

# DIGITAL INCLUSION PROGRAMME

UNHCR Innovation Service's Digital Inclusion programme supports UNHCR's ambitions for Digital Inclusion, in that communities have equitable access to digital technology and channels and can use them to pursue opportunities for lifelong learning, inclusion in the digital economy, leisure, and solutions. We believe that refugees and the communities that host them have the right, and the choice, to be included in a connected society and see innovation and experimentation as critical in these endeavours. Through our programming we want community voices to be heard and to influence the design and implementation of humanitarian response.

The programme provides a flexible and open space for testing new activities that support further digital inclusion and enhance self-

reliance, addressing technology barriers, creating enabling legal and regulatory environments and breaking down digital divides, for example around gender and disability.

The programme also provides an opportunity for UNHCR to test creative solutions, for example to meaningfully engage with communities and their hosts, promote their participation in the design and implementation of programming and strengthen opportunities for feedback and response. The programme intentionally invests in supporting equitable and inclusive digital access across diverse communities and different ages, genders and demographics.

## Programme Objectives

1. Communities and Community organisations can drive forward local digital inclusion solutions to improve their well-being;
2. Communities' rights to legally access connectivity and be digitally included are strengthened through enabling policy and regulation through evidence-based advocacy, capacity building and convening;
3. In diverse contexts, digital gender, age and disability gaps to digital inclusion have been reduced.
4. Meaningful engagement with UNHCR and our partners works through refugees' preferred and trusted digital channels, ensuring individuals can make informed choices.
5. Communities' use of digital solutions helps improve their livelihoods, access to the digital economy and further self-reliance.
6. Communities are able to safely engage in digital ecosystems and access their chosen and preferred services, free of digital risks.

## Programme Pillars

To achieve these objectives, the programme operates a four-pillar strategy, grounded in supporting UNHCR country operations:



**Improving operational practice.**  
Develop and test innovative approaches to address challenges across diverse communities in key operational contexts;



**Research and Advocacy:**  
Generate an applicable and relevant evidence base to inform innovative solutions and develop targeted advocacy and operational interventions;

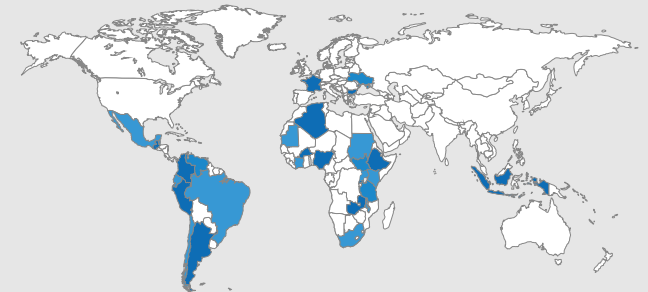


**Guidance and Capacity building:**  
Strengthen organisational and interagency capacity to adopt and adapt tools and platforms supporting digital engagement with diverse audiences;



**Partnerships and Coordination:**  
Broker and strengthen diverse, multi-stakeholder partnerships in support of the Global Compact on Refugees and to promote self-reliance.

## Our Reach



*The boundaries and designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations*

- |                  |                |                  |
|------------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Algeria       | 12. Guatemala  | 23. Rwanda       |
| 2. Argentina     | 13. Honduras   | 24. South Africa |
| 3. Brazil        | 14. Indonesia  | 25. Sudan        |
| 4. Bulgaria      | 15. Kenya      | 26. South Sudan  |
| 5. Burkina Faso  | 16. Lebanon    | 27. Tanzania     |
| 6. Chile         | 17. Malawi     | 28. Uganda       |
| 7. Colombia      | 18. Malaysia   | 29. Ukraine      |
| 8. Cote D'Ivoire | 19. Mauritania | 30. Venezuela    |
| 9. Ecuador       | 20. Mexico     | 31. Zambia       |
| 10. Ethiopia     | 21. Nigeria    |                  |
| 11. France       | 22. Peru       |                  |

# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY DIGITAL INCLUSION?

UNHCR supports the definition of Digital Inclusion put forward by the UN Secretary General's Roadmap, further supported by UNHCR's own strategic approach to Digital Inclusion:

*Digital Inclusion means providing, through intersectional, human rights-based, and whole-of-society policies and programmes, equal, meaningful, and safe access to and use of digital technologies and opportunities in the digital space for everyone, everywhere, without leaving behind those in vulnerable positions or traditionally marginalised and equity-seeking groups....*

Activities may include but are not limited to the following areas



## Commercial Connectivity Services:

Support market-based connectivity provision through partnerships with international and local providers;



## Digital Inclusion for Older Persons:

Addressing barriers the elderly face in connecting to digital society and preventing ageism in the digital world



## Engagement through Social Media and Messaging:

**Apps:** Strengthen UNHCR engagement with refugees on social media and identify pathways for community voice to inform UNHCR programming;



## Community-Based Connectivity:

Last-mile connectivity using community-driven models and innovative partnership arrangements;



## Digital Literacy and Skills:

Initiatives to enhance digital literacy of UNHCR populations of concern and enhance their safety online;



## Safe Access to the Digital Economy:

Supporting communities access safe and secure digitally-enabled livelihoods, providing opportunities for decent work free of exploitation;



## Legal Access to SIM Cards and Digital Financial Services:

Engage with governments and regulators to facilitate inclusion of refugees in national digital strategies and frameworks;



## Digital Protection of Refugees:

Safety of refugees online and protection of their personal data and information;



**Digital Leisure:** Access to digital technology for entertainment and social purposes to support community resilience and well-being.



## Digital Inclusion for People with Disabilities:

Support interventions that aim to break down barriers to digital access i.e. enhancing access to assistive digital tech;



## Misinformation and Rumour Online:

Addressing online misinformation and rumours which hinder access to reliable information for communities;



## Digital and Environmental Sustainability:

Opportunities for digital to provide solutions to environmental crises and greening its impact.



## Breaking the Digital Gender Divide:

Targeted interventions to support women and girls' digital inclusion;



## Online Feedback and Complaints Mechanisms:

Identify opportunities to strengthen feedback and response mechanisms through the adoption or adaption of digital tools;

# HOW CAN WE SUPPORT YOU IN DIGITAL INCLUSION?



## Programme Support

The Innovation Service can support the problem definition, design and delivery of programming around digital inclusion at all stages of the innovation and programme cycle. The team is able to guide on assessing needs, resource allocation, programme design, partnership agreements, learning and course correction and understanding the impact of interventions. We can advise on approaches for coordination, both through multi-functional teams in an operation or in inter-agency contexts, based on prior experience and case studies elsewhere. The team can also support on partnership brokering, particularly looking to work with RLOs and CBOs.



## Financial Support

Through the programme, a Fund has been set up to provide operations with financial and technical support, enabling them to explore, test and learn from innovative digital inclusion solutions, to country operations' and PoC's identified challenges.

Further support is offered by our team to successful applicants to the Fund around clearly defining objectives, enabling community participation and monitoring and evaluation of projects. This helps ensure success in exploring and testing all digital inclusion aspects as set out in the proposals or as a result of lessons and results of testing. The Innovation Service will also look at requests for financial support through joint-fundraising



## Technical support

1. **Tools, 'How-to's' and other resources:** The team can share practical how-to guides and tools to help you make progress. Research and other reports can also provide insight on how to tackle these areas within your operation. If there's something you need which we don't have, let us know and we can look at opportunities for developing it together!
2. **Knowledge sharing:** The team can flag case studies of what's being done elsewhere, advise on corporate tools and guidance, join dots with relevant teams, and link up to practitioners directly (within or outside UNHCR i.e. field teams with prior experience), so you don't have to reinvent the wheel. If you've got case studies or emerging practices, we'd love to hear about them for others to learn from it!
3. **Capacity building:** Through virtual, in person or different approaches, the team is happy to support with training on key thematics to enhance application in any operational context. This can include exploring options for different training modalities and linking to relevant partners.
4. **Support missions and engagement:** While this is currently limited due to COVID-19, the Innovation Service generally is able to provide 'boots-on-the-ground' support covering technical, programme, M&E, etc. We can also do this remotely, for example supporting engagement with Mobile Operators or Regulators on legal and regulatory barriers to connectivity



## Capacity support

1. **Partnership Brokering:** The Innovation Service has strong connections with organisations working on digital inclusion across regions, from NGOs to Community-based Organisations, and can help you find the right partner to implement a digital inclusion initiative.
2. **Human Resources and Surge support:** The Service has a track record of securing surge deployments through rosters to swiftly address issues of digital inclusion. In liaison with the standby team in DESS, the Service can support identifying surge opportunities.
3. **In-kind support:** Other forms of in-kind support often become available through the Service, whether enthusiastic volunteers, private companies providing pro-bono support, or academics that can support with analysis. The Service can help link teams to these opportunities.
4. **Private Sector:** The Service has strong networks with private sector organisations. Whether mobile operators, technology companies or small businesses, the Service can help link teams up with partners active in the digital space, together with PSP colleagues and help navigate engagement.