



# PROJECT UNDERSTANDING

Ipsos presents a special edition of Understanding Society



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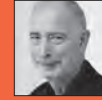
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# Why Project Understanding?



Author:  
**Didier Truchot**  
Founder and CEO of Ipsos

**Welcome to the latest edition of Ipsos Understanding Society. You will notice from the title – Project Understanding – that this is a special edition of our on-going series of publications on social issues.**

What is Project Understanding? It is Ipsos's contribution to building a better global understanding of the benefits of welcoming refugees. This is an issue I am deeply passionate about, and one that Ipsos will be addressing in several ways over the coming years.

Since I work in the world of numbers, I'd like to share a couple of numbers with you to provide a sense of the magnitude of the refugee issue. The UN tells us that there are nearly 70 million displaced people in the world today. Twenty-five million of them are refugees.

We all know that 70 million and 25 million are big numbers. But, it's easy to lose track of what this represents in individual human lives. Let me help you to visualize what we are confronting. Seventy million is the population of Thailand, the world's 20th largest country. Twenty-five million is the population of Australia, the world's 53rd largest country.

Imagine this. The entire population of Thailand being removed from their homes against their will. Or, the entire population of Australia being forced to move to other countries. We must never forget that many of these people are unaccompanied children who are separated from their families. This is a calamitous situation and can't be ignored.

Under Project Understanding Ipsos is also conducting the first global scientific study on finding new ways to build a strong, broad public consensus for supporting refugees. This is not an academic exercise. By the end of 2019, we will share the results of this 30-country study, offering a real-world strategy that works, and finding the new keys to open hearts and to unlock doors.

Part of building understanding is providing a platform where information about refugee issues can be shared. That's the purpose of this specific publication. Within these pages you will find articles by experts, including from Ipsos, on topics as diverse as the refugee experience in East Africa and Turkey, and how applying a gender lens to refugee issues can enlighten us to the special challenges facing refugee women. As a business person, I am especially pleased to share with you a selection of articles on unlocking the economic opportunities that refugees bring to their host countries.

I trust you will find this special edition of Ipsos's Understanding Society thought provoking and enlightening. We will be releasing several other Project Understanding elements through the course of 2019. Stay tuned!

– *Didier Truchot*



# Update on Project Understanding Research

By **Darrell Bricker**  
Global CEO of Public Affairs at Ipsos

In the face of this crisis, Ipsos has taken a stand by funding Project Understanding, a major research program in 30 countries and involving many Ipsos researchers from across our service lines and country teams.

The purpose of the research is to drive the public debate about refugees out of the stalemate and to discover the keys to unlock public hearts and minds on refugee issues. What we will deliver to refugee advocates across the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors is an effective messaging approach to help them win the public opinion battle in support of refugees.

The research program consists of four integrated phases currently under way:

- **Desk research** of available information on refugees and public opinion.
- **Qualitative research** on opinions, attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs about refugees among the general public in six countries<sup>1</sup> through two focus groups per country.
- **Quantitative research** on opinions, attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs about refugees among the general public in 27 countries<sup>2</sup> with 22,327 individuals. This survey is the feature element of our research program.
- **Social media research** examining digital opinion formation and refugee issues. We are monitoring digital conversations in nine countries.<sup>3</sup>

In conclusion, we look forward to sharing our findings with the world. Based on what I've seen from the research so far, it will provide a step change in how we talk about refugee issues, and guidance on a pathway to creating a new understanding on refugee issues. Ultimately, that is the goal of Project Understanding.

<sup>1</sup> Colombia, Great Britain, Germany, Lebanon, Uganda, United States

<sup>2</sup> Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Uganda, United States

<sup>3</sup> Colombia, Germany, Great Britain, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Panama, Turkey, United States

# Overview of Global Refugee Crises

## AFGHANISTAN

Timeline: 1979-present

Total registered refugees: 2.6 million

Main host countries: Pakistan, Iran, Europe

Context: First wave with Soviet invasion (1979); second wave during civil war (1992-1996); 1 million per year from 2016-present

## CENTRAL AMERICA

Timeline: 2014-present

Total registered refugees: 294,000

Main host countries: Belize, Mexico, U.S., Costa Rica, Panama

Context: Dramatic spike in the number of refugees and asylum seekers from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, largely fleeing gang violence, organized crime, and persecution

## NORTH AFRICA/ MEDITERRANEAN

Timeline: 2015-present

Total registered refugees: 1.9 million

Main host countries: Spain, Greece, Italy, Malta

Context: Migrants are now mostly individuals from African countries not at war ("economic" asylum seekers)

## SOMALIA

Timeline: 1969-present

Total registered refugees: 1 million

Main host countries: Kenya, Yemen, Ethiopia

Context: Decade-long internal conflict, furthered by the Northern region's declaration of independence and the beginning of Al-Shabaab in 2006

**25.4 million**

Total registered refugees around the world

**85%**

of refugees are hosted in developing countries

**57%**

come from: **South Sudan** (2.4 million), **Afghanistan** (2.6 million), and **Syria** (6.3 million)

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO**

Timeline: 2016-present

Total registered refugees: 800,000

Main host countries: Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, South Africa

Context: Civil war/sporadic fighting dating back to 2003, with increased waves of violence starting in 2016

**IRAQ**

Timeline: 2014-present

Total registered refugees: 260,000

Main host countries: Syria, Jordan

Context: Sporadic violence between competing factions (most recently, between ISIS/ISIL and the government) dating back to the Gulf War

**MYANMAR**

Timeline: 2017-present

Total registered refugees: 723,000

Main host countries: Bangladesh

Context: Violence sprung from ethnic/religious tensions between Rohingya Muslims in the predominantly Buddhist country

**SOUTH SUDAN**

Timeline: 2013-present

Total registered refugees: 2.3 million

Main host countries: Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, DRC

Context: Largest refugee situation on the African continent stemming from civil war

**SYRIA**

Timeline: 2011-present

Total registered refugees: 5.6 million

Main host countries: Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt

Context: Began as part of Arab Spring which led to government crack-down and civil war, complicated by ISIS, competing international interests, and ethnosectarian conflicts

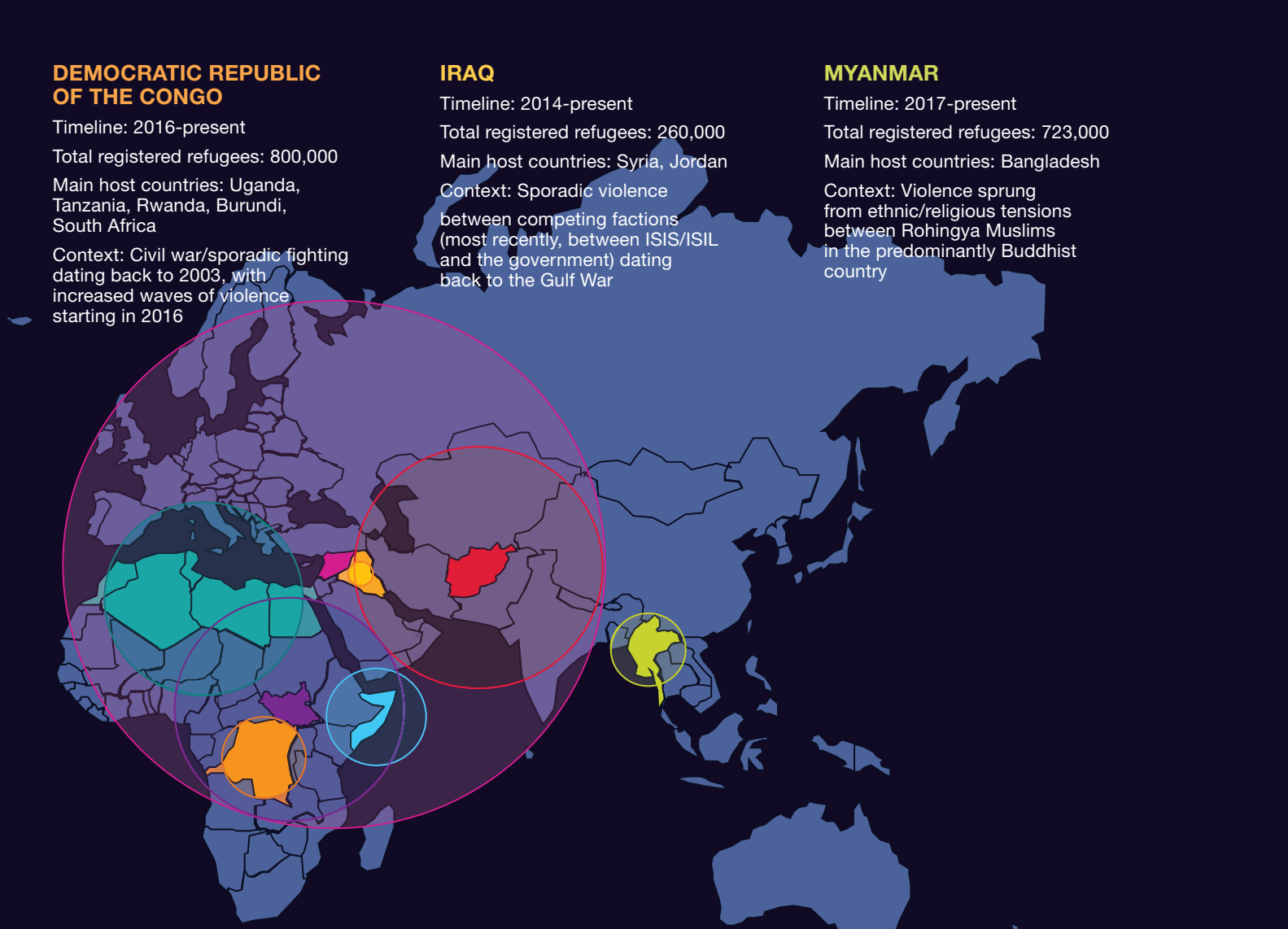
**VENEZUELA**

Timeline: 2015-present

Total registered refugees: 3 million

Main host countries: Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, Chile, Brazil

Context: Largest mass migration in Latin American history, mainly caused by government corruption and mismanagement of economy



# Social Harmony and the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Turkey



Author:  
**Semiha Feyzioglu**  
Researcher with Ipsos in Turkey



Author:  
**Nuray Özbay**  
Researcher with Ipsos in Turkey



Syrian children in a refugee camp in Akcakale, Turkey.  
Photo: RadekProcyk

Since the start of the war in Syria, around 5.6 million Syrians have left and sought refuge in neighboring countries.<sup>1</sup> This includes Turkey, which hosts 3.6 million Syrians, the largest number of refugees in the world.<sup>2</sup>

As this forced migration enters its 8th year, the vast majority (96%) of the Syrians living in Turkey have left the temporary housing facilities (camps) and are continuing their lives in diverse neighborhoods around the country, living together in Turkish host communities. In the early years of this exodus, the general inclination of refugees was to settle in Turkish provinces bordering Syria. Today, we observe the mobility of Syrians from eastern provinces to western parts of the country, following the similar migration trend of the Turkish community, who tend to move towards more economically-developed parts of the country. Therefore, the need for Syrians and Turks to coexist and the imperative of organizations to provide policies and programs that support this have become even more significant.

One of the main obstacles to social harmony between Syrians and the Turkish host community is the legal status of Syrian refugees. As Turkey has signed two major international legal documents—the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, also known as the 1951 Refugee Convention, and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees—the Turkish state constructed a new legal status definition for Syrians. Turkey maintained an optional geographical limitation to the Convention meaning that only refugees under threat due to events occurring in Europe may enjoy Convention refugee status.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, Syrians in Turkey are not legally catego-

alized as refugees but as “Syrians under Temporary Protection.”

With this status, Syrians in Turkey are granted free health and education services and may obtain legal work permits; however, they are unable to travel within Turkey and abroad without written permission from Migration Management,<sup>4</sup> or to directly acquire residence permit or citizenship status. This reinforces the perception of the host community that Syrians are guests and merely temporarily in Turkey, creating a barrier to imagining a joint future and negatively impacting social harmony between the two communities.

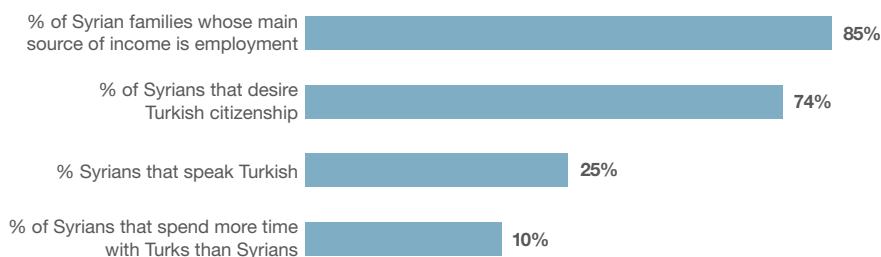
Syrians and the Turkish host community also face a language barrier, further hindering social concord. The majority of Syrians in Turkey currently do not speak Turkish (75% speak none to very little Turkish).<sup>5</sup> This language barrier is more pronounced for women (81% speak none to very little Turkish), as they are significantly less involved in social and work life in public.<sup>6</sup> The tendency for Syrians to congregate and form Syrian

neighborhoods in big cities, and thus have more daily interaction with fellow Arabic speakers rather than Turks, also reinforces the language barrier. As a result, social dialogue between the two communities is still very limited, as only 10% of Syrians spend time more with Turkish people than fellow Syrians.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond the view that the Syrian community in Turkey is “temporary,” the general Turkish opinion of Syrians is strongly influenced by the history of sociopolitical culture. Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, western modernization has been the main discourse of Turkish state politics, and social reforms were based on the idea of separation from the Middle East and positioning Turkey as a European country. This political position caused repercussions in the general mentality of the Turkish society who admire “Europeanization” with an orientalist point of view and distance themselves — either explicitly or implicitly — from the Syrian community, which carries a Middle Eastern cultural connotation, viewed negatively as a result of this history.

One of the main obstacles to social harmony between Syrians and the Turkish host community is the legal status of refugees.

### Lives of Syrian Refugees in Turkey



<sup>1</sup> UNHCR, <https://www.unhcr.org/syria-emergency.html>

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/en/refugees-and-asylum-seekers-in-turkey>

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR, <https://www.unhcr.org/tr/en/refugee-status-determination>

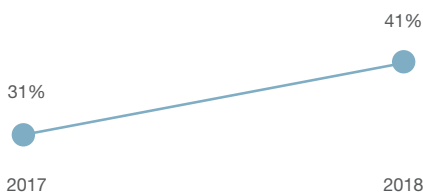
<sup>4</sup> City Governorates of diverse cities issued formal statements, for Sanliurfa Governorate's formal declaration: <http://www.sanliurfa.gov.tr/suriyeli-yabancilarin-seyahatleri-hk>

<sup>5</sup> Ipsos Turkey (2018), Refugee Livelihood Monitor – Wave 2

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

### Ratio of Syrians in Turkey who Work



Moreover, economy-based prejudices or misperceptions, such as the stereotype that Syrians are unproductive and live off social assistance of the Turkish state, are common in the Turkish host community. The reality is that the ratio of Syrians working in Turkey has increased from 31% in 2017 to 41% in 2018, and the main income source of 85% of the Syrian households is earnings from employment.<sup>8</sup> This increase reveals the growing labor market penetration of Syrians, but also leads to another problem between two communities: competition for jobs, especially for unskilled and low paid work in informal sectors. This has led to tensions about the potential displacement of Turkish workers in the informal economy, and moreover, this problem of informality is believed to disadvantage all workers, including Turkish nationals, by putting a downward pressure on wages and working conditions for all.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, the discussions about granting citizenship to Syrian migrants creates another tension point for the Turkish host community and increases hostility

towards Syrians. Currently 75% of Turkish people are against the idea of granting Turkish citizenship to Syrians,<sup>10</sup> whereas an equal proportion of Syrians in Turkey desire Turkish citizenship (72%).<sup>11</sup> As of January 2019, the Turkish government has granted Turkish citizenship to 79,820 Syrians with a promise of naturalizing an additional 300,000<sup>12</sup> on the basis of Article 12 of the Naturalization Law.<sup>13,14</sup> Recently, the Interior Minister of Turkey also stated his wish to grant Turkish citizenship to Syrian babies born in Turkey.<sup>15</sup>

All things considered, Turkey still has journey ahead to establishing real social cohesion between the two communities. The social, political, and economic risk areas as discussed above are clear, confirming that long-term public policies supported by positive language among politicians and media actors is most needed. The situation demands the implementation of social cohesion programs, including widespread and accessible Turkish language training for all. School enrollment and attendance rates of Syrian children should also increase, together with the quality of education they receive, and economic policies should be developed to regulate informality, minimum wages, and working conditions for both Syrians and for the host community. Moreover, the public discourse of the political leaders about Syrians as “guests” must be changed, and ideas about long-term structural planning should be communicated. ■

**To support social cohesion between Syrian refugees and Turkish host communities, substantial investment needs to be made into social, economic, and legal programming that supports both communities simultaneously.**

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> ILO, ILO’s Refugee Response, [https://www.ilo.org/ankara/projects/WCMS\\_379375/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/ankara/projects/WCMS_379375/lang--en/index.htm)

<sup>10</sup> Ipsos Turkey Barometer (2018), October Issue.

<sup>11</sup> Ipsos Turkey (2018), Refugee Livelihood Monitor – Wave 2

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/naturalized-syrians-a-flashpoint-for-turkish-parties>

<sup>13</sup> Article 12 of the Naturalization law authorizes the government to grant citizenship to foreigners who provided important services to the country economically or in the arts, sports, or technology, etc. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/naturalized-syrians-a-flashpoint-for-turkish-parties>

<sup>14</sup> Public remarks of Minister of Interior, Süleyman Soylu, January 19, 2019:

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/minister-suggests-syrian-children-born-in-turkey-should-be-granted-citizenship-139784>



# The Mouth of a Shark

Lives of Refugees in East Africa



Author:  
**Virginia Nkwanzi-Isingoma**  
Social researcher at Ipsos  
in Uganda



A refugee uses her sewing skills.  
Photo: Alexis Felder/RefugePoint

***“No one leaves home unless the home is the mouth of a shark” goes a quote from Warsan Shire, a British writer, poet, and refugee advocate born to Somali parents in Kenya. Many of these refugees that flee their home countries – which have become this ‘mouth of a shark’ – are in East Africa.***

Uganda alone is home to more than 1 million refugees from South Sudan alone, but the country also hosts Somali, Congolese, Burundian, and other refugees.<sup>1</sup> This makes it the largest host country in Africa and third largest in the world.

Refugees who seek asylum in the East African countries come from neighboring countries that include DRC, South Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. One common factor among these countries is the consistent political instabilities, which force the citizens to flee in hope of finding peace elsewhere. However, there are other reasons why people

seek asylum in East Africa, including a drive to escape from cultural practices such as early marriages and genital mutilation, and from other factors like climate change, famine, and economic insecurity, among others.

Syrian refugee Mohammed Salama once said, ***“We escaped from ruin to be met with more ruin here.”*** Refugees still face a number of challenges in host communities, including but not limited to language barriers, lack of proper shelter, sanitation issues, food shortages, discrimination, medication shortages, and inability to access education.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2017/8/59915f604/south-sudanese-refugees-uganda-exceed-1-million.html>

Of note, Congolese refugees living in Uganda have expressed concern over rising discrimination in the country and the lack of education services, arguing that in their host communities, they are only allowed to attain low levels of education.<sup>2</sup> Uganda hosts over 20,000 Congolese refugees, and research shows that only 35% of these refugees access primary education, and 12% access secondary.<sup>3</sup> Riots over food in the Amugo refugee settlement, and overpopulation in the Nakivale refugee camp in Isingiro district have also been reported.

Despite the challenges faced, many refugees have thrived. Even with few resources available, together with their skills and abilities, they have improved their lives and the lives of those around them.

Joseph Munyambaza, a Congolese refugee, is one of these people who have transformed the lives of other refugees with education.<sup>4</sup> As a six-year-old, Joseph arrived at the Kyangwali camp in western Uganda in 1997, and there he could attend only poor-quality schools. This inspired him to make sure that other refugees got a better education. To improve the quality of education for refugees, at 14, Joseph and his classmates founded Coburwas, an affordable school for refugees, giving them access to some of the highest quality education in the country.

In Kenya's Kakuma settlement, Somali refugee Abdi Sofyan has partnered with host community member Joseph Ebei to develop an electricity-generating business.

Despite the challenges faced, many refugees have thrived.

Abdi supplies electricity to the marketplace and nearly 100 households in the settlement. Another Somali refugee in the settlement, Ahmed, supplies internet to 400 individuals in the camp. "I had to first learn how to supply internet and came back here to supply," he says.

Such innovations have made the camp a safe haven for refugees, as they are able to learn, earn, and live comfortably, just like any other Kenyan citizen.

From the stories of these refugees leading the way, several lessons can improve the lives of the refugees in the region, such as:

**Building and encouraging skills development to boost employment** for refugees. Vocational skills like carpentry, brick laying, mechanics, sewing, and

weaving are key sources of livelihoods for refugee communities, especially young people. These also can be a source of income for parents to establish independence from aid. Such economic activities can also be used as point of leverage for international donors as a way of capacity building, increasing resilience and protection, and developing sustainable coping strategies.

**Partnership and coordination of different humanitarian organizations** can help to relieve some of the challenges that UNHCR faces when providing aid. UNHCR's Ugandan refugee program is severely underfunded, limiting all sectors. Support in the form of increased donations and organizational partnerships would help in addressing some of the issues discussed in this article.

**Fighting against corruption, segregation, and discrimination against refugees** is another necessity. Sensitization campaigns can address these issues, as they are some of the biggest challenges that refugees face.<sup>5</sup> These social ills hinder growth and development, and are thus key issues to be resolved to allow refugees easier access to opportunities like employment and education, and in turn increase their potential for prosperity.

**'No one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land'** —The water can be a safe home far away from home if we all join hands together to support refugees. ■

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ipsos.co.uk/dataportal/story/view\\_story/electronic/129979/](http://www.ipsos.co.uk/dataportal/story/view_story/electronic/129979/)

<sup>3</sup> UNICEF Uganda Humanitarian Special Report 2018

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/articles/2018/08/16/school-started-by-refugees-becomes-one-of-ugandas-best>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/2017-03/ipsosPA\\_Articles\\_CommunityConsultationsAidSouthSudan.pdf](https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/2017-03/ipsosPA_Articles_CommunityConsultationsAidSouthSudan.pdf)

# Refugee Resilience in Ecuador

Paving the road to self-sufficiency



Author:  
**Sharon Samber**  
Communications Specialist for  
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society



Juan Camilo Ortega Valencia, a refugee, sells churros.  
Photo: Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society

As Juan Camilo Ortega Valencia sells his churros from his cart, the proud small business owner is a walking advertisement for the success of the novel programming and pathways that HAIS promotes in Ecuador.

Lifting people out of poverty is a lofty goal, often more wishful thinking than an actual attainable outcome. But HAIS is using two major programs to help people, offering well-crafted and sustainable programs to help refugees move beyond emergency support to a foundation for self-sufficiency.

By carefully sequencing and placing certain time limits on the support the refugees receive, the Graduation Model Approach (GMA), which is supported by UNHCR, provides an integrated and holistic response that includes help with basic needs, case management, and livelihoods.

Cash transfer and food coupons provide families with the necessary stability to focus on a sustainable life plan, HAIS Ecuador Country Director Sabrina Lustgarten explains. Later, participants learn to build assets and practice financial discipline, as well as skills training to learn how to care for assets and ultimately run a business.

“We help people find their way, and find a way to make a living,” Lustgarten said. “We build trust with them.”

Depending on their profile and skills, some GMA participants are selected for formal employment, while others—like Juan—are identified as potential

entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs attend special classes, are mentored through the development and implementation of a business plan, and even receive USD \$500 in seed capital to start their business.

Every part of the GMA is important, but the comprehensive case management is the core element that makes things work. Much like in the HAIS “Livelihoods” program, the mentor plays an invaluable role.

HAIS’ Livelihoods program combines different strategies, such as financial literacy to achieve independence, entrepreneurship training to promote enterprise development, and vocational and technical training to improve the professional skills of refugees and increase their opportunities for employment. HAIS also promotes labor inclusion for refugee populations through Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives with 17 employers and companies in Ecuador.

The agribusiness model of Livelihoods in the border province of Carchi showcases HAIS’ ability to find different groups and meet them where they are. The program, which helps refugees in rural communities develop their products and sell them in the local market, also promotes cooperativism, as well as social and economic integration in these communities.

Angie Nuñez Vidal and Paola Lopez Espinoza are young Colombian women who came to Ecuador under difficult circumstances. They were not sure how they would get by after the emergency

**While cash transfer and food coupons provide families with short-term stability, refugees must also learn to make a living in the long-term, work that HAIS does through ongoing programming.**

support they received ran out. But with help from the HAIS program, the adept cooks decided they could start a catering business and join the informal economy. Today they have a house, send their children to better schools, and are thriving.

Ecuador hosts the most refugees and displaced populations in Latin America, with more than 500,000 Venezuelans arriving just this year, or 3,000 daily. In a country where thousands fleeing conflict, poverty, and violence are seeking safety, HAIS Ecuador is using the GMA model and Livelihoods program to change and better people’s lives. As of September 2018, HAIS supported 438 families to graduate out of poverty. These families are saving 5% of their income, generating income that meets their needs, eating 3 nutritious meals each day, and becoming active members of their communities, for a continuous period of six months. There are now nearly 10,000 individuals who have been targeted for the program.

So, Juan (who makes all of his own secret recipe batter) sells his churros and provides for himself. He manages a staff and a workplace. And Angie and Paola sell their food and manage their business. With HAIS’ help, they are making their way in the world successfully and with dignity. ■

# Putting Refugees at the Center of Response



Author:  
**Kaitlin Love**  
Director at Ipsos in Washington, DC

**The world is currently experiencing the largest displacement crisis since the end of World War II, and displacement looks very different now than it has in decades past, particularly for refugees.**

The average length of displacement is now approaching 20 years, compared to nine years in the 1990s, and the majority of the displaced assimilate into urban areas rather than refugee camps. One of the key differences—and one that may not be as well-known—is that 85% of refugees now reside in the low- or middle-income countries that neighbor their countries of origin, placing immense strain on already-burdened infrastructure and public services.

With the global increase in displacement, there has been a commensurate increase in spending on humanitarian aid. This aid, largely in the form of bilateral or multilateral monetary aid or sponsored disaster relief programming, originates largely in wealthy western countries, possibly as part of a bid to avoid or defer taking in these refugees themselves, as the cost of resettlement can be high.

A large network of humanitarian relief providers has emerged in response to these dynamics. These organizations are primarily responsible for providing immediate relief during crisis: for instance, making sure refugees have food, water, shelter,

and access to critical services such as healthcare and education. However, this system is designed to accommodate immediate needs for temporary displacement situations, and it starts to fall apart in the face of protracted crises.

Over the past decade, Ipsos has undertaken substantive research on this topic, conducting studies with refugees on humanitarian service provision and satisfaction, crisis response, and long-term needs and livelihoods. From this, we have identified four challenges that we believe must be addressed to reform the humanitarian sector so it can respond adequately to the current global crisis.



Afghan refugees in Serbia.  
Photo: RadekProcyk

### 1. Assessment of humanitarian need is flawed.

In 2017, \$27 billion was spent on humanitarian aid. This number is based on appeals set out by humanitarian organizations: for instance, in 2017 UN-coordinated appeals requested \$25 billion, 40% of which was funded. Appeal amounts are determined based on internal needs assessments conducted by humanitarian relief providers, whether they are coordinated by the UN or other non-governmental organizations, who have significant experience working with affected populations. While this expertise is invaluable, the system itself is inherently bureaucratic, as these providers have a vested interest in directing response in ways that will propagate their own organizational interests.

*We would recommend a more substantive role of third-party assessors into the appeal process in order to provide unbiased information on organizational needs, as well as primary research with affected populations on need, as described below.*

### 2. Humanitarian aid is insufficient to meet basic needs.

Despite ongoing campaigns, donor country pledges, and global conferences, requests for humanitarian funding consistently fall short of goals. This leaves organizations unable to adequately service populations in need. In our research with refugees, most report that their basic needs are not being met and as a result they have to resort to negative coping mechanisms, including restricting food intake, withdrawing children from school, or

Despite best efforts, our research shows that the majority of refugees are not able to meet their basic needs, and often resort to negative coping mechanisms.

borrowing from friends and family members. Insufficient funding has also led to a widespread lack of information and a perceived lack of transparency of the humanitarian aid system. This has led to extensive misinformation among refugees about how humanitarian aid is prioritized and distributed, resulting in constant fear of support ending.

*We would recommend investing in universal information campaigns about how, where, and to whom humanitarian assistance and services are available as necessary to stymie the pervasive culture of misconception about humanitarian aid distribution and allocation. Additionally, as with other areas of foreign aid and assistance, the humanitarian sector should engage in more rigorous evaluations of response programming, to close the feedback loop and continually adapt and improve service provision.*

### 3. Humanitarian aid doesn't acknowledge or respond to what affected people say they need.

The needs stated by humanitarian relief providers do not always align with the needs expressed by affected populations, particularly where the situation shifts from short-term survival to long-term success. For example, in recent studies of refugees, we have found that while the universally expressed need is for cash, many still receive in-kind and voucher-based aid distributed through humanitarian service providers. This type of model is reflective of refugee crises as we have experienced them in the past: fleeting. However, in the current world of protracted crises, models such as this do not allow refugees the flexibility or autonomy to begin to rebuild their lives.

*We would recommend engaging in more primary research with affected populations rather than through the organizations or stakeholders that serve them in order to understand needs, opinions, behaviors, and po-*

*tential resolutions. Additionally, identifying and building the capacity of refugee and host-community-led organizations will increase the sustainability and responsiveness to context of humanitarian programming.*

#### **4. Focus on meeting basic needs fails to recognize fundamental rights or enable discussion about long-term solutions.**

Our research with refugees consistently finds that their most pressing need is the right to work, something they are prohibited from in nearly all contexts, but that would go further to guarantee long-term livelihoods than temporary aid disbursements. The right to work not only will allow refugees the opportunity to become self-sufficient, but also rebuild their dignity, an often-cited casualty of displacement and a human right. Here, the humanitarian system is largely constrained by the demands of host country governments, who are concerned that large refugee populations will take job opportunities and resources from their own citizens.

*The international community and the humanitarian sector need to face the fact that refugees may not be returning home for a long time—perhaps never—and that the response to the refugee crisis ought to be re-imagined to meet refugees' long-term needs. Global recognition of the realities of extended forced displacement must occur in order to support the position that refugees need to be economically productive to survive and provide much-needed benefits to host communities.*

**The right to work not only will allow refugees the opportunity to become self-sufficient, but also rebuild their dignity, an often-cited casualty of displacement and a human right.**

The humanitarian organizations tasked with assisting refugees through transition, like any public service organization, need to put refugees at the center of the response. The lack of refugee perspective integrated into the response system unfortunately reflects a broader narrative about refugees which takes away their agency and renders them as incapable and helpless victims. As global citizens with global human rights, the humanitarian sector has a duty to treat refugees as citizens and customers, rather than as passive beneficiaries of charitable giving. This not only offers dignity and respects refugees' rights, but like in any other area of sustainable development, makes interventions more responsive, relevant, and effective, and gives refugees back the agency lost in displacement.

Paramount to this is building an understanding of the value that refugees can bring to host economies, communities, and cultures and embarking on a process of integration that will help governments change the dynamic that pits host communities against the displaced. Nowhere is this more true than in wealthy countries whose aging populations mean that they need the young, skilled labor that refugees can provide. While this may be an uphill battle given current populist and nativist sentiment in Western countries and increasingly complex relationships with information and the media, it is one that must be undertaken.

Once the narrative shifts around refugees and their abilities, and they are treated as valuable, they will in turn create value and give back to the communities where they now live. ■

# Amplifying the Voices of Refugees

An Interview with Sana Mustafa



Author:  
**Najat Vallaud-Belkacem**  
CEO Global Affairs at Ipsos



**Sana Mustafa**, Founder of Sana Mustafa Consulting and the Network for Refugee Voices, is a public speaker and storyteller who uses her personal experience of fleeing Syria to put a human face to the global refugee crisis and mobilize support.

**Refugees are a very current and controversial topic these days around the world, from family separation in the US, to the Syria crisis, and Burmese entering Bangladesh. Do you feel like there is a connection between those that make refugee policy and the people that are affected by it?**

No, there isn't, and that is the ultimate goal of the Network for Refugee Voices (NRV) and the Global Refugee-Led Network, of which NRV is a launching member, to make sure that we as refugees are included in conversations in a meaningful way, and that there isn't any a discussion or project about the people without the people.

## **How are you doing this?**

We are creating regional chapters of the network where people in each region come together and try to work on the same goals: meaningful inclusion, participation, and self-representation at the local, regional, and global levels. And then channel this to a global level.

Our members get really involved with their municipalities, their town councils, and with their countries or governments on a national level, but we also do a lot of work with the UN. For instance, we were the only representatives of refugees at the meetings for the Global Compact on Refugees, and because of our work, a paragraph on refugee self-representation and participation was included in the Compact. Can you believe this was the first time in history such documents were explicit about refugee participation?

## **That is a great success! What do you see as the next goal for the network?**

To make sure that inclusion is meaningful. There is a tendency now towards symbolic inclusion. Some say they have inclusion because there is a refugee on the panel or on the board. But this is not meaningful inclusion. Meaningful inclusion is when you allow refugees to contribute and lead decision-making, not when refugees contribute, you listen, and you make a decision. You can't work on refugees if your team is not meaningfully inclusive of refugees: it's really as simple as this.

It is surprising how much resentment there is about including refugees in these conversations. Governments and NGOs feel threatened because they are the people who have been monopolizing the conversation for 50 years now, since the UN was created, and there is a certain way things have always been done. But, we don't want to exclude these groups, we want to work with them and if we're all involved, it will be productive for everyone. At the end of the day, we see it as a win-win.

My perspective is that there are no beneficiaries anymore, it's a transaction. If an NGO is doing work for refugees, they are getting money based on that, they are getting salaries, they are getting self-fulfillment, and in return refugees are getting specific goods or services. It is a partnership.



## Why do you think people in Europe and the US have negative views about refugees?

In the US, I would say it's because first and foremost, the geographical distance. I think it really plays a role. People just tend to not travel as much or to learn about people on the other side of the world. The only things they know are what the media portrays.

Unfortunately, the mainstream media in the US and in Europe is funded by people who have specific agendas, and so of course, that shapes the public opinion. They are really focused on the stereotypical image of people from the Global South and from the Middle East, portraying people as dangerous, as terrorists, even as inhuman, I would say. There is an internalized stereotype about people from that part of the world that, despite if those very people are now in danger, others have already constructed an image and an understanding about them that makes them feel threatened.

At the end of the day, the issue is a lack of diversity. In the media, in the work-space, in the professional space, even in academia.

## Would you say this lack of diversity is contributing to an empathy gap?

Yes. When you don't see those people, when you don't have human interaction with them, how would you know who they are?

You can't work on refugees if your team is not meaningfully inclusive of refugees: it's really as simple as this.



This is why one of the focus areas of my work is storytelling, to put a human face on those displaced populations. You would be surprised how many people who disagree politically, once they see you—once they know that this is your story and you are the face in front of them—they cannot dehumanize you. There's something about the human connection that breaks a lot of barriers.

I don't see much of this here in the States. In Europe, the level of dehumanizing is lower than in the US. Europeans have been able to interact with displaced populations, whereas in the US there are far fewer displaced people, so there is a lack of a human connection.

## What do you think we can do to address this empathy gap?

Inclusion and interaction, creating actions between the two groups to bring them together. It's as simple and obvious as it sounds, but it doesn't happen.

I think the solution is for all policies and projects to have a more human-centered design thinking approach, where all people at the table are equal. When you put all people on the same level, and you make everyone feel that they have something important to contribute and try to figure out this solution for this problem together, it breaks down a lot of barriers between the different groups, but also makes everyone feel ownership and agency over the solution.

In my personal life, I've been doing a lot of storytelling and public speaking. Just telling it as it is. I think there are two stories out there: either idealizing refugees or demonizing refugees. Refugees are either super successful and they are great for our country, or they are terrorists. I think both are untrue and unfair.

The story should be that people are humans. These people are humans like all of us. They are another population. There are good people. There are bad people. There are successful people. There are people who are trying to figure it out.

**Many governments are very hostile on this issue now. Do you think there is a role for the private sector to play?**

Yes. I always encourage the private sector to use their power. They have so much influence, and so much incentive to work with governments, whether this is in host countries like Jordan, Turkey, Uganda, or Bangladesh or in the countries where the business is based in Europe or US.

**Can you give an example of how this could work?**

Sure. There's a lot of people who work on hiring refugees, so then I say, okay well, you create let's say 100 job slots for refugees, but there are no work permits. Businesses have to get political. They have to advocate and work with the government to provide

**Refugees are human like all of us. There are good people, there are bad people, there are people that are trying to figure it out.**



more work permits. Because if you create 100 jobs and people do not have the right to work legally, then it's useless.

There's also the question of impact. Is the impact of these initiatives meaningful? We hear a lot—we employed 1,000 refugees or we provided assistance to 1,000 refugees to get jobs—but there's not much actual research done or information about the real impact of services that are provided. Are they actually changing people's lives or just keeping them stuck where they are barely surviving?

Some companies don't want to get involved in refugee issues because they fear the backlash of taking a stand.

Yeah, we encounter this a lot and I tell them, do not frame it as taking a stand, do not frame it as getting involved with refugees. It's really as simple as that. Target refugees alongside the host populations in and frame it in a way that is inclusive of the people who may feel resentment. This is a very simple idea, but then when it comes to implementing it, it's not always as easy.

**Thank you for speaking with me today.**

I'm always glad to talk about these issues. It's important. If we don't talk about it, how will we learn about it? ■

# Gender Norms and Displacement

The Case of Syrian Refugees



Author:  
**Gabriella Nassif**  
Researcher and project manager with  
The Arab Institute for Women, Beirut



Author:  
**Kaitlin Love**  
Director at Ipsos in Washington, DC



Syrian women and children in a refugee camp, Suruc, Turkey.  
Photo by RadekProcyk

The Syrian crisis has had significant consequences for women and girls. By some estimates, nearly 80% of all Syrian refugees are women and children, and close to one million Syrian women and girls live as refugees in neighboring countries. Displacement often exacerbates pre-existing gender-specific vulnerabilities, whether because of the breakdown of law and order, limited access to resources, or the separation of families and kin structures. However, paradoxically, many Syrian women and girls are also experiencing empowerment alongside increased vulnerability.

Nowhere are the increased risks for women and girls in displacement more impactful than in the case of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). From the sexual assault of women and girls as a punishment for political opposition, to higher incidences of child marriage, the sexual exploitation of vulnerable women and girls seeking assistance or access to key services, and increased domestic violence, SGBV is one of the primary risks affecting female Syrian refugees.

SGBV is closely linked to social, cultural, and economic disempowerment, and in all cases, social stigma and conservative gender norms across the region contribute to generally low reporting rates. This is exacerbated by complex dynamics between Syrian refugees and host populations, which often leave Syrian women and girls feeling like second-class citizens.

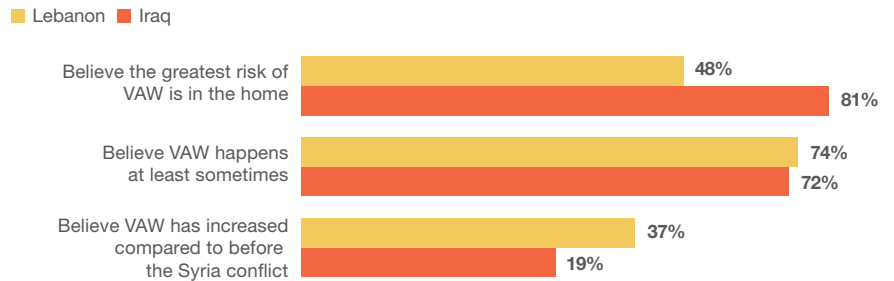
Despite the perceived increases in SGBV and violence against women, many Syrian women and girls have taken on new and larger roles both within and outside of the household.

In cases where men are not present or not capable of taking on traditionally male head of household roles, Syrian women and girls have been venturing outside of the household in search of better livelihoods, education, health services, and humanitarian aid. In a recent Ipsos study, 83% of Syrian women in Lebanon and 57% of Syrian women in Iraq said they have a larger role in their household when compared to before the Syria crisis.

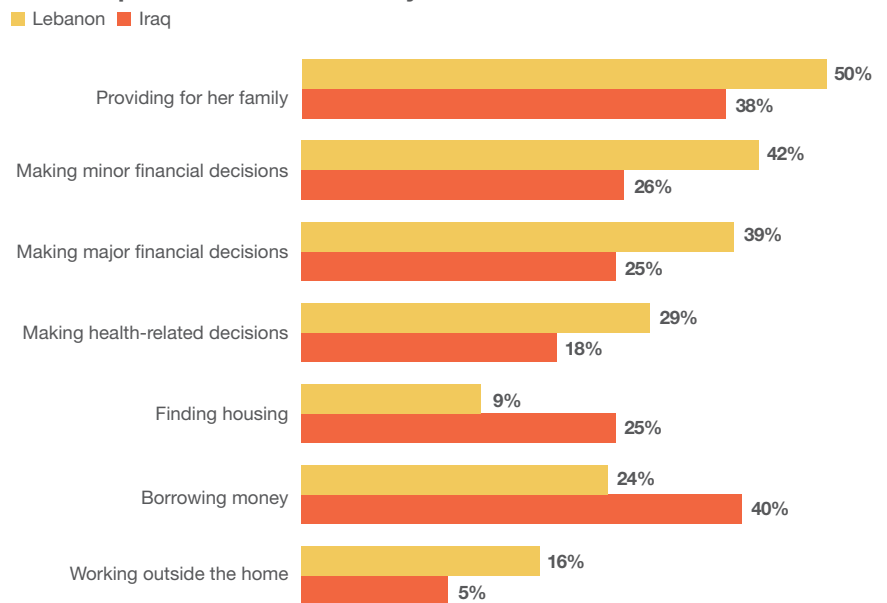
The ability to contribute to the household in substantive ways leaves many women feeling empowered, and working outside the home has meant increased mobility and independence. Programming that provides targeted support for women and girls alongside broader community-based programming facilitates and provides support for these changes. Though they might be temporary, such pressures on traditional gender roles should not be discounted, and might ultimately contribute to long-term shifts.

**“Once we came to Lebanon, Syrian women realized that women could be more active in society, make important decisions, work, and be financially independent. Since the Syria crisis, women have left their comfort zones, taken steps forward, and become active members of society. We no longer rely on anyone for help.”** – 48-year-old Syrian woman living in Beirut, Lebanon

### Violence against Syrian Women (VAW) in Host Countries



### New Responsibilities Since the Syria Crisis



While in some cases this change in gender dynamics has led to wider acceptance of women and girls as economic contributors, the movement of women and girls into the historically-male-dominated public sphere can also create tensions, and in some cases, result in increased risks. Challenges to traditional masculinity—which sees men as the main economic providers—can result in

household tension that in some instances leads to surges in domestic violence and/or restrictions on women’s movement.

Even where women find support from their immediate families, they might meet resistance in the streets, or at their new workplaces. This perceived threat for women who enter the public sphere, whether at the hands of the

host community or fellow refugees, often curbs the independent movement of women and girls, and influences many to choose not to work.

**“In Syria women were better off, and we used to feel safe walking in the street. Nobody used to look at us, but here in Erbil they give us strange looks, and I feel unsafe.”** – 27-year-old Syrian woman living in Erbil, Iraq

Despite perceived increases in empowerment during displacement, additional programming that supports women’s economic empowerment is needed to ensure that women and girls can keep these gains. New mobility and independence is often seen as temporary: many communities share the belief that their displacement will eventually end, returning them back to their “normal” lives, which threatens the gender empowerment advances that were made during displacement.

Additionally, changes in gender roles that practitioners view as empowering might not be interpreted as such within refugee communities. Many women see these shifts as the forceful result of their displacement, driven by need alone, and not something that they necessarily wanted. Many Syrian women feel that their value is tied to their household work, especially caring for children, and in displacement, where they are now forced to work, they are unable to do this job well.

**“Almost everything has changed. In Syria, I wasn’t responsible for my kids and their needs alone. My family and relatives were around me. Now,**

**In cases where men are not present or not capable of taking on traditionally male head of household roles, Syrian women and girls have been venturing outside of the household in search of better livelihoods, education, health services, and humanitarian aid.**

**I’m responsible for everything, I’m the main provider for my kids. This causes me huge mental stress.”** – 47-year-old Syrian woman living in Mafraq, Jordan

Attention to the needs of refugee women and girls is crucial not only for immediate survival, but for long-term social and economic well-being of communities more broadly. As humanitarian

programming continues to develop gender-sensitive programming, practitioners should pay close attention to impacts and outcomes of such programming. Conceptions of empowerment vary, and without understanding women’s own expectations and desires, humanitarian programming risks reinforcing embedded inequalities and socioeconomic hierarchies instead of overcoming them. ■

# Urban Refuge

How the City of LA is Building Inclusive Communities



Author:  
**Dr. Linda Lopez**  
Chief of the Los Angeles  
Office of Immigrant Affairs



Author:  
**Samer Saliba**  
Urban Technical Advisor with  
the International Rescue Committee



Men walking in May Day March, Los Angeles, USA.  
Photo: anouchka/iStock

**As we continue to face the humanitarian crisis of our lifetime, US political leadership has reduced by three-quarters the number of refugees being allowed into the United States. As a result, and out of necessity, cities instead are leading the way in developing solutions to refugee resettlement.**

The global refugee crisis and urbanization are major global trends with no immediate signs of slowing. In fact, nearly 60% of refugees worldwide live in

cities, not in camps. This is the reality cities are facing each and every day. In response, they are developing innovative policies and programs.

A new report<sup>1</sup> from the International Rescue Committee (IRC), which highlights refugee integration efforts in over 20 cities across four continents, shows the immense benefit of refugee integration to not only individuals but the communities they now call home. A key finding from the report: nearly half of cities participating in refugee resettlement and

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.rescue.org/cities>

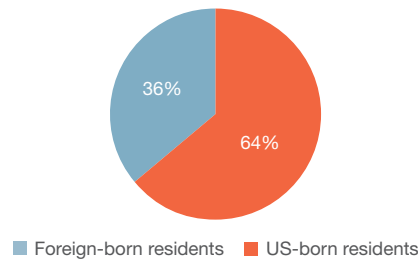
integration programs cited positive benefits, including an expanded local economy and a more diverse workforce, as a result of these new residents.

These benefits are a snapshot of the immense, well-documented value that refugees bring to the private sector, small businesses, communities, and national economies. Refugees are 50% more likely to become entrepreneurs<sup>2</sup> than American citizens who were born in the US, and a federal government study shows that refugees have generated \$63 billion in net revenue<sup>3</sup> over the past decade. Employers report that hiring refugees increases company efficiency, improves management practices, widens applicant pools, and reduces turnover rates.<sup>4</sup>

In Los Angeles specifically, the result has been revitalized communities, reinvigorated economies, and a stronger, more diverse workforce. Los Angeles' successful integration efforts stem from its long history of welcoming diverse and immigrant populations. Approximately 40% of the population is foreign-born and more than 62% of the population are immigrants or the children of immigrants. In the Los Angeles metropolitan area, immigrants are entrepreneurs and start businesses that generate job growth, making up almost two-thirds of all "Main Street" business owners.<sup>5</sup>

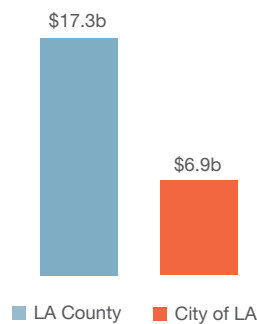
A recent study (2014)<sup>6</sup> by the New American Economy and in partnership with Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce illustrates the demographic and economic shifts of "New Americans"

**(Figure 1) Contributions to LA County GDP, 2014**



for the city and the region as a whole. In fact, in 2014, foreign-born residents contributed roughly \$233 billion to Los Angeles County's GDP, making up nearly 40% (see Figure 1), in addition to making great contributions through federal taxes to both Los Angeles County and the City of Los Angeles (see Figure 2). The contributions of immigrants to the local economy are also evident in the entrepreneurial spirit that immigrants bring to specific industries including construction, transportation, services, and retail.

**(Figure 2) Federal Taxes Paid by Foreign-Born Residents, 2014 (in billions, USD)**



Nearly half of cities participating in refugee resettlement and integration programs cited positive benefits including an expanded local economy and a more diverse workforce.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/NAE\\_Refugees\\_V5.pdf](http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/NAE_Refugees_V5.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/09/19/us/politics/document-Refugee-Report.html?smid=tw-share>

<sup>4</sup> <http://fiscalpolicy.org/refugees-as-employees-good-retention-strong-recruitment>

<sup>5</sup> "Bringing Vitality to Main Street: How Immigrants Small Businesses Help Local Economies Grow." American's Society and Council on the Americas, and Fiscal Policy Institute (2015).

<sup>6</sup> "New Americans in Los Angeles: A Snapshot of the Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Los Angeles County and the City of Los Angeles." New American Economy report



**Refugees represent a population with immense potential. Recognizing this, cities are doing everything in their power to unleash it, creating greater economic opportunity for all and building stronger, more inclusive communities.**

Los Angeles is also leading the way in creating opportunities for immigrants, including refugees, to thrive by facilitating access to financial and citizenship services. For example, the city has created a partnership with organizations that serve immigrants and refugees to provide one-on-one training and financial education so that immigrants and refugees better understand their finances and save money. The 'Cities for Citizenship' program, of which the IRC is a partner, enables immigrants to receive support as they start their citizenship applications and participate in workshops on preparing for the citizenship test. Local city libraries have been leveraged to provide this training and education for individuals who are entering

the process of naturalization, and it is a model that has been replicated in other cities across America.

Cities across the globe are seeing similar benefits to the City of Los Angeles. In Bristol, UK, refugees are helping the city become more diverse through the creation of educational cross-cultural activities. In one Istanbul neighborhood, refugees have created over 200 new businesses, bringing economic vitality that was once absent. And in São Paulo, the municipality credits refugees for strengthening the city's culture of civic engagement through their participation in the city's Municipal Council for Immigrants. Brazil's only such council, it informs refugees about the adaptation and creation of policies that promote

greater and more effective integration efforts, specifically around access to city services.

To mayors across the United States and around the world, refugees represent a population with immense potential. Recognizing this potential, cities are doing all in their power to unleash it, creating greater economic opportunity for all and building stronger, more inclusive communities. The federal government in the United States and national governments across the globe should take note of the actions cities are taking and the benefits they're already seeing. Cities like Los Angeles are proof that refugees build stronger, more vibrant communities. Investing in them benefits us all. ■



# Refugee Investing

How Private Capital Can Unlock Opportunity for Refugees



Author:  
**John Kluge**  
Founder and managing director of  
the Refugee Investment Network



Author:  
**Timothy W. Docking**  
Managing Director of the Refugee  
Investment Network



Refugees can gain self-reliance through entrepreneurship.  
Photo: Alexis Felder/RefugePoint

**You see it on the news almost every day: the global refugee crisis is growing, as more people find themselves displaced from their home communities. However, in the typical media focus on the tragedy and struggle these people experience, hopeful stories are often overlooked. A closer look uncovers the passion, ingenuity, and entrepreneurial spirit of refugees.**

A walk through a refugee camp in Syria, for example, reveals thriving enterprises run by refugees:<sup>1</sup> restaurants, clothing stores, and barbershops. Perhaps even more significantly, three-quarters of refugees live in urban settings,<sup>2</sup> where they are building self-sufficiency through starting vibrant and successful businesses that support not only their families but also the economies of their host communities.

<sup>1</sup> <https://medium.com/athenslivegr/in-a-refugee-camp-entrepreneurship-thrives-in-isobox-containers-115d6e9833e9>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rescue.org/press-release/sector-system-reform-and-renewal-humanitarian-aid>

However, as any entrepreneur knows, starting and scaling a business requires investment—something which refugees often lack access to. That is why we started the Refugee Investment Network (RIN),<sup>3</sup> which aims to forge new pathways for investment and sustainable jobs creation among forcibly displaced people.

Achieving our goals will require the entire private sector to step up; from impact investors, who can apply our refugee lens to their portfolio, to foundations and corporations, who can help incentivize and de-risk investment in refugee markets.

Refugees hold incredible potential, and there is a considerable evidence base that demonstrates this. Through in-depth research and conversations with hundreds of entrepreneurs, impact and institutional investors, refugees, humanitarians, finance and business professionals, philanthropies, and development and government leaders, the RIN established the current landscape of refugee investing in the recently released report, “Paradigm shift: how investment can unlock the potential of refugees,”<sup>4</sup> our first step towards mobilizing investment capital for refugee entrepreneurs.

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**Refugees aren't a charity case—these are individuals who have tremendous value to add to the world and we want to help create more of that awareness.**

**Chris Chancey,**  
*Refugee Investor, Founder & CEO of Amplio Recruiting*

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The report shows the three core characteristics of refugees that highlight their economic potential in ways that stand the popular narrative surrounding refugees — as societal burdens — on its head:

**1. Refugees tend to be extraordinarily entrepreneurial.**

In the United States, for example, there are over 180,000 refugee-led or founded businesses employing millions of Americans. Indeed, nearly half of Fortune 500 enterprises were started by first or second-generation Americans, many of whom were refugees. Data show that rates of entrepreneurship among refugees are higher than both general immigrants or native-born U.S. citizens. Their high rates of entrepreneurship, grit, and unyielding resilience make them what we call Extreme Entrepreneurs. Despite often having a lack of credit history and tangible assets, along with challenges stemming from anti-immigrant biases, underinvestment, and navigating complicated legal and tax policies, refugee entrepreneurs still find their way.

First Syrian Exporters Group, a Turkish garments manufacturer, is one example of an enterprise on the cusp of expansion, but in need of additional investment. Not only is the consortium composed of Syrian refugee-owned businesses, but it also employs more than 500 Syrian refugees. If given the right opportunities, First Syrian Exporters Group could employ even more refugees and have a broader impact on refugees and the host communities in which they live. And the businesses that

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.refugeinvestments.org/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b280d6a620b85faae73af1a/v/5b449824fa51a6514e2b0177/1542736284883/RIN+Investor+Report-Paradigm+Shift-final-2.pdf>

are members of this group aren't anomalies—many other refugee-owned businesses are building up their operations but seeking funding that will allow them to scale up their work.

## 2. Refugees are employable.

Just like non-refugees, not every refugee strives to be an entrepreneur, and data show that refugees are strong and exceptionally loyal employees. Allowing refugees to work encourages them to invest and integrate into their new communities, thus driving economic progress and development for all. Once given the opportunity to work, refugee employees show lower rates of turnover than non-refugees in the manufacturing, healthcare, meatpacking, hospitality, construction, commercial laundry, and staffing industries, which means more capital for businesses to re-invest in their operations or increased dividend payouts.

## 3. Refugees are credit worthy.

When given access to loans to grow their businesses, refugees have proven they're a safe bet. Over the past year and a half, Kiva has distributed more than \$9 million in loans to over 8,000 displaced entrepreneurs worldwide.<sup>5</sup> While some lenders are cautious about such loans due to perceived high risk with displaced peoples, Kiva's experience proves otherwise. The average repayment rates were 98.86% among refugee entrepreneurs versus 96.83% among host country entrepreneurs.

**I know that many Syrian refugees are highly educated and they have access to the internet. This is where this idea for WorkAround came from.**

*Wafaa Arbash,  
Syrian Entrepreneur,  
Founder & CEO, Workaround*



It's clear that refugees have a lot to offer—but oftentimes, investors do not know how to interact with and invest in them. We developed the “refugee lens” to help investors understand the types of investments in refugees that are available. The lens considers ownership, leadership, and an enterprise's potential for change within the “refugee community,” which includes refugees and forcibly displaced people, as well as their hosts. It also considers a venture's ability to improve humanitarian response capacity, as well as funds and lending instruments. Investors can use the lens both to examine and weigh prospective deals and to assess whether their past investments qualify as refugee investments.

With these kinds of investments, refugees can move beyond the crises and traumas of their past and restart their lives. However, they still face daunting challenges, including restrictive work policies in host countries and perceived high risks by employers and investors. However, the facts show that these perceptions and biases are both incorrect and self-defeating.

It's time to change the narrative surrounding refugees. By showing that refugee employees are a smart and sound investment for employers, and by bridging the gap between investors and refugee entrepreneurs, we hope to help build a world where the value and opportunity surrounding refugees is universally recognized so that they receive the freedoms that allow them to contribute to both their communities and their own self-reliance. ■

<sup>5</sup> <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b280d6a620b85faae73af1a/1/5bf449824fa51a6514e2b017/1542736284883/RIN+Investor+Report-Paradigm+Shift-final-2.pdf>

# Moving from Crisis Response to Building Refugee Resilience



Author:  
**Kellie C. Leeson**  
Initiative Lead for the Refugee  
Self-Reliance Initiative



A Yazidi man sells fruits and vegetables, Sharya IDP camp near Dohuk, Iraq. Photo: Joel Carillet

**Refugee assistance was established as a humanitarian intervention to provide a lifeline to people temporarily seeking refuge. Organizations are now able to quickly deploy high-quality responses such as safe drinking water, nutritious food and provisional shelter to refugees in urgent need throughout the world. This is a major achievement, but the realities of contemporary refugee experiences illustrate that immediate assistance is only the first of many challenges.**

We now know that people are in refuge for ever-longer periods of time, some estimates suggest up to 26 years.<sup>1</sup> The common perception is of a refugee living in a camp, but the reality is that over half of the displaced have settled in host country cities.<sup>1</sup> Responses to the myriad refugee crises need to grow from addressing immediate survival needs, ensuring safety, and protection, towards providing refugees the opportunity to rebuild their lives, in short-term or permanent homes.

In recent years fewer than 3% of refugees worldwide have been able to take advantage of any long-term solution<sup>3</sup> such as returning to their home country,

legally integrating into their host country, or resettling to a third country. In addition, we have seen a steady reduction of the foundational rights outlined in the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, such as a refugee's right to not only seek asylum but also to pursue gainful wage and self-employment in countries of asylum. In a recent response, nations have come together to negotiate the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), a global agreement focused on cooperation and responsibility-sharing that includes objectives to enhance refugee self-reliance. It is within this complicated reality that the Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative (RSRI) was born.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.state.gov/j/prm/policyissues/issues/protracted/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/5b27be547>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/06/19/when-refugee-displacement-drags-on-is-self-reliance-the-answer/>

This initiative is a system-wide effort to transform humanitarian responses to go beyond emergency response and explicitly support opportunities for refugees to meet their own basic needs and plan for their futures, something that refugees themselves tell us they want.<sup>4</sup> The RSRI, formally launched in September 2018,<sup>5</sup> is a joint effort by a coalition of organizations, government agencies, foundations, research institutes, and other partners<sup>6</sup> focused on promoting opportunities for refugees to become self-reliant. This member-driven initiative focuses on three mutually-reinforcing pillars: measurement, programming, and advocacy.

Currently, there is little data to show whether refugees are reaching self-reliance. While the humanitarian world has invested in monitoring mechanisms for emergency response services, few tools exist to measure long-term economic or social success among refugees. As such, the RSRI has collaboratively developed a tool to measure this outcome and begun creating an evidence base of successful self-reliance programming and policies. This initiative will change how success is defined, pivoting from monitoring project outputs to measuring refugee outcomes and direct resources where they are most needed. Common indicators could also assist in the monitoring of the recently adopted Global Compact on Refugees.

The RSRI also aims to identify the types of interventions, program models, and approaches that help to facilitate self-reliance. This may include (re)designing aid programs to more effectively support ho-

## Few tools exist to measure long-term economic or social success among refugees.

listic refugee outcomes, increasing the availability of safe and dignified income-generating opportunities, and creating multi-sector and multi-year funding tools. As a community, the RSRI will create a learning agenda to understand the essential ingredients of effective programs that lead to self-reliance, share knowledge, encourage peer exchanges, and serve as a clearing house to expand tried and tested successful programs.

Lastly, the RSRI promotes an environment in which refugees and host communities can thrive. For refugees to become self-reliant, they will need enabling environments that allow them to move freely, to seek jobs, and to have access to labor markets, and basic social services. Support for refugees must simultaneously include strategies that mutually benefit the hosting communities and the refugees they host.

The RSRI intends to fill the gap between the high-level policy commitments with pragmatic self-reliance programs and measures. The RSRI's "Ten Challenges to Build Better Lives Now"<sup>7</sup> document concisely outlines the changes that are needed and what parties from all sectors of society can do to contribute, starting with a commitment to assist refugees to achieve self-reliance. New actors such as the philanthropic and private sector can use their global reach to support hosting nations to strengthen their economies while encouraging the inclusion of refugees in social and economic life. At the same time, governments can reduce barriers for refugees to participate in the market, while the media can promote positive views of refugees and the contributions they make.

The RSRI is a growing community and with the launch of this effort, there is now a place to come together to contribute, share and expand the global conversation on self-reliance. Refugees should not have to wait to lead the lives they want to live, and the RSRI seeks to help them to achieve this. ■

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/sites/default/files/resources/2017/Jul/COMMUNITY\\_CONSULTATIONS\\_ON\\_HUMANITARIAN\\_AID\\_-\\_OVERALL\\_FINDINGS.pdf](https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/sites/default/files/resources/2017/Jul/COMMUNITY_CONSULTATIONS_ON_HUMANITARIAN_AID_-_OVERALL_FINDINGS.pdf); <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/knowledge/society/un-women-reports-2018>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.refugeeselfreliance.org/betterlivesnow/>

<sup>6</sup> Asylum Access, Christian Aid UK, Danish Refugee Council, HAIS, the IKEA Foundation, International Rescue Committee, the Joint IDP Profiling Service, Mercy Corps, Oxford Refugee Studies Centre, RefugeePoint, Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat, Samuel Hall, Save the Children, Trickle Up, UNHCR, US State Department/PRM, the West Asia and North Africa Institute, and the Women's Refugee Commission.

<sup>7</sup> <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b96ee1f36099b138a86b3d9/t/5b9a8b5f2b6a288509fa4a4a/1536854879433/The+Refugee+Self-Reliance+Initiative+Challenge+Document.pdf>

# How Businesses Can Address the Global Refugee Crisis



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Tent Partnership for Refugees



Refugees gather to support one another.  
Photos: Tent Partnership for Refugees

The global refugee population is at an all-time high and continues to grow. The majority of refugees come from countries with protracted crises like Afghanistan and Somalia, which are unlikely to see resolution in the near future. Given the scope of the modern refugee crisis, traditional actors such as governments, multi-lateral organizations, and NGOs are struggling to address the heightened demand. In this context, it is critical that the business community rise to this challenge and help refugees build better lives.

This is the founding belief of the Tent Partnership for Refugees (Tent),<sup>1</sup> a non-profit launched by Hamdi Ulukaya, the founder, Chairman, and CEO of yogurt brand Chobani. When Ulukaya opened Chobani's first factory in upstate New York, he made a concerted effort to hire refugees alongside other members of the local community. As the refugee crisis worsened in recent years, Hamdi felt like there was so much more that the business community could be doing—and he created Tent to fill that gap.

Tent works closely with companies to help them identify and understand concrete opportunities to help refugees. We encourage and welcome efforts to support refugees around the world, but we have a particular focus on middle- and low-income countries, like Turkey and Ethiopia, that host the vast majority—nearly 90%—of the global refugee population.

<sup>1</sup> <http://tent.org/>

There are over 100 companies in the Tent Partnership today, including Ipsos, Airbnb, and Starbucks, making efforts to support refugees across 34 countries. Beyond helping companies design and implement commitments to help refugees, Tent also commissions research that makes the case for businesses to take action, connects businesses to NGOs and implementing organizations, and brings our member companies together to learn from one another.

We encourage companies to focus on how they can leverage their core business to help refugees. Financial contributions or in-kind donations are valuable for immediate humanitarian assistance but sustainable, long-term solutions for refugees' diverse needs are more crucial than ever. Over half of the global refugee population will likely remain displaced for 20 years or more. The biggest opportunity for businesses—and refugees' most significant need—is helping them integrate into economies where they live.

Companies can engage refugees as employees, producers, entrepreneurs, and customers—and ultimately, support and enable refugees to realize their economic potential and make meaningful contributions to their host communities. By including refugees in their central business activities, they can achieve social impact, gain reputational benefits, and build brand loyalty. However, investing in refugee integration programs is not just a social good, it can also be a financially beneficial corporate strategy.

It is critical that the business community rise to this challenge and help refugees build better lives.

### Businesses can play a valuable role in three key areas:

**Hiring and/or Sourcing:** Companies can hire refugees directly into their workforce or integrate them into their supply chain. Businesses often have to make some adjustments and modest investments up front to bring refugees into the workforce, but those investments quickly yield dividends. Refugees are highly motivated and loyal employees, and research shows

that they have higher retention rates than non-refugee employees.<sup>1</sup> Ipsos, as part of their membership in Tent, is hiring 100 refugees over the next two years.

**Service Delivery:** Companies can tailor existing or new commercial goods and services to better reach refugee populations. There are specific areas, such as banking and telecommunications, where businesses can build their customer base by reducing barriers for refugees to use their products and services. For example, Tent member Mastercard is expanding its financial services to reach refugees and allow them to access and pay for services like electricity, Internet, and school fees.

**Supporting Refugee Entrepreneurs:** Companies, as well as investment firms, can improve refugee livelihoods and earn financial returns by investing in refugee-run enterprises or businesses that hire or source from refugees. Refugees have high rates of entrepreneurship. For example, in Turkey, Syrian refugees have started over 6,000 companies since 2011, creating more than 55,000 jobs. Generali, the Italian insurance company, has committed to helping refugees start 500 new businesses across Europe within five years.

We encourage businesses interested in engaging refugees to join the Tent Partnership and make an impact on this critical issue. Showing leadership on this refugee crisis is a win for refugees, host communities, and for business—and most importantly, it will help one of the greatest humanitarian crises in history. ■

<sup>1</sup> <http://tent.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://tent.org/resources/good-retention-strong-recruitment/>



# Information

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## About Ipsos

At Ipsos we are passionately curious about people, markets, brands and society. We deliver information and analysis that makes our complex world easier and faster to navigate and inspires our clients to make smarter decisions.

With a strong presence in 90 countries, Ipsos employs more than 18,000 people and conducts research programs in more than 100 countries.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is controlled and managed by research professionals.

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