



Economic Inclusion of Refugees and Host Communities in Rwanda

The challenge

Due to persistent political instability and numerous conflicts in Central Africa and the Great Lakes Region, Rwanda has been a destination for refugees for decades, mainly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and from Burundi. Many refugees have been living in Rwanda for several years and are unlikely to return to their countries of origin in the foreseeable future. Their socio-economic integration into Rwandan society is therefore crucial.

Although basic needs, including food, primary healthcare and access to schooling are met, further reaching services to strengthen refugees' economic empowerment are insufficient. These services include access to professional upgrading, support for business start-ups, entrepreneurship training, income-generating activities and promotion of employability. In addition, youth unemployment and underemployment are among Rwanda's main challenges. As a result, the economic inclusion of refugees and inhabitants of the host communities is often inadequate.

Our approach

The project "Economic Inclusion of Refugees and Host Communities" is jointly implemented by the Government of Rwanda and Germany, through the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. It is co-funded by the European Union (EU) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The objective is to improve the economic inclusion of refugees and host community members.

Project name	Economic Inclusion of Refugees and Host Communities
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and European Union (EU)
Project region	Rwanda
Lead executing agency	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
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The target group are young refugees and entrepreneurs from the Mahama, Mugombwa and Kigeme refugee camps, refugees from the recently closed Gihembe camp, urban refugees from Huye and Kigali and residents of the host districts Kirehe, Gisagara, Nyamagabe and Gicumbi.

The project is working towards achieving the following targets by 2024:

- 2,900 young women and men from the refugee camps and host communities have found employment or started a business;
- 200 new businesses have been created in the refugee camps and host districts;
- 250 existing businesses have increased their number of employees by 20%;
- 1,400 refugees are no longer dependent on material or financial support from UNHCR.



Left: Kalisa in his hairdressing salon in Gisagara district, which he opened after graduating from TVET training and where he employs Enock from Mugombwa refugee camp.

Right: Saving group members from Kigeme refugee camp

Page 2: Diane and Emmanuel during TVET training



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In order to reach these targets, the project applies an integrated approach to employment promotion, consisting of four interlinked areas of activity:

- (1) **Improving framework conditions** at national and local level to address barriers and enhance opportunities for economic inclusion;
- (2) **Promoting business development** through the provision of entrepreneurship trainings, access to finance for business start-ups and expansions;
- (3) **Professional upgrading** of young refugees and young women and men from the neighbouring communities through short-term vocational courses, and
- (4) **Psychosocial support** to foster conflict transformation and dialogue.

In all our measures, special attention is paid to ensuring equal access for refugees and host communities in line with the “Do No Harm” principle, as well as equal access for both women and men, while also involving vulnerable groups (people with disabilities and single parents). In our work with the target group we apply a trauma- and conflict-sensitive approach.

Our partners

To implement our strategy, we work very closely with two key partners: The Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). MINEMA is responsible for the political steering of legal and administrative affairs concerning refugees.

The Ministry receives advisory support from UNHCR, who is responsible for the protection of refugees, as well as the coordination of humanitarian aid for refugees in Rwanda. Within UNHCR, the project cooperates with the livelihood unit, which provides advisory support for the economic inclusion of refugees.

Some of our interventions

1,800 youth from the refugee camps and host communities have taken part in **short-term technical training courses** in trades such as culinary arts, tailoring and masonry, among others.

The TVET graduates receive further support on their way to (self-)employment through coaching and mentoring, savings group formation, as well as training on entrepreneurship, life skills and employability (“Get Set for Work”). 250 existing enterprises and cooperatives have completed **entrepreneurship and business trainings**.

In order to support business development of existing businesses and facilitate self-employment of TVET graduates, the project rolled-out **business competitions** in partnership with Digital Opportunity Trust (DOT) Rwanda and partnered with the Rwanda Rural Rehabilitation Initiative (RWARRI) to provide **toolkits and equipment** to selected entrepreneurs and TVET graduates.

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