

RE:BUILD INFLUENCE AND ADOPTION 5-YEAR REFLECTIONS



August 22, 2025, Nairobi, Kenya. A participant at the community engagement meeting sharing key challenges refugees face in accessing documentation. (PHOTO: Edgar Otieno for the IRC).

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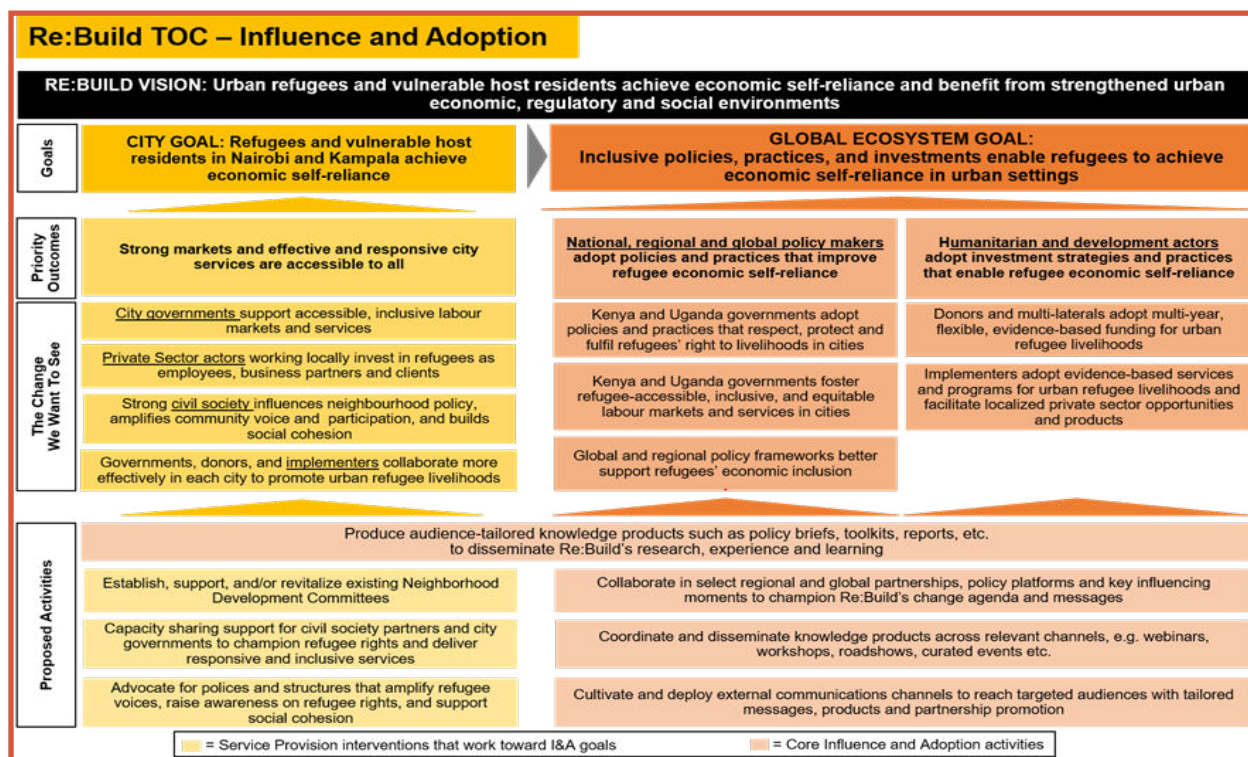
List of Abbreviations

- CGD – Center for Global Development
- CPFS – Community Process Facilitators
- DRS – Department of Refugee Services
- GRF – Global Refugee Forum
- I&A – Influence and Adoption
- IGAD – Intergovernmental Authority on Development
- KACITA – Kampala City Traders Association
- KCCA – Kampala Capital City Authority
- LC1 – Local Council 1
- NCCG – Nairobi City County Government
- NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
- NSSF – National Social Security Fund
- PLAVU – Platform for Vendors Uganda
- RCTs – Randomized Controlled Trials
- Re:BUiLD – Refugees In East Africa: Boosting Urban Innovations and Livelihoods Development.
- RLOs – Refugee-Led Organizations
- SHA – Social Health Authority (Kenya)
- SHIF – Social Health Insurance Fund (Kenya)
- UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1. The I&A Vision and Objectives

The Influence and adoption (I&A) component represent the [third pillar](#) in the overall [Re:BUiLD](#) program and aims to ensure evidence and learning generated throughout the program is used to influence change in refugee livelihoods and the urban economic, regulatory, and social environments that surround them. Re:BUiLD champions change and inspires local and global action by bringing the voices of refugees, their needs, and the services that work to support their self-reliance to the right local and global conversations, platforms and media. I&A aims to achieve behaviour change among targeted stakeholders, improving recognition, inclusion, and economic outcomes for urban refugees through two main approaches: a) Changing the way national, regional, and global policymakers develop, set, and implement relevant policies, and b) Changing how humanitarian and development actors prioritize investments and adapt services to better meet the needs of urban refugees, including stronger linkages with local private sector actors. The integrated approach of the I&A work demonstrates the importance of advocacy in influencing communication and dissemination approaches in the Re:BUiLD program, demonstrating the importance of advocacy in influencing communication and dissemination approaches in the Re:BUiLD program.

Re:BUiLD Theory of Change: Influence and Adoption Outcomes



2. Partnerships

Some I&A activities were led by IRC in coordination with other partners recognizing different partners' comparative advantages as well as access to advocacy targets and influencers. [PLAVU](#) and [Pamoja Trust](#) have been key partners in amplifying refugee voices at the community level, leveraging their grassroots networks to ensure inclusive participation in advocacy dialogues, promoting inclusive urban planning, and improving access to services for displaced populations in Kampala and Nairobi.

- National level advocacy activities were led by the Re:BUiLD team in collaboration with CSO partners, influencers, and allies.
- Global and regional level advocacy activities were led by both the Re:BUiLD and the Center for Global Development (CGD).
- City Level advocacy activities were led by the Re:BUiLD team in partnership with the city authorities at NCCG and KCCA and periodically Pamoja Trust and PLAVU.
- Community level activities were led by refugee-led organizations (RLOs) and civil society partners given their connections and understanding of communities.

Re:BUiLD has built relationships with a wide range of actors, including the World Bank, International Labor Organization, Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and many others. These collaborations and discussions are instrumental in addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by refugees, focusing on enhancing their access to decent work, financial inclusion and promoting self-reliance through recognized skills and certifications.

3. Summary of Conferences, Community Events, Convenings

Re:BUiLD has actively engaged in a range of conferences, community events, and convenings to advance advocacy, learning, and inclusion. Key highlights include participation in international commemorations such as World Refugee Day, [International Women's Day](#), [International Labor](#)



October 15, 2024. Nairobi, Kenya. Participants at the Research and Policy Symposium. (Photo by: Edgar Otieno for the IRC)

[Day](#), World Entrepreneur Day and more, which provided platforms to amplify refugee voices and strengthen partnerships. The program also partnered in the launch of Kenya's National Social Security Fund (NSSF) [Haba Haba](#) program and subsequent community sensitization events, expanding outreach on social protection. The I&A team also regularly contributed to technical working groups (such as the Economic Inclusion Working Group (EIWG), Community Based Protection (CBP), NGO Refugee Group (NRG), Kampala Livelihoods working group meetings, enabling joint planning and alignment with stakeholders.

Re:BUILD further championed annual campaigns, including the [Cost-of-Living Campaign](#) in 2022, the [Decent Work Campaign in 2023](#), the [Research and Policy Symposium 2024](#) and the [Documentation Campaign \(2025\)](#), each driving critical advocacy on refugee rights and economic inclusion. Re:BUILD also actively utilized influence opportunities through participation in high-level events and platforms. This included, among others, presenting research findings and lessons at different regional working groups including the UNHCR East Africa Economic Inclusion Exchange Group Alliance for Financial inclusion workshops, [Africa Urban Forum](#), [World Urban Forum](#), EU-Africa CSO Forum, UNHCR Speakers corner and COP on financial inclusion, as well as peer organisation groups, and private sector alliance meetings

The full list of conferences, community events and convenings are shown in [Annex I](#). A full list of Re:BUILD publications is available in [Annex II](#).

4. Community Level Changes

Overall, Re:BUILD has contributed to meaningful community-level change by strengthening access to services, promoting inclusion, and fostering social cohesion in both Kenya and Uganda.

In **Kenya**, uptake of the [Social Health Authority \(SHA\)](#) and [Social Health Insurance Fund \(SHIF\)](#) among refugees has expanded access to affordable healthcare. Through a community baraza in Eastleigh, for example, Pamoja Trust sensitized 100 refugees and host community members on SHA and linked them to the area administration office for registration. As a result, 30 refugee women enrolled in SHA and 20 obtained KRA PINs, improving their access to essential health and social services.

In collaboration with [Nairobi City County Government \(NCCG\)](#), [Kampala Capital City Authority \(KCCA\)](#), Pamoja Trust and PLAVU, the program enhanced community solidarity and visibility for refugees through World Refugee Day celebrations in Nairobi and Kampala aimed at promoting solidarity and advocating for inclusive policies. The celebrations featured a series of impactful activities such as market cleaning, exhibitions, medical camps, and awareness drives that raised awareness about the rights and responsibilities of urban refugees ([Kenya 2024](#), [Uganda 2024](#), [Kenya 2023](#)). The events saw active participation from various stakeholders, significantly contributing to the promotion of refugee support and community integration.

At the institutional level, **Pamoja Trust** advanced the role of RLOs in governance and service delivery. In Nairobi and Kajiado counties, RLOs were supported to participate in county

governance processes, strengthen resource mobilization, and improve organizational management systems. The capacity of 20 RLOs to build self-reliance among displaced populations was strengthened, 25 RLOs established internal governance systems, and five sectoral working groups were formed to facilitate peer learning and collaboration.

In **Kampala**, community-based advocacy led by PLAVU has driven inclusive change in urban refugee-hosting areas. [Community Process Facilitators \(CPFs\)](#), drawn from both refugee and host communities, have bridged gaps in service access, supported the development of village registries by LC1 structures, and secured formal inclusion of refugees in LC1 structures. This recognition has enabled joint problem-solving, improved case management, and stronger service referral systems. Regular community dialogues with market administrators and vendors opened access to trading spaces for refugees, enhancing livelihoods. Parallel initiatives, such as rights awareness sessions with local leaders, joint savings groups, and community dispute resolution mechanisms, have further strengthened social cohesion and built trust between refugees and host communities.

Re:BUiLD has also carried several capacity strengthening activities, including trainings on refugee policies, good governance and leadership targeting local council leaders, refugee leaders, refugees and host communities. These trainings have helped communities gain a clearer understanding of refugee laws and policies, leading to improved implementation at the local level. The trainings also enhanced leadership capacity among refugee and host community representatives, strengthened their ability to engage in decision-making processes, and fostered stronger collaboration between refugees and host communities in addressing shared challenges.

Collectively, these efforts demonstrate how the program has gone beyond service provision to foster systemic change at the community level. By building the capacity of RLOs, expanding access to health and livelihoods, and creating spaces for inclusive dialogue and collaboration, the program has advanced more resilient and cohesive urban refugee-hosting communities' relationships.

5. City Level Changes

Re:BUiLD has not only expanded refugees' access to jobs and services but also embedded refugee inclusion into city systems and policies. By bridging local governance, private sector networks, and community initiatives, the program has fostered more inclusive and cohesive urban environments where refugees and host communities can thrive together. In 2021, IRC signed MOUs with Nairobi and Kampala city authorities enabling more visibility for urban refugees, integration of refugees into cities and appetite by stakeholders to innovate livelihoods solutions.

At the **city level in Kampala**, Re:BUiLD has strengthened collaboration with KCCA to integrate refugee needs into urban planning and service delivery. Through targeted advocacy, refugees have actively participated in city livelihood forums and policy consultations, leading to decisions that have enabled refugee traders to access public city markets, secure representation within local council structures at the cell level, and promote skills development through the KCCA Employment Bureau.

Through **market-led interventions**, the program has expanded refugees' access to formal and informal job markets. Partnerships with business associations such as the [Kampala Capital City Traders Association](#) have opened pathways for refugees to join trade and enterprise networks, while targeted capacity-building sessions for city officials have increased understanding of refugee rights and fostered greater support for refugee-led businesses. Evidence generated through Re:BUiLD's Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) [Uganda](#) and [Kenya](#), as well as urban livelihoods pilots have informed city-level policy dialogues, shaping strategies that promote inclusive economic growth.

Re:BUiLD has pioneered innovative approaches to promote refugee inclusion in urban economic systems. The program provided in-kind grants in the form of ICT equipment, to equip the Kabagala Youth Center and the KCCA employment Bureau, enabling urban youth to acquire practical skills in videography and photography for improved employability. Additionally, in 2023, Re:BUiLD supported the City Authority with essential office supplies to streamline the registration process for savings groups, enhancing financial inclusion and formalization of refugee-led initiatives.

Joint **city-wide events and campaigns** including the [Urban Refugee Marathon](#), [International Women's Day](#), [16 Days of Activism](#), [World Refugee Day](#), and [International Labor Day](#) have further enhanced social cohesion, challenged stereotypes and strengthened cooperation between diverse urban communities.

In **Nairobi**, Re:BUiLD has advanced digital literacy and employability of youth by equipping the [Nairobi County Youth One Stop Center](#) with IT equipment- computers, desks, and tents, enabling expanded the digital skilling of over 80 refugees and host community youth. This investment has strengthened opportunities for young people, including refugees, to participate in the digital economy. This has been supplemented through the support of RCK, recently establishing a business information hub at the Kayole Youth Resource Centre, one of the refugee hosting regions in Nairobi County.

In line with our commitment to promote refugee participation in the governance processes, Re:BUiLD Supported the Department of Refugee Services (DRS), in the finalization of the [Standard Operating Procedures](#) on refugee registration, protection, and documentation and brainstorming on information pack on the refugee documentation access process. Additionally Re:BUiLD sensitized 30 Nairobi City County staff on refugee participation in governance processes, while technical collaboration with the Public Participation Technical Working Group led to the development of [guidelines](#) that formally ensure refugee inclusion in community decision-making forums. To ensure refugees are not subjected to unwarranted harassment by enforcement officers, Re:BUiLD partnered with the inspectorate training institute to sensitize 1,400 recruits on refugee rights, reducing risks of harassment and laying the groundwork for integration of refugee-focused content into the [official training curriculum](#) by 2025

Finally, Re:BUiLD supported the NCCG to finalize a [Refugee Sensitization Manual](#) and [Community Sensitization Guide](#), which will serve as practical tools for training officials and strengthening community engagement.

To build on peer-learning and strengthen municipal leadership in refugee inclusion, Re:BUiLD facilitated a [city exchange visit](#) between Nairobi and Kampala city governments, Koboko municipality in Uganda. Koboko shared best practices on integrating refugees into public services, sub-granting to RLOs and developing sustainable funding mechanisms. Insights from this exchange are informing cities' engagement strategies for 2025, reinforcing their role as key drivers of urban refugee interventions.

6. National Level Changes

Over the past five years, Re:BUiLD has contributed to significant shifts in refugee policy, legal recognition, and socio-economic inclusion in both Kenya and Uganda. By combining community-level initiatives with city and national advocacy, the program has supported progressive reforms in documentation, social protection, and governance, while also advancing labor market integration and inclusive planning. These efforts are helping to move both countries toward more sustainable, rights-based, and inclusive approaches to refugee management.

Kenya

In 2021 and 2022, Re:BUiLD, in collaboration with Refugee Consortium of Kenya (RCK), UNHCR and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), supported the Department of Refugee Services (DRS) in Kenya to [unpack the Refugee Act 2021](#), specifically its implications on the management of refugees in the country. Gaps were highlighted alongside actions to be taken by relevant stakeholders in implementing the Act. Re:BUiLD representatives also participated in a taskforce team with DRS, DRC, RCK and UNHCR to develop recommendations to be tabled before Ministry of Interior Permanent Secretary for endorsement, with several of the proposals expected to be reflected in the forthcoming Refugee Act 2021 regulations.

[Gazettement of refugee documentation:](#) In 2024, five key documents were gazetted, including [regulations](#) that formally recognize the refugee identity card as a valid document for SIM card registration. A landmark [case](#) also secured citizenship rights of children of Kenyan-refugee unions and confirmed refugee documents as valid for residency and citizenship applications. Re:BUiLD was involved as committee members alongside legal experts to unpack the judgement and define next steps, including lobbying the Attorney General to put in the right parameters for implementation and support Haki na Sheria, the lead counsel, to sensitize the government entities and CSOs on the judgement and its implications.

[Refugee Social Security Inclusion:](#) In Nairobi, Re:BUiLD engaged with the [National Social Security Fund \(NSSF\)](#), ILO, UNHCR, and Danish Refugee Council (DRC) to include refugees within the national pension schemes. In 2022, this culminated in the launch of the [guidelines for refugee inclusion in Haba Haba](#), a savings plan designed for individuals working in the informal sector, including refugees. The pilot was rolled out among both urban and camp-based refugees in

partnership with Equity Bank. This led to the finalization of [the Haba Haba initiative](#), enabling refugees to contribute to and benefit from national social security schemes. While the pilot phase led to the registration of 103 refugees, discussions are on-going to integrate more urban and camp-based refugees into the national pension framework, with sensitization programs continuing in 2025.



October 24, 2024. Nairobi, Kenya. Key partners at the launch of the Haba Haba Initiative that is to integrate refugees into Kenya's national social security schemes. Photo by: Edgar Otieno for the IRC

Shirika plan: Kenya's refugee landscape experienced significant shifts in 2025, marked by a blend of policy momentum and deepening humanitarian strain. Between April and June 2025, national and county-level actors advanced efforts to transition from camp-based refugee management toward integrated, community-based solutions most notably through the operationalization of the [Shirika Plan](#). Launched in April, the Shirika Plan represents a bold national strategy to implement the 2021 Refugee Act (the development of which Re:BUiLD contributed to). It lays the groundwork for transforming refugee camps like Kakuma and Dadaab into formal municipalities by 2035, integrating refugee populations into local economies, governance systems, and public services. Re:BUiLD was part of a core group of NGO representatives engaged in consultative meetings that informed the Shirika plan pillars and was involved in reviews of early drafts of the plan. Re:BUiLD worked with NCCG to ensure that urban refugee priorities are integrated into the Shirika Plan, including by engaging with actors in the urban space and participating in discussions to contribute to the development of the [Nairobi Refugee Response and Development Plan](#), which aligns with the Shirika Plan.

[Refugee Integration Strategy:](#) Re:BUiLD participated in Nairobi County's development of a comprehensive refugee integration strategy, ensuring refugee access to city services and inclusion in city planning. The strategy's roadmap and inception report were finalized, with full adoption expected in 2025.

Uganda

In promoting [decent work](#) for refugees and refugee employability, Re:BUiLD partnered and officially sponsored the [Employer of the Year Awards](#) organized by the [Federation of Uganda Employers](#) (FUE), highlighting refugee employability and economic contributions. IRC also partnered with the Federation of Uganda Employers, focusing on joint advocacy efforts to improve refugee employability and promote inclusive labor market integration.

At the national level, Re:BUiLD has informed the upcoming Jobs and Livelihood Response Plan (2025–2030), using evidence from RCTs and urban implementation. Active engagement in CRRF and livelihoods working groups has ensured urban refugee priorities are integrated into national planning. Further, the PLAVU model on including refugees in the LC1 governance structures has shaped discussions on refugee participation in local governance and service delivery systems.

In the year 2023, Re:BUiLD, in partnership with the Judiciary and the Office of the Prime Minister of Uganda, contributed to the development of the [Access to Justice Handbook for Refugees](#), a critical resource that provides clear guidance on refugee rights, available justice mechanisms, and procedures for seeking redress. The handbook is designed to empower refugees with knowledge to navigate the justice system and reduce barriers to legal services. It also serves as a reference tool for duty bearers.



October 13, 2023. Kampala, Uganda. Key partners in the development of the Access to Justice for Refugees Handbook at the launch of the Handbook. Photo by: Nathan Ijjo Tibaku for the IRC

Re:BUiLD's technical input into the development of [KCCA's 2026–2030](#) strategy ensures that refugee inclusion is treated as a core component of Kampala's urban development agenda. Through evidence-based recommendations and active participation in consultative processes, Re:BUiLD influenced key pillars of the strategy, including economic empowerment, social protection, and climate resilience. This contribution guarantees that refugees are integrated into

city planning frameworks, enabling equitable access to services, livelihood opportunities, and participation in governance structures.

7. Regional and Global Level Changes

Re:BUiLD has increasingly positioned itself as a key influencer of regional policy change and systems strengthening in East Africa as well as global ecosystem change.

By convening governments, cities, and global actors, the program has advanced evidence-based approaches to refugee self-reliance, strengthened municipal leadership in refugee integration, and driven forward the inclusion of refugees in national and regional identity, social protection, and urban development frameworks. These efforts are shaping not only country-level policy but also cross-border and regional dialogues on how to build more inclusive, sustainable responses to displacement.

In 2022, the I&A team conducted a **cost-of-living campaign** to push the agenda for urban refugees to be included in national social protection systems, to cushion them from the economic crisis resulting from the Ukraine conflict and COVID-19 pandemic. A [policy brief on the cost-of-living crisis](#) was produced and launched during the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) conference on the Kampala Declaration held in Nairobi in October 2022. Re:BUiLD made a joint presentation with the World Bank on social protection focusing on urban refugees. The IGAD conference was significant as it enabled the IRC and Re:BUiLD to bring urban refugees to a regional platform, whilst key recommendations on social protection for refugees were included in the [IGAD report](#) on the Kampala Declaration. The campaign also featured in the [UNHCR speakers' corner](#) in Geneva and was shared in other regional and global platforms.

That same year, Re:BUiLD engaged with the Global Compact on Refugee processes, engaging at the High Levels Official Meetings in Geneva in December 2022, where we [presented our Cost-of-Living report](#).

In 2023, Re:BUiLD organized [Decent Work conferences](#) in Nairobi and Kampala, to advance the cause of refugees' access to meaningful employment. The conferences in both cities were a culmination of six-months intensive consultations with relevant actors to push forward the agenda of systematic change in favour of refugee rights to employment. It successfully brought together key stakeholders, including government representatives, private sector associations, labour movements, UNHCR, and ILO. The ILO committed to organising annual decent work conferences to take stock of what actors in the space are doing, and progress towards the overall vision. Federations of employers from both countries committed to embedding refugees decent work advocacy in their workplaces. The Governments of both Uganda and Kenya Committed to address policy and legal barriers for refugees' access to decent work.

In the lead up to the [Global Refugee Forum \(GRF\)](#) that took place in 2023, Re:BUiLD engaged actively with Nairobi and Kampala city authorities, securing the submission of a [joint pledges](#) to include urban refugees in accessing city services. These included commitments focusing on refugee inclusion in development plans, the establishment of innovation centers for skills development, dedicated sectors for refugee matters, and coordination mechanisms for Nairobi's

refugee responses, including baseline assessments of refugee populations' livelihoods and needs. Re:BUiLD also played a key role in facilitating the participation of Nairobi and Kampala cities in the GRF and ensured the city pledges were also formally supported by the [Mayors Migration Council \(MMC\)](#). Through the MMC, cities also issued a [Call to Local Action](#), for cities to



The Lord Mayor of Kampala Erias Lukwago and Nairobi County officials during a consultative meeting in October 2023. Photo: Joseph.Sosi for the IRC

commit to the UN Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees and be recognized for meeting global goals. committed to supporting refugee integration for self-reliance. Following the GRF, IRC has been tracking the joint pledges through the [Post GRF Monitoring Tool](#).

In October 2024, the Re:BUiLD program, the IKEA Foundation, and the World Bank, in collaboration with other partners, convened the [Research and Policy Symposium](#) in Nairobi, Kenya to examine and advance refugee self-reliance and economic inclusion in East Africa, focusing on Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. The symposium provided a platform for researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and donors to exchange ideas and increase awareness of, access to, and utilization of impactful evidence products in policy. Throughout the two-day event, a diverse group of researchers, policymakers, and field experts shared valuable insights into the critical areas of access to finance, social protection, jobs and skills development, justice, and legal identity. The collaborative dialogue and exchange of research findings set a strong foundation for shaping policies that positively impact refugee communities. [The symposium report can be accessed here](#).

Building on connections made when Re:BUiLD [participated in the World Urban Forum](#) in 2022, at the 12th [Session of the World Urban Forum \(Cairo, 4–8 November 2024\)](#), Re:BUiLD hosted a side event that brought together policymakers, practitioners, refugees, researchers, and donors to

address the unique challenges urban-based refugees face and explore how various actors can better support them. The forum provided a critical platform for discussing sustainable urbanization and the challenges urban communities face worldwide. Read the [forum report here](#), and a blog post [here](#).

Re:BUiLD also participated in the [First Africa Urban Forum](#) (Adis Ababa, Ethiopia, September 4-6, 2024), contributing to discussions around the critical role of urbanization in achieving the objectives of Agenda 2063 and shaping the future of Africa's cities. Experts from various fields, including governments, academia, urban planners, economists, architects, developers, community leaders, residents, civil society, the private sector, development agencies, and practitioners shared best practices related to urban development and planning commitment to action.

Re:BUiLD has also been advancing refugee rights through the [Securing Documentation Campaign for Refugees in Kenya and Uganda](#), launched in mid-2025. The initiative aims to expand refugee access to labor markets, financial systems and essential services by ensuring stronger legal identity and documentation. The campaign has engaged refugees, asylum seekers, RLOs, legal experts, human rights defenders and policy makers/government. Media coverage of refugee stories has highlighted the human impact of lacking documentation, raising public awareness and influencing policy discussions on financial and social inclusion.

Re:BUiLD also participated in the [ID4Africa Conference \(May 20-23, 2025\)](#), contributing to high-level dialogue on integrating refugee data into national identification systems. The discussion emphasized the importance of interoperable identify frameworks to ensure equitable, secure and efficient access to services. Kenya's DRS affirmed its commitment to developing a comprehensive refugee database that will link with other government systems, significantly enhancing refugee access to healthcare, education, and social protection.

Donor and partner interest in Re:BUiLD's work has grown significantly, with global and regional platforms providing visibility and influence for city-led refugee responses. These engagements have not only positioned Re:BUiLD as a key voice in shaping urban refugee policy but also helped ensure that urban refugee priorities remain at the center of broader humanitarian and development agendas.

8. Changes among donors and humanitarian and development actors

Re:BUiLD has regularly engaged with development and humanitarian partners to share lessons and insights from the program as well as to influence their own practices as well as funding decisions. This has included engaging in various national, regional and global level platforms (as outlined above) to share insights and lessons learned from Re:BUiLD, as well as regularly producing knowledge products and ensuring they were disseminated to the right audiences. Through its '[How donors can better support urban refugees](#)' paper, Re:BUiLD analyzed the state of play of key bilateral and multilateral donors in supporting urban refugees and made tailored

recommendations on how this can be improved. To inform this paper but also throughout the program duration, Re:BUiLD maintained relationships with key institutional donors and multilateral development banks with regular exchanges, bilateral meetings, donors visits as well as invites to Re:BUiLD led events and panels. This had some positive results on donors funding strategies, for example the EU (INTPA) has launched new self-reliance programming for urban refugees extending their approach in Koboko municipality and expressed interest in funding urban programming that incorporates lessons from Re:BUiLD

9. What we have Learned

In both Kenya and Uganda, Re:BUiLD has learned that targeted capacity building and sensitization efforts for leaders and government officials can significantly shift perceptions and attitudes towards refugees. Sustained engagement with both government and community structures has proven essential for influencing policy and practice. In Uganda, for example, consistent collaboration with LC1 leaders and KCCA officials directly contributed to the formal inclusion of refugees in local governance processes, as reflected in the new KCCA Strategic Plan. Furthermore, community dialogues and capacity-building workshops have strengthened trust between refugees and host communities, amplified refugee voices, and translated grassroots priorities into actionable policy recommendations. This participatory approach has fostered stronger social cohesion and supported the design of more responsive urban livelihood programs.

- **Direct Engagement is Key:** Sustained direct engagement with local government and city authorities is key to embedding refugee needs into urban planning, shifts attitudes and policy practices.
- **Evidence-Based Advocacy Works:** Evidence-based advocacy (RCTs, pilots, campaigns) increase credibility and influence in policy spaces.
- **Capacity Enhancement Matters:** Capacity enhancement of RLOs improves refugee voice in governance and strengthens sustainability.
- **Formal Systems Create Pathways:** Linking refugees to formal systems (SHA, SHIF, NSSF, SIM registration) creates long-term pathways to integration and inclusion.
- **City Authorities Funding:** City authorities are critical partners in refugee integration but require direct donor funding to enhance their response capacity.
- **Documentation is Paramount:** The Documentation Campaign underscored the importance of securing legal identity for refugees to access essential services and financial systems.

10. What Next

Building on progress achieved to date, the next phase of work requires a coordinated effort across community, national, city, regional, global, and development actor levels. Sustained impact will depend on strengthening refugee inclusion, embedding lessons learned into policy and practice,

and ensuring financing mechanisms reach the local level where integration takes place. The following priorities provide a roadmap for advancing durable solutions:

- **Community:** Continue investing in RLO governance capacity and expand refugee participation in county and local governance processes.
- **National:** Broaden refugee access to national IDs, health coverage, insurance, and pension schemes. Use research evidence and programmatic lessons to inform and shape inclusive policies.
- **City:** Scale city-led refugee integration strategies within national refugee policy frameworks and ensure city budgets allocate resources for refugee-responsive services.
- **Global:** Advocate for direct donor support to cities hosting refugees and embed urban refugee priorities into global refugee compacts and development financing agendas.
- **Regional:** Formalize recognition of refugee skills and qualifications under IGAD frameworks and strengthen peer-learning platforms for municipalities across the region.
- **Development Actors:** Align funding strategies to support evidence-driven, city-led integration initiatives. Partner with the private sector to expand formal and informal employment pathways and continue advocating for refugee documentation to enable access to labor markets, financial systems, and essential services.

Annex I: Conferences, community events and convenings

- February 2022: Re:BUiLD participated in the [EU-Africa CSO forum](#), presenting work on economic rights and dignity of displaced populations.
- June 2022: Participated in World Urban Forum (Poland) and connected with stakeholders involved in urban and displacement issues, such as [UN Habitat](#) and its [Global Alliance on Urban Crises](#), [IFC](#), [JIPS](#), [IOM](#), [ICRC](#), Kenya Ministry on Urban Development, etc.
- Sept 2022: [IOM regional summit](#)/regional ministerial forum in Ethiopia
- Oct 2022: Launch of the [Analysis and Evaluation of Refugee-related Policies and Legislation - Kenya and Uganda](#)
- Oct 2022: launch of [the cost-of-living policy brief](#) during the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) conference on the Kampala Declaration.
- 2022: [Africa Union Forum on Development and Displacement](#) highlighted urban refugee needs and importance of funding cities
- Sept 2023: CGD- Re:BUiLD [webinar on adaptive management](#)
- Oct 2023: Launched the [Access to Justice Handbook for Refugees](#) in Uganda.
- Nov 2023: Re:BUiLD speaking at the [European Microfinance Week](#), an important event for financial inclusion, renowned as a unique meeting point for all professionals working in the inclusive finance sector worldwide, and with 659 attendees from 61 countries in person and online. IRC's close collaboration with the European Microfinance Platform, who organizes the week, ensured the topic of refugee financial inclusion was high on the agenda with one plenary session and one panel, in which Re:BUiLD participated.
- Nov 2023: Re:BUiLD presentations at the [Alliance for Financial Inclusion](#) training event in Kampala, enabling key interactions with Central Banks of Uganda and Kenya

- Nov 2023: [IIED learning](#) event in Nairobi. ReBUI LD contributed to the panel discussion organised by ReDSS and IIED on protracted displacement in an urban world and refugee livelihoods which birthed the NCCG strategy and engagement of IRC in the strategies technical working group.
- Nov 2023: Re:BUI LD participated in the [Africa Forum on Displacement](#) in Ghana, highlighting the needs of urban refugees to the private sector and emphasizing the importance of addressing these needs for better integration and self-reliance.
- Dec 2023: Re:BUI LD engaged with Nairobi and Kampala City ahead of the [Global Refugee Forum](#), securing the submission of a [Joint pledge](#) to include urban refugees in accessing city services. Re:BUI LD ensured the city pledges were also formally supported by the Mayors Migration Council, Re:BUI LD partners PLAVU and Pamoja Trust, and included in the [Second Report on Local Action for Migrants and Refugees](#).
- March 2024: [donor breakfast roundtable](#) in Nairobi to launch of the '[how donors can better support urban refugees](#)' report.
- 2024: World Bank Kenya Policy Research workshop: High level evidence and data informed platforms launched their [KLSRH](#) report to influence policy implementation, discuss Re:BUI LD RCT models, localize knowledge production and fostered in-depth conversations on the intersection of forced displacement and socioeconomic inclusion of refugees
- June 2024: IRC engaged at the [AidEx Nairobi](#) conference, a unique and varied gathering of humanitarian and development professionals, consisting of 500 senior decision-makers from UN Agencies, local and international NGOs, community-based organisations, government, the private sector, civil society and public sector, and donors.
- July 2024: [Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics 2024](#), where Re:BUI LD presented the W1 RCT results.
- October 2024: [Research and Policy Symposium](#).
- July 2025: Innovations for Poverty Action webinar where [Re:BUI LD & CGD presented the W1 RCT results](#).
- June 2025: 13th [Africa Evidence Summit](#) focusing on **"Better Data for Decision-Making."** The Africa Evidence Summit advances knowledge about how to alleviate poverty in sub-Saharan Africa and fosters unique collaborations between scholars, practitioners, and policymakers. Re:Build presented the W1 RCT.
- September 2025: Re:BUI LD participated in the Launch of the [KCCA strategic plan 2025/26–2029/30](#).
- October 2025: Re:BUI LD partnered with LWF and participated in the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) meeting in Gambia, where it convened a side event under the theme *"Borderless Justice."* see [Advocacy Brief Presented before Special Rapporteur of Refugees, Migrants and IDP's](#)

Annex II: Summary of publications

- September 2025: Learning brief, [Key Strategies for Effective Collaboration Between Development Partners and Kampala Capital City Authority for Sustainable Delivery of Services to Urban Refugees](#)
- August 2025: Learning brief, [Unlocking Financial Inclusion for Refugees through A Loan Guarantee Fund](#)
- August 2025: Learning brief, [Agents of Change: Community Process Facilitators, Driving Refugee-Host Integration in Kampala](#)
- June 2025: Randomized controlled trials (RCT) publications:
 - [Kenya Policy Brief](#)
 - [Uganda Policy Brief](#)
- May 2025: Policy Analysis, [Urban Refugee Policies and Legislation in Kenya and Uganda: 2025 Stocktake](#).
- 2025: [Nairobi county refugee integration and community building strategy](#)
- December 2024: Blog post, [What the 12th World Urban Forum Means for People Affected by Conflict in East African Cities](#)
- March 2024: CGD/IRC report, [How Donors Can Better Support Urban Refugees in Kampala and Nairobi](#) and [summarized policy brief](#) for donors.
- August 2023: Policy brief, [Access to Decent Work: A pathway to durable solutions for urban refugees](#).
- June 2023, CGD/IRC report, [Adaptive Management in Refugee Programming: Lessons from Re:Build](#) and related [blog post](#).
- October 2022: Policy brief, [The Cost of Living for Urban Displaced People in East Africa](#), and related [press release](#)
- October 2022, Policy analysis, [An Analysis and Evaluation of Refugee-Related Policies and Legislation Uganda/Kenya](#). January 2022, Lessons learned report, [Finance in Displacement – joint lessons report](#), including a focus on urban refugees (launched jointly with the policy evaluation in Kampala)
- Blog posts:
 - CGD blog [How Multinationals Are Working with the Private Sector to Enable Refugee Economic Inclusion](#)
 - CGD blog [Most Refugees Live in Cities, Not Camps. Our Response Needs to Shift](#)
 - CGD blog [World Urban Forum: What Was Discussed on Cities and Displacement?](#)
 - Re:BUILD blog [Forced Migration and the Global Housing Crisis](#)