

Background

As of 30 September 2020, Zambia hosted 92,598 persons of concern (PoC) including 63,739 Refugees, 4,819 Asylum seekers and 24,040 Others of Concern. In Zambia, PoCs are hosted in both urban and rural settings. Refugees in urban areas mainly reside in the capital Lusaka and Zambia's third largest city Ndola. Since their establishment, UNHCR has been working to support refugees and hosting population to access sustainable livelihoods through economic inclusion, market participation and agricultural value chain development.

49% of the population of concern in Zambia is an economically active cohort, aged 18 - 59%. A small percentage of this population, at approximately 30% across all locations, have, for the past two years, directly received the various agro and non-agro based livelihoods support from the Government, UNHCR in partnership with Caritas Czech Republic and other operational partners. The Government has maintained and integrated settlement approach and as such support targets both refugees and hosting population.



Meheba refugee settlement, Graduation Approach beneficiary shows of her Maize Harvest

In the rural areas of Mantapala in the North, Meheba, in the North West and Mayukwayukwa in the Western, mainstay economic activities are agriculture and petty trading. A significant number, 48% of the economically active refugees in the settlements, are currently engaged in farming as main source of livelihoods. Food production has mainly taken a value chain approach with activities ranging from input supply, cultivation, value addition and marketing.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, local settlement micro-economies had exhibited steady increase in small business startups and entrepreneurship promotion. However, the gains have seen an eminent reversal notable among them, a loss of income-generating opportunities, job loss, food insecurity at household level and depleted savings.

Livelihoods Strategic Objectives

- **Pillar I: Promote an improved policy and regulatory environment to optimize engagement of refugees in formal and informal economic sectors.**

Through jointly actions UNHCR and the office of the Commissioner of Refugees (CoR), to influence the policy formulation in line with the 2017 Refugee Act, towards an enabling environment for refugee inclusion such that refugees have access to decent work, self-employment and unrestricted movement.

- **Pillar II: Agriculture and trade sectors developed through market oriented and value chain-based solutions**

To promote and facilitate food security and increased incomes through implementation of sustained market-oriented and value chain-based solutions (agro and non -agro based and service and product based) through partnership with private, local social enterprises and public sector stakeholders.

- **Pillar III: To facilitate socio- economic inclusion into national and development programmes by Government and Development partners.**

To scale up and mainstream inclusion of refugees into specific national programmes such as the Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP) and other projects by Development actors(World Bank, WFP, FAO, ILO and UNDP). This aligns to the key tenets of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and its Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and particularly to the pledges made by the Government of the Republic of Zambia.

- **Pillar IV: Skills development**

Provide opportunities for refugees to acquire and build employable skills and knowledge through scholarships for technical and vocational training, establishment of training centres in each District/ Ward, enrolment for apprenticeship, internship, on job training, incubation, talent development and start -up support.

Recognize prior learning to enhance employability: trade testing and certification, of refugees with prior technical or craft skills, by the TEVETA. UNHCR to partner with the authority to conduct practical exams to these categories of the refugee population.

Collaborate and partner with TEVETA and the Ministry of Education to support secondary schools, in the settlements, to offer dual learning pathway which combines academic and vocational curricula. A pilot is already being undertaken in Mantapala and will be considered for the other locations.

Impact of COVID -19 pandemic

- **70 %** of the refugee population negatively impacted.
- **64%** of the population registered reduction of income, with the Lusaka urban population hardest hit.

To address the situation, households have reported adoption of several coping strategies where:

- **25%** have reported reducing their expenditure patterns.
- **40%** are diversifying their income sources and
- **20%** reported seeking support from family/ friends/ UNHCR and partners.

Under the leadership of the Government through the office of Commissioner of Refugees, UNHCR has collaborated with livelihoods project partner, Caritas Czech Republic (CCR) and other partners to respond and address the effect of the pandemic on the livelihoods of the population of concern and hosting communities.



Achievements

Continued support for agricultural production, partnership with private sector entities to support selected value chains and advocacy for refugee inclusion in national response plans have been heightened.

- Refugee settlements are being included in social economic surveys being conducted by the Government with the support of development actors; World Bank and UNDP. Findings from the assessments will inform national response plans led by the Government.
- Upto 200 skilled refugee tailors have been engaged in the production of 65,000 cloth face masks distributed to refugees and host communities, thus contributing to the response in preventing spread of the virus while gaining some income.
- For the first time, upto 200 refugees in the Meheba and Mayukwayukwa settlements have been included in the Government supported Farmer Input Support Programme (FISP). The selected farmers are to receive inputs for the farming season 2020/ 2021 with 75% contribution from the Government and 25% support from UNHCR.
- To further support recovery of lost livelihoods of PoCs, UNHCR will support, through a digitized cash transfer model, at least 500 most affected PoCs with start -up and working capital to regain and boost their respective enterprises and livelihood ventures impacted by the pandemic.
- UNHCR, in partnership with Trickle Up (TU) piloted the Graduation Approach supporting refugees and host community living in extreme poverty. To further the gains, UNHCR has steered the formation of the **Poverty alleviation Coalition (PAC) – Zambia** comprising of UNHCR and 4 NGOs; Caritas Czech Republic, World Vision -Zambia, Self Help Africa and Trickle Up. The coalition has developed a joint multi-year ‘*Graduation Approach*’ proposal targeting 6,000 households over 4-year period in all the locations. The proposal is a joint tool for resource mobilization.

“Graduation Approach is proven to be effective at supporting the extreme and chronic poor achieve sustained income, build self-esteem and support a pathway out of poverty. The approach effectively links humanitarian aid and development work through time-bound, sequenced interventions combining cash and asset transfers with training and mentoring and building towards access to sustainable employment and livelihoods. It presents a sustainable model that ‘empower’ and ‘include’ persons of concern, reinforcing UNHCR’s strategic directions. The graduation approach can be used as a way to increase integration of refugees with host-communities, leading to improved relations”.



Meheba settlement processed rice. UNHCR has supported establishment of a mini rice milling plant. The plant is under management and operation of a local cooperative.

- UNHCR has supported rice value addition in Meheba settlement by empowering a refugee run farmer cooperative with a mini processing plant. The cooperative has been linked to a market offtake actor with a monthly offer of 5 tonnes purchase. Over 50 rice farmers (refugees and others of concern) are set to benefit from this initiative.

- UNHCR has developed a shared value partnership with Forest Fruit Limited and Bee Sweet Honey limited to support honey production value chain in Meheba and Mantapala settlements. At least 150 bee farmers will benefit from capacity building, extension support and market offtake support to be provided by the companies.

- UNHCR is collaborating with Jewel of Africa in Lusaka to provide apprenticeship trainings to refugee youths in lapidary; a specialized skill in gemstones jewellery production. A first cohort of 5 refugees youths in Lusaka graduated after 4 months period. All related costs for the training was covered by the company.



A skill building partnership initiative between UNHCR and a Jewellery Company in Lusaka. Refugee youths at the Jewel of Africa workshop in Lusaka where they are building special skills in Lapidary.

- 20 youths based in Lusaka participated in a competition dubbed “young idea competition”, aimed at giving an opportunity to the youth to generate innovative and viable business ideas. 5 youths (2 Zambians and 3 Refugees) who emerged as winners were rewarded with cash grants each to help them invest in their new business ideas. UNHCR supports youth programmes that help the young minds to acquire skills and develop their full potential in exploring their environment to achieve their dreams.
- 75 other youth from the three rural refugee settlements of Mayukwayukwa, Mantapala and Meheba have been sponsored to undertake a number of skill development courses in respective government training institutions in their locations.



UNHCR protection Associate with the youth during the competition

Limitations

- Business slow down due to COVID - 19 and effects on the supply chain
- Limited access to business capital
- Lack of mechanized support to agricultural production
- Restrictive policy on refugee employment
- Inadequate funding leading to an increase in unmet needs
- Limited business innovation due to lack of connection to the National electricity grid in all three settlements.

Opportunities

- Opportunity to scale up inclusion by further developing the rice value chain in coordination with JICA.
- Opportunity to partner with private enterprise in supporting quality honey production in all three settlements.
- Opportunity to introduce renewable energy in the settlements to support small business enterprise.
- Opportunity to scale up food relief and cash assist program for COVID-19 relief through partnership with WFP.

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