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# Building Better Futures

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UNHCR assists States in finding solutions to displacement, and ensuring that populations of concern enjoy safe, dignified and productive lives. Throughout 2016, the Office undertook solutions-driven programming in numerous operations, sometimes re-orienting its programmes, to promote comprehensive approaches to protection and solutions from the onset of emergencies. This included developing and providing holistic settlement, shelter

and sustainable energy solutions for people in need.

With displacement-inducing situations protracted, voluntary repatriation numbers in 2016 remained low, although greater than the previous year. Resettlement and humanitarian pathways continued to be vital to UNHCR's efforts to find solutions and advocate equitable responsibility sharing for refugees. In 2016, the Office significantly

increased its resettlement submissions, while also working to expand refugee access to complementary pathways to help widen the options available to refugees with few prospects of return in the short term.

UNHCR further expanded the availability and impact of educational opportunities for people of concern, helping to ensure that displaced children and young people are

*Syrian refugees Mohamed Khaddam (centre) and Mohamed Awad sell soaps and detergents in their shop in Alexandria, Egypt.*



able to acquire the knowledge and skills to become key actors in their future. With partners, the Office also facilitated refugees' access to, inclusion in, and contribution to formal economies by

supporting their engagement in local, national and global value chains, and advocating their inclusion in national development plans.

## Promoting access to education

More than 984,000 refugee children were enrolled in primary education and 85,300 refugee adolescents in secondary education in 2016.

Education supports the development of skills critical for personal growth and engenders broader economic and social benefits, such as community development and reconstruction. In situations of displacement, education can provide children and young people with a safe space for learning and play, alleviating some of the effects of trauma and reducing their vulnerability to protection risks, such

as early marriage, dangerous onward movements, smuggling and human trafficking, and child labour.

Facilitating access to quality education is at the heart of UNHCR's solutions-based approach for the protection of refugees. In 2016, the Office continued working with governments and other partners to facilitate refugees' access to national



Young refugee children read books at the newly built library in Filipadja camp, Greece.

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education systems. By the end of the year, 64 of 81 countries assessed had policies in place supporting the inclusion of refugee children in national education systems. More than 984,000 refugee children were enrolled in primary education, including more than 250,000 children in 14 countries who were previously not attending school.

Despite this progress, UNHCR estimates that only half of refugee children attended primary school in 2016, and a mere 22 per cent of refugee adolescents had access to secondary education. To close this gap, the Office continued its efforts to increase access to, and the quality of, accelerated learning programmes as a viable pathway to certified education for over-age and out-of-school refugee youth. Some 42,000 young refugees participated in accelerated and other non-formal learning programmes during 2016.

UNHCR and the Vodafone Foundation improved the quality of education in refugee and host communities by equipping classrooms with technology that connected students to dynamic educational resources and the broader online world. By 2016, 27 "instant network schools" were established in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania. These facilities have benefitted more than 31,000 students and 570 teachers.

Close to 4,400 refugees in 38 countries received DAFI scholarships to undertake higher education. In addition, some 1,500 students undertook higher education through "connected learning" programmes, which combine face-to-face instruction with online learning to extend the reach of certified tertiary programmes. In total, more than 5,000 students have benefited from connected learning programmes since 2010.

KEY AREAS OF INTERVENTION IN 2016	KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016
<b>SECURITY FROM VIOLENCE AND EXPLOITATION</b>	
<b>Protection of children strengthened</b>	Guidance and tools for child protection programming in urban settings were finalized and will be piloted in 2017.
<b>Provide guidance and operational support on child protection</b>	UNHCR continued work on the use of sports and recreation programming to achieve protection outcomes for children, adolescents and youth, including with the International Olympic Committee and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Youth Refugees and Sport.  Child protection specialists were deployed to 23 operations and provided 92 months of technical support. In addition to strengthening child protection case management and best interests procedures, these specialists trained more than 200 UNHCR and partner staff, government officials, and refugee volunteers on child rights and child protection.





KEY AREAS OF INTERVENTION IN 2016	KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016
<b>Implement the regional child protection initiative covering the Horn of Africa and Yemen</b>	<p>The regional initiative "Live, learn and play safe" (2014-2016) for unaccompanied and separated children, and other children at risk, was in its final year of implementation in 6 locations in Egypt, northern Ethiopia, Sudan and Yemen. The project has had a positive impact on the well-being of individual children and strengthened the overall child protection response by UNHCR and partners.</p> <p>The number of children who moved onward in northern Ethiopia was reduced, including through family-based care arrangements. Children in family-based care were found to be 20% less likely to depart than unaccompanied children in other forms of care.</p>
<b>Strengthen programming for adolescents and youth</b>	<p>23 youth-initiated and led protection projects were supported through the Youth Initiative Fund (YIF), benefiting 779 adolescents and young people (375 females and 404 males) in 9 countries. YIF projects demonstrate that young people, supported with training and resources, can be creative problem solvers who are capable of designing, leading and implementing successful projects that benefit themselves and their communities. For example, YIF projects in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, focused on improving mental health and well-being by using theatre as a tool for engagement and social inclusion (particularly for adolescent girls).</p>
<b>Strengthen child protection response in emergencies</b>	<p>Roving experts in child protection during emergencies, including those deployed by Save the Children Norway and Sweden, supported refugee and IDP operations in Ethiopia, Greece, Iraq, Italy, Malawi and Uganda. In Greece, support was provided to initiate best interests procedures and community-based alternative care for unaccompanied children. In Malawi, support was provided to establish emergency registration procedures that facilitated the identification of children at risk and appropriate referral mechanisms.</p>
<b>Strengthen capacity for the protection of children</b>	<p>27 UNHCR staff, primarily in eastern and southern Africa, benefitted from the annual child protection learning programme.</p> <p>Operational tools and child protection issue briefs were developed and disseminated, with a particular focus on best interests procedures linked to durable solutions.</p> <p>Training events at global, regional and country levels were organized, including the joint UNHCR-Save the Children training on child protection and education in refugee settings.</p>
<b>Promote the protection of displaced children and youth in inter-agency fora</b>	<p>UNHCR became a member of the Executive Committee and Founding Board of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, established to promote the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), in particular SDG 16.2.</p> <p>Specific considerations for refugee and displaced children were integrated into the "Field handbook on unaccompanied and separated children" issued by the Inter-Agency Working Group on Unaccompanied and Separated Children.</p> <p>UNHCR worked with partners to operationalize the "Global compact on young people in humanitarian action," a commitment to address the needs of young people in conflict endorsed at the World Humanitarian Summit.</p> <p>As part of its efforts to expand the number of child protection actors engaged in work related to stateless children and birth registration, UNHCR organized a specific session on programmatic approaches to protecting stateless children and youth, at the first annual joint meeting of the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility.</p>



KEY AREAS OF INTERVENTION IN 2016	KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016
<b>BASIC NEEDS AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES</b>	
<b>Population has optimal access to education</b>	
<b>Support the inclusion of refugees within national education systems and programmes</b>	<p>5 country operations received training on national system inclusion and 20 operations received technical support.</p> <p>UNHCR strengthened its association with the Global Partnership for Education through a memorandum of understanding and board membership, to ensure the inclusion of refugees in education sector planning.</p> <p>UNHCR advocated Member States to develop and implement inclusive policies, as part of inter-agency efforts to achieve SDG 4: "Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning."</p>
<b>Increase enrolment and retention of out-of-school children in primary school</b>	<p>14 operations assisted more than 250,000 out-of-school children to enrol in primary school through the Educate a Child initiative.</p> <p>The UNHCR-led, inter-agency Accelerated Education Working Group developed guidance and tools to harmonize, standardize and improve the quality of accelerated education programmes globally.</p> <p>Standardized training for refugee teachers was launched with Columbia University and other UN and NGO partners to enable them to get qualifications and improve the quality of their teaching.</p>
<b>Expand and promote the use of innovation in education</b>	<p>19 countries operationalized innovative educational approaches to expand access and improve learning effectiveness for more than 100,000 learners.</p>
<b>Enhance access to tertiary education</b>	<p>A consortium of connected learning partners, led by UNHCR and the University of Geneva, developed quality standards for connected learning, strengthened coordination, and expanded access to accredited tertiary education for 1,500 refugees.</p> <p>A total of 4,397 refugees in 37 countries received DAFI scholarships to undertake higher education.</p>



**CASH ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION**

UNHCR is using the cash modality for education in a range of interventions across 15 operations to increase student enrolment and retention. These include cash grants for school-related expenses, such as uniforms, learning supplies, transport and school fees; subsistence allowances for students, particularly at the higher-secondary and tertiary levels; and the payment of incentives to refugee teachers.

In 2016, UNHCR conducted a review to understand how cash assistance can better contribute to educational outcomes. The review will inform the development of technical guidance and tools on the use of cash-based interventions (CBI) in education, to be rolled out in operations in 2017.



## Empowering refugee youth

Young people constitute a large proportion of refugee communities and have specific needs based on their age and stage of development. Refugee youths often face diminished prospects for their education, employment and skills development, and uncertainty for the future. The isolation, marginalization and hardship of forced displacement also increases the vulnerability of young people to protection risks, including exposure to violence, exploitation, substance abuse, and recruitment into gangs or armed groups.

In 2015-2016, close to 1,500 young people (15-24 years; 58% male and 42% female) from refugee and host communities in 34 countries participated in the Global Refugee Youth Consultations. These consultations were organized by UNHCR and the Women's Refugee Commission, together with States, civil society and other partners (see *Supporting UNHCR's work*

chapter). The drive, entrepreneurship, language abilities, technological savviness and other skills of refugee youth mean they play essential roles in supporting their peers, families and communities. Young refugees self-organize to provide peer-to-peer support, as well as vital community services, in formal and informal ways.

For UNHCR and the youth involved, the global consultations were the beginning of a process to develop the leadership, capacity and potential of refugee youth around the world. Participants developed their own framework for action to help inform the way that humanitarian actors engage with young refugees. The framework consists of seven core actions, including in relation to empowering, developing the skills and capacities, protection, and supporting the physical and emotional well-being of refugee youths.

## Livelihoods as a driver for self-reliance

80 country operations implemented livelihood initiatives for refugees in 2016.

Building the self-reliance of refugees equips and prepares them for the future and to take advantage of whatever durable solution will become available. Self-reliant refugees lead independent and productive lives, and are better able to enjoy their rights and live in dignity.

UNHCR considers access to livelihood opportunities, namely refugees' ability to make a safe and sustainable living, an important driver for self-reliance. In 2016,

32 country operations implemented livelihood strategies, an increase from 18 in 2015. However, refugee access to lawful employment remains limited, including in States party to the 1951 Convention.

Livelihoods programming informed by market dynamics is more likely to assist refugees in securing safe and sustainable livelihoods, and enable them to contribute to the community and economy. The Office's "Operational guidelines for the



Two Malian refugees working on various pieces as part of a programme that supports refugee artisans.

minimum criteria for livelihoods programming" supported 80 country operations implementing livelihood initiatives to ensure that programmes are market-oriented and results-driven. The guidelines align UNHCR with industry standards, such as the Small Enterprise Education and Promotion Network's Minimum Economic Recovery Standards.

UNHCR also worked with the OECD and employers to facilitate refugees' access to local labour markets. In response to the increased number of asylum-seekers and refugees arriving in Europe in 2015-2016, several companies endeavoured to employ new arrivals. However, legal frameworks, administrative barriers, language gaps and other factors hindered the employment initiatives from reaching scale. To better support companies to overcome challenges and facilitate employment opportunities for refugees, a series of business consultations were conducted and a joint UNHCR-OECD policy brief on the findings was published.

Financial inclusion can also enhance access to livelihood opportunities and contribute to self-reliance. In 2016, UNHCR and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency agreed to launch a

\$15 million partial credit guarantee facility, designed to increase refugees' access to credit by reducing the risks to financial service providers in host countries.

To enhance the inclusion of the most impoverished in livelihood efforts, UNHCR adopted the graduation approach (see *Glossary*), a poverty-reduction methodology that supports the extremely poor to 'graduate' out of poverty, in 2013. Related programmes have since been initiated in Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Results of these programmes in 2016 were encouraging. Unemployment rates in Costa Rica among 114 refugee and host community members, for example, decreased from 36 per cent in 2014 to 4 per cent, while self-employment rates among participants increased from 24 per cent to 59 per cent. On 'graduation', close to 80 per cent of participant households achieved a monthly household income equal to, or greater than, the national minimum wage, increasing from a baseline of 15 per cent. The Government of Costa Rica is integrating the graduation approach into its national development plan, which will further ensure programme sustainability.

UNHCR also strengthened relationships with organizations such as ILO, the World Bank, and other regional partners to support changes, locally and nationally, that expand refugee access to labour markets. The “Guiding principles on the access of

refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market,” adopted by the ILO Governing Board in 2016, marked an important step in establishing a framework for actors to promote refugees’ full enjoyment of the right to work.

KEY AREAS OF INTERVENTION IN 2016	KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016
<b>COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF-RELIANCE</b>	
<b>Self-reliance and livelihoods improved</b>	
	<p>New indicators for livelihood interventions were field-tested in 4 country operations.</p> <p>The livelihoods expert roster was expanded to more than 40 technical experts; 9 country operations were supported by deployments from the roster.</p>
<b>Improve the quality of livelihoods programming</b>	<p>Technical support missions were conducted to 22 operations (Algeria, Cameroon, Chad, Costa Rica, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Mexico, Mozambique, Nepal, Panama, Thailand, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe).</p> <p>30 UNHCR staff were trained in livelihoods programming.</p> <p>UNHCR staff received market analysis training from ILO, which enabled market analysis to be conducted in Cameroon.</p>
<b>Support refugees to access international markets</b>	<p>A new global artisan strategy to support refugee artisans’ access to international markets was developed. As part of the strategy, local social enterprises were identified as business partners in 6 countries and will work with refugee artisans under fair trade conditions to support product development, production and sales.</p> <p>Multi-faceted interventions were undertaken to improve the quality of artisanal products made by refugees in 6 countries (Burkina Faso, Egypt, Kenya, Malaysia, Rwanda and Thailand).</p> <p>Programme tools were developed to determine when refugee-made products are market ready.</p>
<b>Increase employment and self-employment opportunities for poor and ultra-poor refugees</b>	<p>UNHCR partner Trickle Up secured \$2.5 million to expand graduation approach initiatives to additional geographic areas, and to provide additional technical support over the next three years.</p> <p>Guidelines on access to financial services for refugees were developed.</p>
<b>Promote the financial inclusion of refugees</b>	<p>20 technical assistance providers were trained on access to finance for refugees.</p> <p>The credit guarantee facility structure was created and preliminary screening of 3 financial service providers was completed.</p>



Syrian refugee Hanan Dacka (centre), 12, studying alongside her new friends at their school in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

## Resettlement and other forms of admission

Resettlement continued to gain widespread global attention in 2016. The need for greater solidarity and responsibility-sharing to protect and assist refugees was emphasized in several high-level meetings throughout the year, starting with the High-Level Meeting on Global Responsibility-Sharing Through Pathways for Admission of Syrian Refugees in March, and culminating in the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants in September 2016. As an outcome of the Summit, States committed to work towards increasing resettlement places and other legal pathways for the admission of refugees on a scale commensurate with the annual resettlement needs identified by UNHCR.

Although the number of resettlement places available globally continued to be significantly lower than the overall resettlement needs, estimated by UNHCR to be close to 1.2 million refugees, or 7 per cent of the global refugee population under UNHCR mandate, resettlement

opportunities did increase significantly in 2016. UNHCR worked with 37 resettlement countries, up from 33 in 2015, and many countries announced increased resettlement quotas during the year.

In response to this increase in resettlement quotas, UNHCR significantly scaled up its resettlement activities and made more than 162,000 resettlement submissions, a 20-year high and increase of 21 per cent compared to 2015. The top countries of origin for resettlement referrals by UNHCR were the Syrian Arab Republic (77,200), the DRC (22,800) and Iraq (12,800). Generous donor funding to the supplementary appeal for “Strengthening refugee resettlement and other pathways to admission and solutions” allowed the Office to strengthen its resettlement processing capacity, including in areas such as registration, refugee status determination and community-based protection, in Africa and the Middle East and North Africa.

The number of resettlement States increased to 37 from 33 in 2015.

125,600 refugees departed for resettlement, an increase of over 50 per cent from 2015.



More than 125,600 refugees were able to start a new life through resettlement in 2016. The main countries of destination for resettled refugees were the United States of America (78,300), Canada (21,800), Australia (7,500) and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (5,000).

During the year, UNHCR played a critical role in supporting and guiding resettlement States as they built robust and sustainable resettlement programmes. Of note was the organization's close collaboration with the UK in designing its Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme, as well as work undertaken with European Union partners to expand and expedite the resettlement processing of Syrian refugees. These initiatives were critical in ensuring more resettlement opportunities were provided to vulnerable refugees.

Focus was also placed on strengthening the integrity of the resettlement process. New policy and guidelines on addressing fraud committed by people of concern were being finalized and additional integrity-focused positions were created in several operations. Field operations were also supported with capacity building and technical expertise to minimize vulnerability to fraud.

Many initiatives to share experience and boost the capacity of newer resettlement States were taken in 2016. The "Emerging resettlement countries joint support mechanism" (ERCM), a platform established to help countries create robust and sustainable refugee resettlement programmes, was launched at the Leader's Summit on Refugees hosted by the United States in September. UNHCR worked closely with IOM and governments in developing the ERCM's structure and programme of work, beginning a comprehensive mapping of needs and opportunities that would benefit from technical support through the mechanism.

In addition, the "Global refugee sponsorship initiative" (GRSI), a partnership between UNHCR and the Government of Canada, the Open Society Foundations, the University of Ottawa, and the Radcliffe Foundation, was launched to promote and support the establishment of private sponsorship programmes for refugees. In addition to providing refugees with protection and a durable solution, private sponsorship programmes can expand community engagement in the resettlement process, create a more welcoming environment for refugees, and foster diverse and inclusive societies.

KEY AREAS OF INTERVENTION IN 2016	KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016
<b>DURABLE SOLUTIONS</b>	
<b>Potential for resettlement realized</b>	<p>162,500 resettlement submissions were made, a 20-year high and increase of 21% from 2015 (134,000 submissions).</p> <p>The number of resettlement States increased to 37 from 33 in 2015.</p> <p>125,600 refugees departed for resettlement, an increase of over 50% from 2015 (81,900).</p>
<b>Resettlement submissions</b>	<p>Streamlined and expedited processing modalities were developed, such as the identification-based methodology for Syrian refugees.</p> <p>The expanded use of group processing (based on new criteria) of Congolese refugees in Rwanda was developed.</p> <p>UNHCR's evidence base on resettlement activities was expanded through the development of a resettlement data portal (<a href="http://www.unhcr.org/resettlement-data.html">http://www.unhcr.org/resettlement-data.html</a>).</p>
<b>Ensure the integrity of the resettlement process</b>	<p>New policy and guidelines on addressing fraud committed by people of concern were being finalized for roll-out in 2017.</p> <p>Training-of-trainers on investigating fraud by people of concern was conducted for anti-fraud focal points and newly-recruited integrity officers.</p> <p>4 multi-functional technical anti-fraud missions were undertaken to support field operations in minimizing fraud.</p>
<b>Build resettlement capacity</b>	<p>New and revised learning tools and training on resettlement were developed and rolled out.</p> <p>More than 800 UNHCR staff and affiliate workforce members benefitted from 8 resettlement training sessions, 6 on-the-job learning workshops and more than 100 webinars.</p>
<b>Enhance partnerships</b>	<p>2,100 months of deployment support were provided to field operations through 4 NGO partners.</p> <p>The ERCM was established to build the capacity of new resettlement States.</p> <p>Efforts to broaden engagement in resettlement by the GRSI were supported.</p> <p>Support and guidance were provided to resettlement countries in establishing, expanding and implementing new resettlement programmes.</p> <p>UNHCR continued to work closely with the Government of the Netherlands, followed by the Government of New Zealand, as chairs of the Annual Tripartite Consultations on Resettlement in 2016. The consultations aim to strengthen cooperation and foster open and frank dialogue between governments, NGOs and UNHCR on topics such as integration and preparing refugees for resettlement.</p> <p>The Syrian Core Group continued to play an important role in mobilizing support for increased and more harmonized efforts to resettle Syrian refugees. An additional 80,000 places were pledged for resettlement and other forms of admissions for Syrian refugees by States in 2016, bringing the total numbers pledged since 2014 to more than 242,000.</p>

## Complementary pathways

Complementary pathways are safe and regulated avenues which allow refugees to be admitted into, and to stay in, a country, have their international protection needs met while supporting themselves to reach sustainable and lasting solutions. Although complementary pathways are not meant to substitute the protection afforded to refugees under the international protection regime, they serve as an important and complimentary expression of global solidarity, international cooperation and more equitable responsibility sharing.

Complementary pathways include, but are not limited to, provisions for family reunification, labour mobility schemes, education and training programmes, and other special visa categories. Critical to their realization is the recognition that refugees have the right to access the same mobility opportunities and acquisition of skills as others, which can help refugees to attain a sustainable and durable solution in the future.

UNHCR's objective is to achieve new commitments from States to identify and increase the number and range of

complementary pathways for refugees, which can facilitate a progressive approach to attaining durable solutions. To this end, the Office is finalizing a framework, as well as guidance and tools, on complementary pathways for reference by States, refugees, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders.

UNHCR continued to research and map complementary pathways that could be used by refugees, including labour mobility and education opportunities. The Office also advocated that States make family reunion more accessible, including for extended family members.

In addition, UNHCR supported the development of initiatives such as Japan's sponsorship of 100 Syrian postgraduate students over five years, commencing in September 2017; the pledge by the Peace University in Costa Rica to sponsor 500 refugee students for five years; and work with the NGO partner Talent Beyond Boundaries in facilitating employment for refugees through labour mobility schemes in third countries.

## Voluntary repatriation

Circumstances in many countries in 2016 prevented the voluntary repatriation of refugees in safety or dignity, and the context in which some refugees returned to their home countries remained complex. Concerns that some returns may not be sustainable stemmed from some reports by refugees that their decision to return was based on a lack of viable protection and

solutions options elsewhere. Throughout 2016, UNHCR's operational role in return situations was context-specific and included working with governments; engaging in ongoing dialogue with refugees to plan for sustainable reintegration; verifying the voluntary nature of returns; gathering and analysing information to help refugees make informed decisions; monitoring returns;

conducting advocacy; and providing other repatriation assistance and reintegration support.

In 2016, an estimated 552,230 refugees returned voluntarily to their country of origin, 351,000 more than in 2015. During the year, UNHCR assisted some 33,800 Somali refugees to return home from Kenya. In Côte d'Ivoire, more than 20,000 Ivorian refugees have returned home since resumption of the return process in December 2015, and UNHCR expects to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of a further 13,700 people during 2017 as part of its comprehensive regional durable solutions strategy for Ivorian refugees. Support for voluntary repatriation was provided to more than 5,500 Rwandan refugees who returned in 2016, mainly from the DRC. At the end of 2016, the number of spontaneous refugee returns to the Central African Republic had reached an estimated 34,000.

The year also saw a surge in the return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan, with more than 370,000 registered Afghan refugees returning home. The scale marked a 10-year high. There were just over 58,000 returnees in 2015. Some 2,200 Afghans from the Islamic Republic of Iran also repatriated. With Pakistan continuing to host some 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees, and UNHCR's return monitoring showing that refugees present multiple, interlinked factors influencing their decision to return—including economic hardship, harassment, fear of arrest and deportation, as well as positive factors including perceived improvement in the security situation, and the State's commitment to provide land and shelter on return—UNHCR worked closely with authorities to counsel and assist returning refugees, and to monitor returns as extensively as possible while advocating further efforts to create conditions for sustainable return.



### CASH ASSISTANCE FOR RETURNEES

In 2016, UNHCR provided in repatriation grants some \$150 million to support the safe and dignified repatriation of refugees. Cash assistance formed part of a broader package of assistance to help returnees cover the costs of repatriation, such as

self-organized transport, documentation and administrative fees. Cash grants also helped meet initial reintegration needs, such as food, shelter, medical care and education, and helped to establish livelihoods.

An estimated 552,230 refugees returned to their country of origin in 2016, including 500,200 who were assisted by UNHCR.

## Multi-year, multi-partner protection and solutions strategy

The protracted nature of many conflicts, and the rising number of people of concern to UNHCR, heightens the need to plan for protection and solutions from the onset of displacement. Accordingly, the Office in 2016 strengthened its multi-year, multi-partner (MYMP) planning to work with partners to assess and address the economic, social, cultural, legal, civil and political dimensions necessary to secure solutions for populations of concern within three to five years.

In 2016, UNHCR operations in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Ghana, Senegal, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania developed MYMP strategies to achieve concrete, longer-term protection and solutions objectives, in collaboration with governments and other partners. As an example, the MYMP strategy in Uganda will help align UNHCR programming with local district planning, as well as the implementation of a \$50 million World Bank loan provided to the

Government to support host communities and displaced populations. In Costa Rica and Ecuador, the strategies build on new and expanded civil society partnerships to better support governments in applying the graduation approach to poverty eradication, to benefit both refugees and local communities.

Experience over the years has led to an understanding that unlocking solutions requires direct and early links to national development planning, as well as a wide range of local and international actors focused on longer-term support. The MYMP approach facilitates field operations to plan in a more strategic and coherent way, in coordination with a wider range of stakeholders, and aims to provide forcibly displaced people with more opportunities to achieve durable solutions. UNHCR took the decision to expand the roll-out of MYMP strategies to an additional 15 countries in 2017.

## Alternatives to camps

UNHCR's "Policy on alternatives to camps" promotes context-specific approaches, creating opportunities for refugees to fully exercise their rights and live lawfully, peacefully and productively in hosting communities. This approach builds on, and invests in, the resources and capacities of refugees, and enhances synergies with national and local development, infrastructure and service delivery systems.

In 2016, UNHCR used its diagnostic tool for alternatives to camps to analyse the implementation of its policy in 90 operations, supporting some 15.7 million refugees. The results highlighted many positive developments, including the increased use and coverage of CBIs to protect and assist people of concern.

Initiatives promoting and operationalizing the policy included integrated settlement planning in Chad, Malawi and Rwanda; supporting governments to include refugees in national development planning and services; and improving approaches to targeting assistance in out-of-camp settings.

In Uganda, UNHCR worked closely with partners, including the World Bank, to develop a multi-year, multi-sectoral, development-oriented strategy that would help implement the inclusion of refugees in the National Development Framework II for 2015/16 to 2019/20. This strategy is grounded in existing development plans and UNHCR's MYMP framework, and focuses on strengthening the self-reliance and resilience of refugees and host communities. In Rwanda, where refugees were recently integrated into national education systems, UNHCR and the Government jointly facilitated a national stakeholder consultation aimed at increasing the self-reliance of refugees and their participation in the local economy.

UNHCR is also applying the Master Plan approach (see *Glossary*) to implement

alternatives to camps. This approach explores how infrastructure development and service provision in refugee settlements can serve the interests and needs of both refugee and host communities, with the objective that the settlement typology evolves into a sustainable integrated community. The approach is being piloted in Chad, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique and Nepal. A key element of the Master Plan approach is investment in service infrastructure and facilities, to enhance their standards and capacity.

In 2016, UNHCR started implementing a global initiative to strengthen the consistency and coherence of targeting approaches for urban and out-of-camp refugees. The project provides technical expertise to support field operations in developing and implementing assistance targeting strategies in urban and out-of-camp settings. Targeting processes included data collection and analysis; setting eligibility criteria; planning the delivery of assistance; communicating with displaced communities; and establishing complaint and feedback mechanisms to ensure transparent and effective implementation and accountability.





Qaymawa camp, Iraq, at night time.

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## Access to energy and environmental protection

Millions of displaced people lack access to clean, safe and secure energy. UNHCR invests in the environmental sustainability of its interventions to help mitigate the impact of refugee settlements on the environment, and increase refugees' access to sustainable energy. These measures benefit both refugee and host communities and promote peaceful co-existence, particularly in operational contexts where natural resources are scarce.

The positive outcomes of past investments are becoming increasingly evident. In Rwanda, a carbon credit project providing fuel-efficient stoves to refugees resulted in carbon emission reductions of up to 17,650 tonnes over a three-year period, from 2014-2016, while also reducing the level of deforestation and soil erosion. Furthermore, the daily lives of refugees improved with the decreased risk of burns, reduced exposure to risks associated with collecting firewood, such as SGBV, and an increase in the time women and children could spend engaging in education or livelihood activities.

Solar power plants in Jordan's Azraq and Zaatari refugee camps are scheduled for completion in 2017 and have the potential to provide renewable energy to more than 30,000 refugee households as well as schools and medical centres, decrease electricity costs by more than \$10 million annually, and reduce carbon emissions by more than 19,000 tonnes each year.

UNHCR promotes market-based approaches which engage affected communities in the selection of energy goods and services appropriate for their needs, enhance the development of livelihoods and entrepreneurship, increase private sector involvement, and expand local markets. In Malawi, UNHCR worked with the local community and local government environmental service to restore an informal reception site that suffered from deforestation, accelerated erosion and degradation of a water stream. In Ghana, shallow waste pits were rehabilitated into arable land, enabling refugees to grow food crops. The Office also continued to explore innovative and inclusive financing mechanisms which

increase the potential for low-income families to access energy services.

Collaboration and partnerships were also strengthened to expand the use of environmentally-friendly and cost-effective approaches, facilitate sharing of expertise and resources, and create strong policies and guidelines on energy and environment programming. In line with its "Global strategy on safe access to energy (SAFE)" (2014-2018), UNHCR initiated the process of

obtaining accreditation from the Green Climate Fund, one of the most substantial resources for climate change adaptation and mitigation. The Office also began developing a holistic \$50 million proposal for climate-smart energy and environmental programmes in Cameroon, Niger, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania, as well as guidance on solar water pumping and community lighting, in partnership with the World Bank and Phillips Lighting, to improve refugee safety during hours of darkness.

KEY AREAS OF INTERVENTION IN 2016	KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016
<b>BASIC NEEDS AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES</b>	
<b>Population has increased access to clean energy</b>	
<b>Expand energy and environment expertise and capacity in the field operations</b>	An online learning programme on safe access to fuel and energy in displacement settings was launched. 30 participants from 15 operations received training to strengthen UNHCR's capacity to incorporate energy and environmental considerations in programming.
<b>Enhance research and partnerships</b>	Technical capacity for energy programming was strengthened in collaboration with universities, NGOs and private sector partners. UNHCR and Engineers Without Borders USA signed a memorandum of understanding to provide technical expertise for planning and implementation of energy projects. UNHCR and Georgetown University undertook a comparative evidence-based study ("Environmental impact of refugee camps: resource usage and management") in Djibouti and Ethiopia to provide guidance on reducing environmental impacts in displacement settings.
<b>Test innovative approaches to energy and environment</b>	UNHCR partnered with LandLife to test a tree planting approach, called "cocoon," which uses a nutrient-rich, plant-feeding pot to grow seedlings in adverse conditions. In Malawi, 330 cocoons were tested and had a modest survival rate of 55%. Several factors contributed to the survival count, including hot weather conditions, pests such as termites, and disease. In Nepal, in collaboration with the IKEA Foundation and Engineers Without Borders USA, mini-grids for community lighting were designed, installed and maintained with support from the community, to provide cost-effective solar street lighting.



## Addressing climate change displacement

UNHCR's engagement in situations of displacement related to natural disasters and climate change dates to the mid-1980s and has advanced since 2000, both regarding policy development and operational response.

In 2016, UNHCR committed to supporting two new coordination entities. The first was the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), which started work in July 2016 to implement the Nansen Initiative protection agenda for cross-border disaster displacement. UNHCR is directly supporting the coordination unit of the PDD, is an observer of the steering group, and is a member of the advisory committee. The Office contributed to developing the PDD work plan, which includes specific activities to which UNHCR contributes or leads.

The second was the Task Force on Displacement of the UNFCCC Warsaw

International Mechanism on Loss and Damage, created in 2016, by the Paris Agreement to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to address, minimize and avert displacement associated with climate change. UNHCR is a member of the task force to ensure protection is mainstreamed in responses to displacement situations associated with climate change impacts.

UNHCR also participated in several international and inter-agency processes focused on disaster displacement to help ensure coordination and policy coherence. These included the UNFCCC Climate Change 22<sup>nd</sup> Conference of Parties in December 2016 and its work with UN Agencies and governments to support implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Nansen Initiative Protection Agenda on cross-border displacement in the context of disasters and climate change.

## Syrian seamstress becomes a part of community fabric

This article is an adapted version of a UNHCR news story.  
15 December 2016

*Norine Verberg, Bronwen Cooke, Lucille Harper and Cindy Murphy are part of a group of sponsors that work closely with the Al Zhouri family to help in the resettlement process in Antigonish, Canada.*

**ANTIGONISH, Canada** | When a local hockey coach phoned Rabiaa Al Soufi, she didn't hesitate before agreeing to help. Fifty hockey jerseys were dropped off at her house, all needing name plates sewed on as soon as possible.

Rabiaa quickly got to work, spending the next few nights hunched over a sewing machine. Her husband and children helped out where they could, eager to make a good impression on the community that had recently welcomed the family.

With skills honed from years of teaching sewing and tailoring in Syria, a heap of finished jerseys piled up quickly. "Even though this is a very simple thing, I am grateful that of all people I was able to provide this to them," says Rabiaa.

The five members of the Al Zhouri family were resettled to the town of Antigonish, on Canada's eastern shores, in January 2016. The family fled conflict back home in Al-Qusayr, Syria, for Lebanon and, for five years, had been unable to work or attend school.

For both Antigonish and the province of Nova Scotia, the intake of refugees served two purposes: to give shelter to those in need and to grow a dwindling population with capable workers. By the end of 2016, Nova Scotia hopes to have resettled 1,500 Syrians.

Soon after arriving, the quiet emptiness of the winter surprised Rabiaa. For the first five months, she felt alone. Her mind often drifted back to her home in Syria and the



war. But the family's sponsors in Canada gave them new hope and strength.

Cindy Murphy and other sponsors brought Rabiaa to social events as often as possible. "I would have to say, bar having my children and getting married, this is one of the most important things that I've ever done," says Cindy.

The large group of sponsors, made up of community members and university students, often spent hours at Rabiaa's house, drinking tea and conversing. As her mood brightened, Rabiaa started baking and sewing again—jobs she'd once thrown herself into in Syria.

What began as a way to fill her days soon turned into a small business. Her sponsors arranged for a table at the weekly farmer's market to sell her Syrian pastries.

Then, after staring at a worn couch in their new home, Rabiaa crafted a new couch cover. When her sponsors visited, they marveled at the stitching and design.

Soon, word got out in the small town about Rabiaa's talents. Customers would leave her market stall with cookies and appointments for tailoring or upholstery. Working alongside her husband Toufic, a skilled carpenter, the couple created a niche service in the area.

And as Rabia's presence in the community grew, her family's did too. Her eldest son, Majd, between a job and school, took the lead in a community theatre play to improve his English and confidence. Her younger children, Ranim and Aghyad, volunteered in the community and quickly became fluent in English. Her husband built a reputation as a carpenter. Amid the family's growing successes, the sponsors helped where they could.

"It's an enriching process to be working alongside newcomers," says Cindy Murphy, one of the residents who sponsored the Al Zhouri family. "But I'm going to have to stop using that word in a little while. Because, really, they're very much a fabric of our community."