refugees and hosts in Nairobi and Kampala

With gratitude,

Priscilla Dembetembe, Re:BUiLD Program Director,

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PROGRESS TO END OF YEAR 4



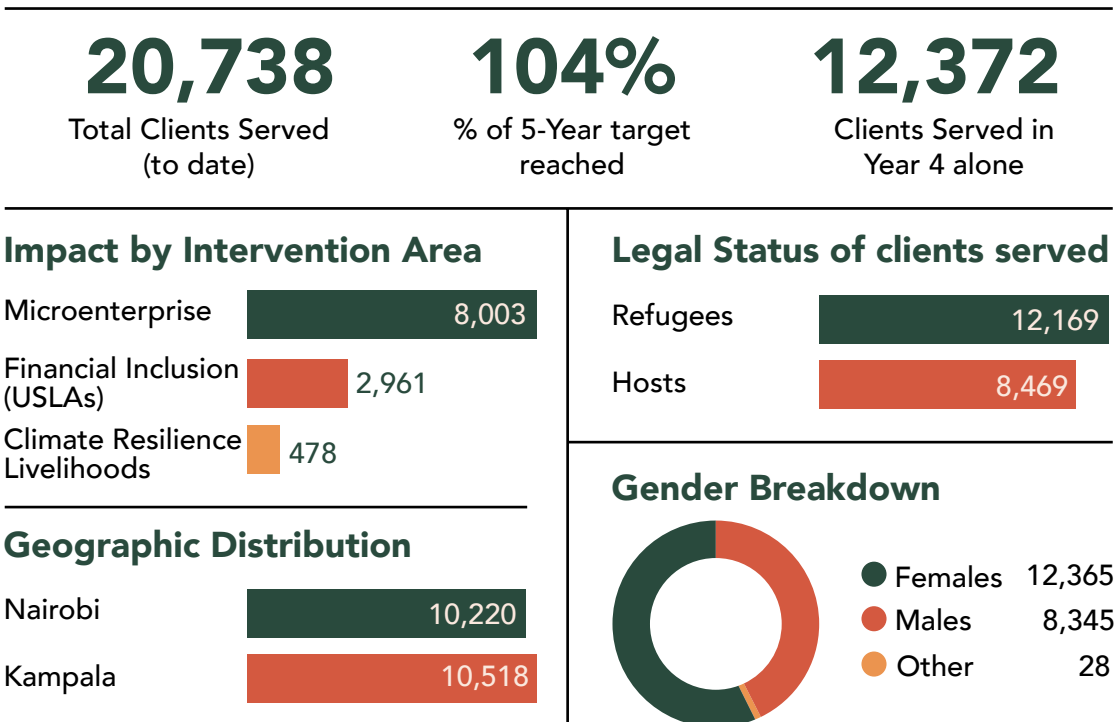
A Re:BUiLD client in the process of making improved cookstoves, creating job opportunities while promoting cleaner and more efficient cooking methods in Kampala. (PHOTO: Raising Gabdho Foundation)

Borrowing on learnings from year 3, the program identified three areas to scale in year 4

- **Microenterprise support where we served 8003 clients**
- **Financial inclusion where we supported 2961 clients**
- **We supported 478 clients to advance climate resilient livelihoods**

By the end of Year 4, the Re:BUiLD program had directly served **20,738 clients**, we are delighted that we were able to surpass our 20 000 target by 4%. This included **12,372 clients** who were served in Year 4 of implementation and benefited from a complementary suite of livelihood services and support. This growth was driven by microenterprise support through Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs), financial inclusion through USLAs, and climate resilience livelihood initiatives implemented during the year.

Re:BUiLD Year 4 Program Dashboard



FINANCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP

The Re:BUiLD program continued to partner with Equity Bank in Nairobi and UGAFODE Microfinance Limited in Kampala to implement an Loan Guarantee Facility model, an initiative linking urban refugees and vulnerable to financial service providers. Through this intervention, **218 clients (145R, 73H;141F, 75M, 2 Other)** accessed loans totaling **€56,253**.

Financial Inclusion

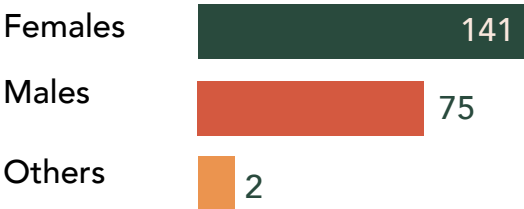
218

Total Clients Served
(to date)

€56,253

Total Amount of
Loans accessed

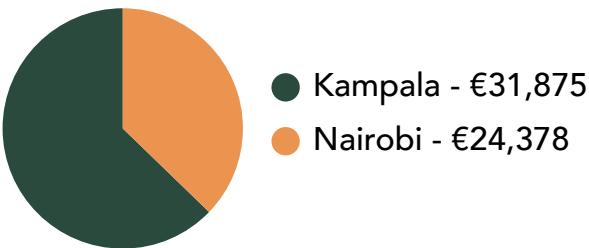
Clients linked by Gender



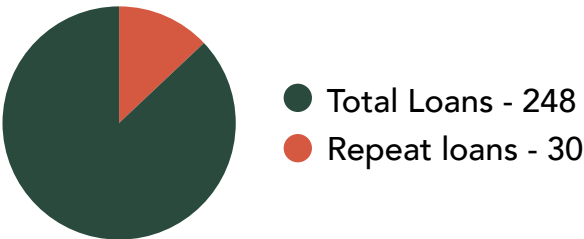
Clients served by Legal status



Loans accessed by cities



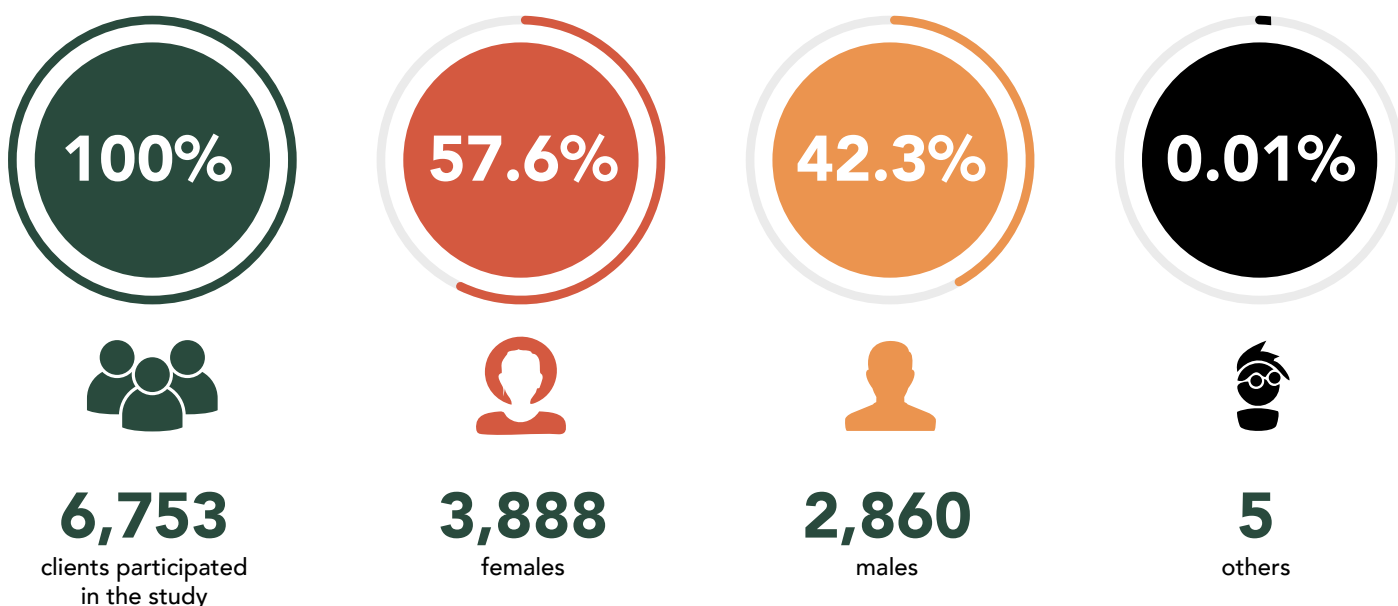
Loan distribution



RE:BUILD SECOND WAVE RANDOMIZED CONTROL TRIALS (RCT)

In February 2024, the second wave of the Randomized Control Trial (RCT) study launched in Nairobi and Kampala, marking a significant step forward in supporting microenterprises. The study achieved a **99.6% success rate** in its baseline survey and successfully delivered interventions to all participants. All participants engaged in structured networking sessions aimed at strengthening local business connections and fostering peer learning. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to empower refugee and vulnerable host entrepreneurs, build resilient business communities, and generate evidence on what works in microenterprise development.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:



SERVICE DELIVERY IN UGANDA

PROGRESS ON ENSURING PEOPLE ARE EMPLOYED

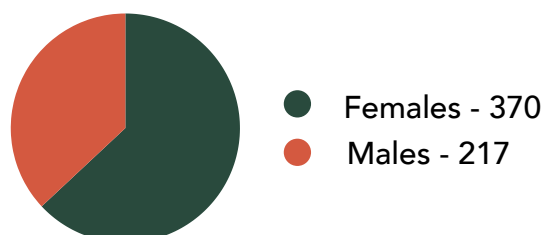
Kampala Non-RCT Client Assessment – Year 4 Highlights

In Year 4, the program conducted a follow-up survey with 769 non-RCT clients in Kampala who had previously received technical skills training. The goal was to assess their economic performance and engagement in income-generating activities.

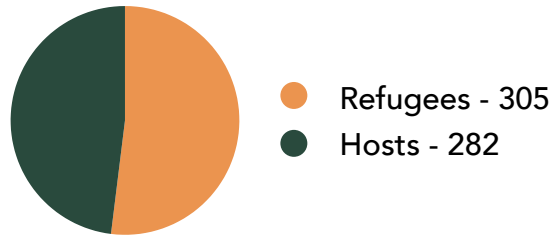
Clients engaged in income-generating activities



Gender Breakdown of Active Clients:



Legal status Breakdown of Active Clients:



ENGAGING PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS

The program also deepened its private sector engagement, creating linkages between refugee and host community youth and potential employers to improve employment opportunities. This effort forged a close working relationship with the [Uganda Federation of Employers](#) whereby in its [2024 Employer of the Year Awards](#), a category was introduced to award the employers of urban refugees.



CATALYTIC FUND PARTNERS

The IRC Catalytic Fund is a fund allocation initiative to support innovative ideas that show promise of scale to employ refugees and vulnerable hosts. It emphasizes collaboration with local partners. In Year 4, two IRC projects; **Re:BUiLD** and **KULEA WATOTO**, in partnership with **JP Foundation** and supported by the Catalytic Fund, trained **67 clients (82% female, 87% refugees)** in baking using local ingredients. As a result, **43 clients transitioned to self-employment**, earning an average monthly profit of **UGX 200,000 - 300,000 (€53 - €79)**, with one securing a contract to train others.

67 clients trained

43 clients transitioned to self employment

€53 - 79
average monthly profit

CLIMATE RESILIENT LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES

The program supported over 300 clients in Kampala across three climate-resilient livelihood components.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

11 refugees earned UGX 3M (~€750) through a fuel efficient cookstove apprenticeship

ECO GROWING

283 clients harvested 1,000 kg of mushrooms, earning UGX 7.3M (~€1,800)

WASTE MANAGEMENT

30 clients produced and sold 200 baskets for UGX 1.4M (~€350)



SERVICE DELIVERY IN KENYA

PROGRESS ON ENSURING PEOPLE ARE EMPLOYED/SELF EMPLOYED

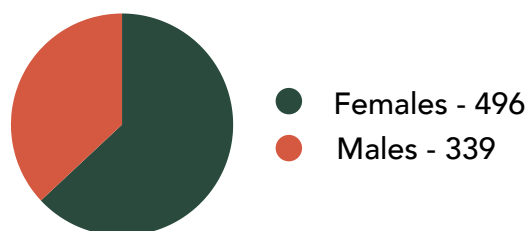
The program surveyed 967 non-RCT clients in Nairobi who had previously received skilling support. Results showed that **837 clients (87%)** were actively engaged in income-generating activities, **up from 54%** in April 2023. This includes **496 women, 339 men, and 2 identifying as other**, with **406 refugees and 431 host community members**.

Additionally, **23 refugee clients** were certified by the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) in trades such as tailoring, beauty, photography, electrical installation, catering, and barbering—enhancing their employability and income potential.

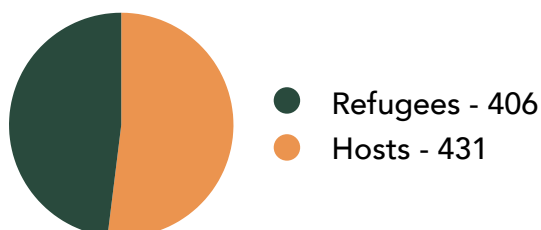
Clients engaged in income-generating activities



Gender Breakdown of Active Clients:



Legal status Breakdown of Active Clients:



ENABLING PEOPLE TO MANAGE FINANCIAL RISKS

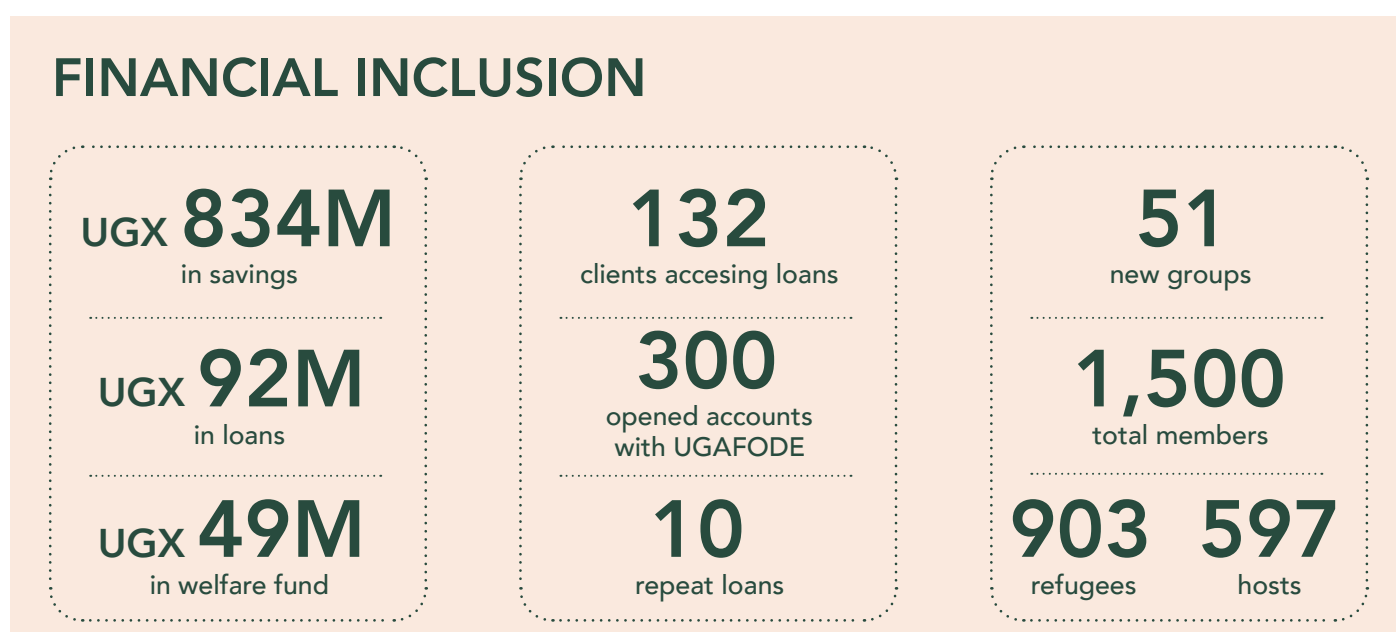
KENYA

87 new groups received financial literacy training, capacity building, and support for formal registration, improving access to financial services and economic resilience.



UGANDA

The program significantly advanced financial inclusion and economic empowerment through the formation and support of 51 USLA groups in Kampala.



BUILDING COHESIVE COMMUNITIES, UNLOCKING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SERVICES

WRAP-AROUND SERVICES FOR WOMEN

Re:BUiLD's wrap-around services in Kenya and Uganda provided holistic support to refugee and host community women through legal counseling, protection awareness, GBV prevention, and economic empowerment. In Kenya, over **1,600 individuals** were reached through sensitization on labor mobility, legal rights, and GBV prevention, while **1,400 city officers** were trained on refugee documentation. In Uganda, services included legal aid, rights awareness, and participation in the Kampala GBV Safety Audit. These efforts strengthened protection, increased access to services, and promoted safer, more inclusive communities.



KENYA



65 CLIENTS SENSITIZED
ON LABOR MOBILITY



42 REFUGEES RECEIVED
LEGAL COUNSELING



1,400 NCCG OFFICERS
TRAINED IN REFUGEE
PROTECTION



121 USLA PARTICIPANTS
IDENTIFIED SERVICE GAPS



30 FOOTBALL COACHES
TRAINED ON GBV &
CHILD PROTECTION

UGANDA



45 USLA MEMBERS TRAINED
ON REFUGEE RIGHTS



31 CLIENTS RECEIVED
GBV/LEGAL COUNSELING



17 REFFERALS
FOR PARTNER SUPPORT



311 REFUGEES
ATTENDED INFO SESSIONS

EVIDENCE AND LEARNING

MICROENTERPRISE SUPPORT IN KAMPALA AND NAIROBI

The [Re:BUiLD](#) program under the International Rescue Committee (IRC), with funding from the IKEA Foundation carried out the RCT (Randomized Control Trial) Wave 1 study to find out the effects of Cash and Mentorship on refugee and host businesses

In Kampala, the study was carried out in collaboration with the Center for Global Development (CGD), Makerere University's Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC), Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA), Georgetown University, and the University of Rochester.

In Nairobi, the study was carried out in partnership with Princeton University and Georgetown University. The study findings show that Cash grants had a positive effect on refugee and host entrepreneurs and communities while mentorship had mixed outcomes

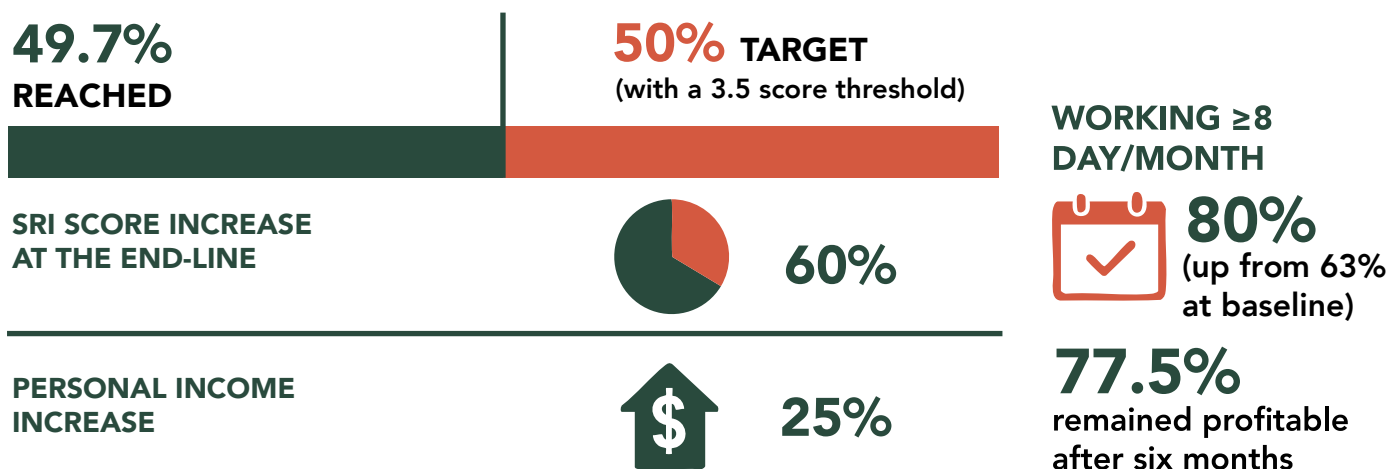
The findings are presented in [Kenya Policy brief](#), [Uganda Policy brief](#), [Research Brief](#) and [RCT Wave 1 Uganda working paper](#).

In February 2024, Re:BUiLD successfully recruited a total of **11,568 (Kenya: 4,867; Uganda: 6,701; 42% M, 58% F; 38% H, 62% R)** for the [second wave of the Randomised Controlled Trials \(RCT\)](#). The program initially targeted 8000 (4000 in Kenya and 4000 in Uganda) urban refugees and hosts. Of the 11,568, the **8,105 (4,603F, 3,502M) clients (Kenya: 4,053; Uganda: 4,052)** were randomly selected to participate in the study.

PROGRAM MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Program sampled 722 clients in a periodic follow-up survey to analyze its performance against the [Self-Reliance Index \(SRI\)](#).

SRI breakdown:



DATA VISUALIZATION STRATEGY

The program launched the [Re:BUiLD Dashboard V4 in Power BI](#) with an enhanced user experience and support for data-driven decision-making, featuring a refreshed design for improved insights into program results by the program staff.

CLIENT RESPONSIVENESS

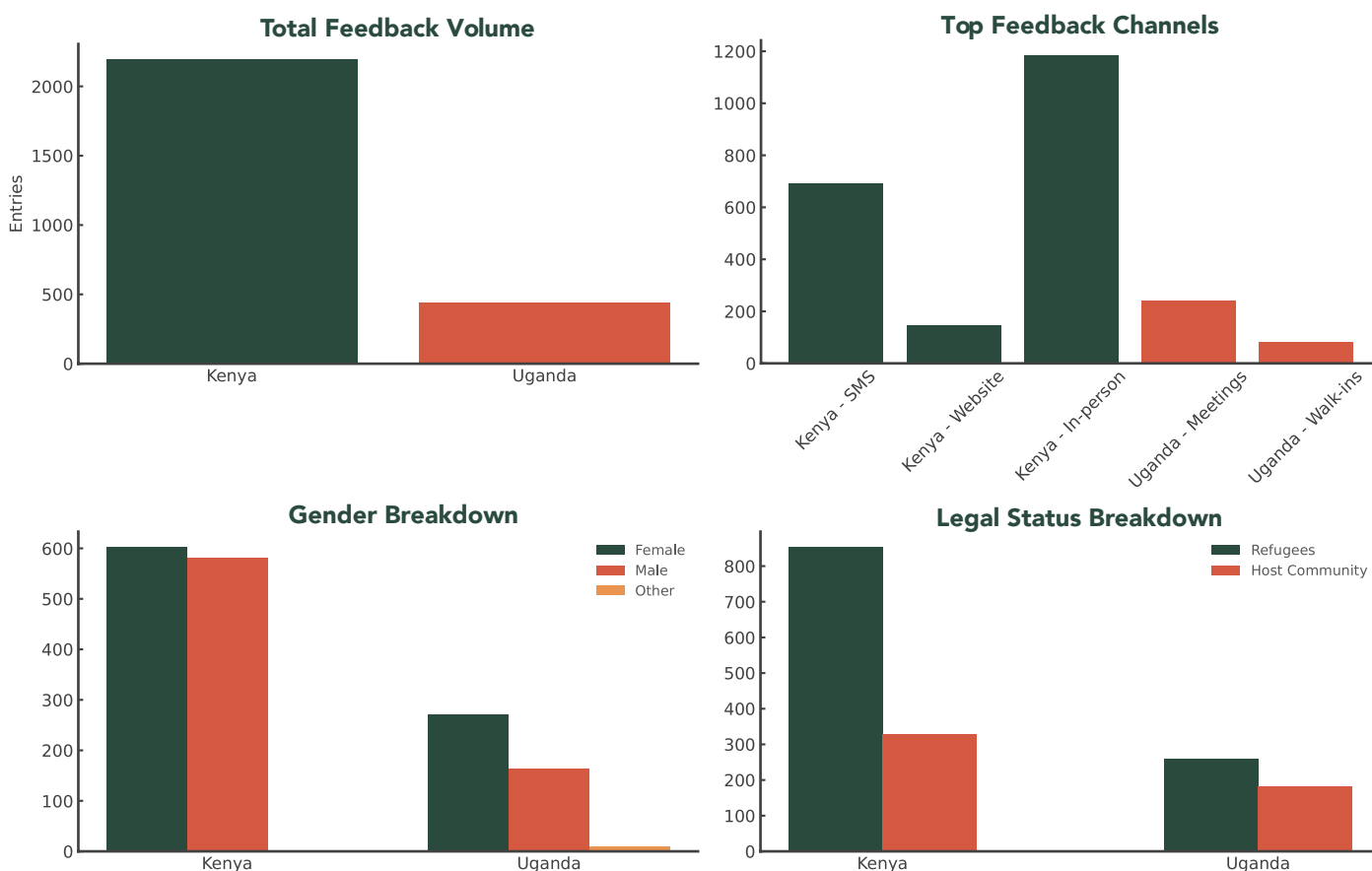
Client feedback was continuously collected throughout the project, reflecting IRC's commitment to Client Responsiveness. This feedback informed program design and delivery, ensuring services were more responsive, appropriate, and effective in meeting client needs in Kenya and Uganda. Feedback was gathered through both reactive and proactive channels such as SMS, email, WhatsApp, in-person interactions, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), feedback sessions, community meetings, and suggestion boxes.

KENYA

- Feedback Volume: **1,013 registry entries + 1,183 in-person feedbacks.**
- Top Channels: **SMS (691), Website (147), In-person sessions (1,183).**
- Client Demographics: **603 Female, 580 Male; 854 Refugees, 329 Host community.**

UGANDA

- Feedback Volume: **442 cases (270F, 163M, 9 Others; 260R, 182H).**
- Top Channels: **Community meetings (240), Office walk-ins (81).**
- Resolution: **204 addressed, 103 positive, 135 referred.**



INFLUENCE AND ADOPTION

On October 15–16, 2024, the Re:BUiLD program, in partnership with the IKEA Foundation and the World Bank in collaboration with International Rescue Committee (IRC), Department of Refugee Services (DRS), Nairobi City Council Government (NCCG), Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), Refugee & Returnee Service (RRS), UNHCR, International Labor Organization (ILO) and Refugee-Led Research Hub (RLRH) hosted the [Research and Policy Symposium](#) in Nairobi to advance refugee self-reliance and economic inclusion in East Africa. The event brought together researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to share evidence and insights on access to finance, jobs, social protection, legal identity, and justice. The symposium fostered collaboration and informed policy dialogue aimed at improving outcomes for refugee communities. [\[Access the full report here.\]](#)



KENYA

In Nairobi, Re: BUiLD partnered with National Social Security Fund,(NSSF), International Labour Organization, (ILO), UNHCR, and Danish Refugee Council, (DRC) to advance refugee access to social security. This collaboration finalized the [Haba Haba initiative](#), enabling refugee enrollment with a Ksh25 daily contribution. The pilot registered 103 refugees, and ongoing efforts aim to integrate both urban and camp-based refugees into the national pension system, with sensitization activities continuing into 2025.



103 Refugees
registered in the pilot
phase of the **Haba
Haba initiative**

KES 25 daily
contribution

ENGAGING THE DONOR COMMUNITY

Re:BUiLD launched and disseminated the donor support [paper](#) to key global donors, including USAID, PRM, SIDA, GIZ, FCDO, and the World Bank. The paper highlights progress and insights from the program's work on refugee economic inclusion and was also shared with civil society organizations through the regional livelihood group. This collaborative effort aims to strengthen advocacy and draw greater attention to the needs of urban refugees.

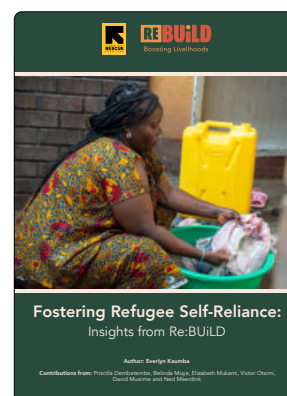
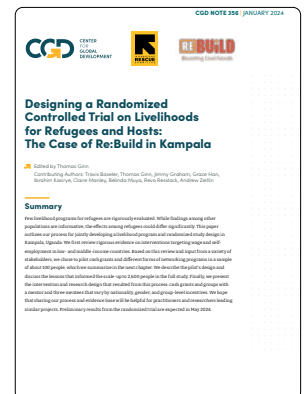
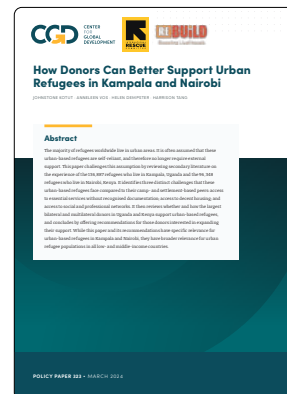
KEY MOMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS THAT SHAPED THE PROGRAM'S YEAR 4

The program, together with partners, convened and participated in key regional and global events as part of the influence and adoption strategy. The key moments were used to disseminate learnings and publications to key stakeholders in refugee livelihood programming.

- The [Research and Policy Symposium](#) in Nairobi
- The [Twelfth Session of the World Urban Forum \(WUF12\)](#)
- The Uganda Wave 1 RCT Draft Working Paper (Mentoring Small Businesses: Evidence from Uganda) was presented at the [3rd JDC Research Conference on Forced Displacement](#), Abidjan, Ivory Coast, on 19th September 2024 .

KEY LEARNINGS AND PUBLICATIONS RELEASED IN YEAR 4

- [How Donors Can Better Support Urban Refugees Report](#).
- [Designing a Randomized Controlled Trial on Livelihoods for Refugees and Hosts: The Case of Re:BUiLD in Kampala](#)
- [Fostering Refugees' Self-Reliance: Insights from Re:BUiLD](#)
- [Research Symposium Papers](#)
- A [blog post](#) on the perspective-taking experiment with the Kenya RCT was submitted to the World Bank Development Impact Blog Series.
- [Re:BUiLD in Action Newsletters](#)
- [Multimedia content on YouTube](#) with 450+ subscribers



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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.