

Development approaches in Forced Displacement Settings

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Group discussion between newly arrived refugee women, members of the women artisans' network, and UNHCR staff in Aghor. ©UNHCR/OMAR DOUKALI

Development approaches at UNHCR refers to the inclusion of refugees in national systems, through the actions and processes of ensuring that refugees have access to national services and opportunities, in accordance with international law and practice. This inclusion process recognizes that it is the State's primary responsibility to protect but takes a whole-of-society and community-based protection approach recognizing the critical role of civil society, development and private sector actors. The inclusion process emphasizes national law and policy frameworks but is anchored in international norms and standards to prevent promoting inclusion practices that discriminate or violate the very norms and standards that UNHCR is mandated to supervise and promote.

The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) has brought new impetus to support States in their protection obligations. It proposes transformative approaches to advance inclusion with larger coalitions of partners. While the Refugee Convention and other international legal obligations focus on the rights of refugees and States' responsibilities to protect, they do not specify how these responsibilities be shared.

Development partnerships have been instrumental in supporting host governments to advance the inclusion of refugees in national services and local economies. UNHCR has worked to foster and strengthen these collaborations, yielding significant progress in addressing forced displacement issues by establishing dedicated financing instruments and integrating forced displacement into development strategies, response plans, socio-economic data collection, and policy dialogues with governments. There is also growing recognition of the role that the private sector can play in supporting displaced and host communities to become self-reliant and access essential social and economic services.



[Data on
Mauritania
operation](#)

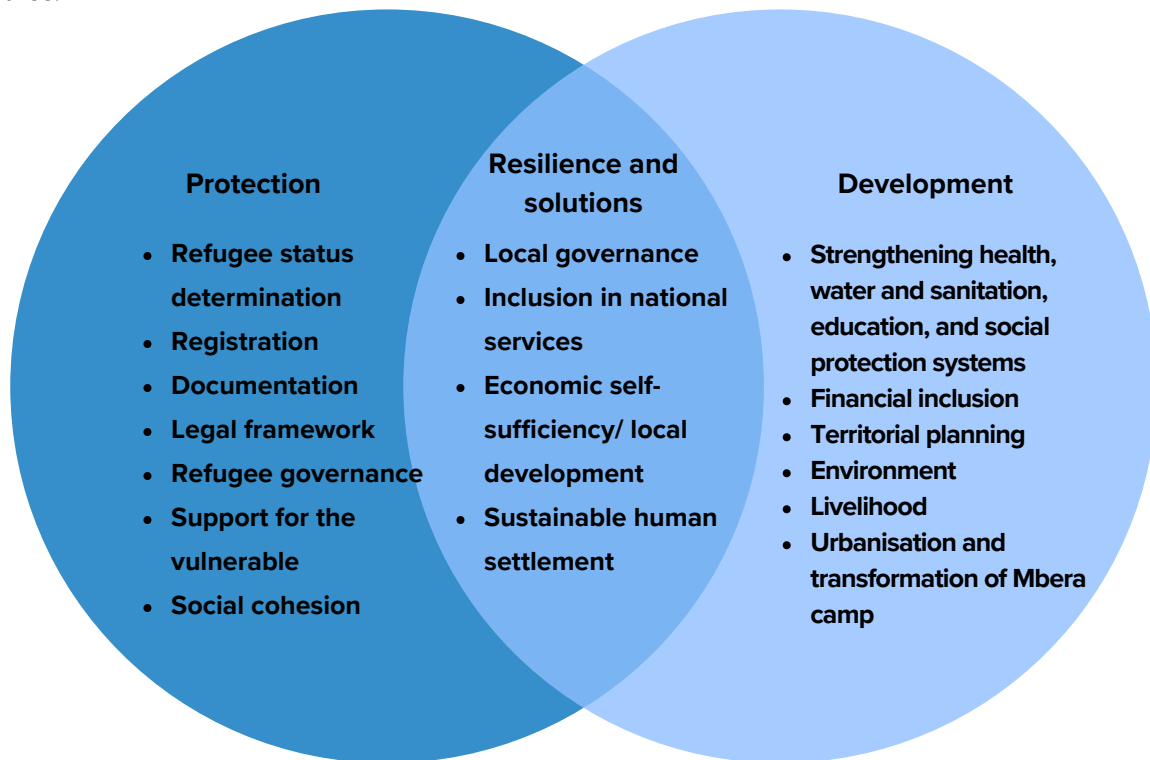
UNHCR's operational objectives in Mauritania

The refugee response in Mauritania focuses not only on core protection and humanitarian responses but also on several other priorities aimed at securing durable solutions for refugees.

The operational objectives of UNHCR Mauritania are:

1. **Protect refugees and respond to their humanitarian needs.**
2. **Include them in national systems, empower them to build their self-reliance and find long term solutions for their displacement.**

UNHCR in Mauritania has developed a multiyear strategy (2023-2026) articulated around protection and solutions for all forcibly displaced populations residing in Mauritania. The objectives and interventions are aligned with the Global Compact on Refugees, which represents the political will and ambition of the international community for strengthened cooperation and solidarity with refugees and affected host countries.



UNHCR's humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach in Mauritania

UNHCR leads, in accordance with the Refugee Coordination Model, the **humanitarian response to refugee needs** in Mauritania, including support for **emergency preparedness** in the Hodh Chargui region and along the southern border of Mauritania with Mali.

In November 2017, Mauritania became eligible for the World Bank IDA-18 Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities, enabling increased humanitarian and development cooperation and refugee inclusion in the areas of health care, social safety nets, water management and sanitation, local development and urbanization.

Additional support through the IDA-20 Sub-Window for Host Communities and Refugees is being considered. An example of the success of the inclusion approach, through World Bank funding, with the cost per consultation significantly decreasing, from 48 USD in 2018 with MSF to just 9 USD in 2023 with Inaya/UNHCR. This reduction in costs is also accompanied by a drastic improvement in service quality, demonstrating the impact of development.

During the [Global Refugee Forum](#) of December 2023, key pledges were made by the Government of Mauritania, namely on access to social protection, inclusion of refugees in national education systems and the transformation of Mbera refugee camp into a sustainable human settlement. The Government of Mauritania also renewed its 2019 pledges, relating to access to national health systems, the development of a legal framework, access to documentation and access to the labour market.

In this context, UNHCR plays a crucial role in supporting the efforts of the Government of Mauritania, sister UN agencies, development actors, donors, refugees themselves and other partners such as the Alliance Sahel, in full alignment with the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and the UN Integrated Vision for Joint Action in the Hodh Chargui region, to ensure **greater socio-economic inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in national service delivery systems**.

Moreover, as part of this objective and to facilitate a smooth **transition from a humanitarian refugee response to the gradual inclusion of refugees**, UNHCR works with partners to ensure transparency in the management of integrated development projects in areas hosting refugees.



Malian refugees in front of the pharmacy at the Health Center in Mbera refugee camp. ©UNHCR/OMAR DOUKALI

The aim of socio-economic inclusion for refugees and asylum seekers in national systems is to enhance self-reliance in situations of forced displacement. UNHCR works with partners to ensure:

- Access to quality social services is maintained for the most vulnerable.
- Support to accompany increased interventions of government actors and expansion of development activities including refugees.
- Investment in climate and environmental activities, supporting natural resources, development, plans for reforestation, access to water and sustainable sources of energy.
- Promotion of labour and economic development by anchoring in local development plans and larger investments.

Global Refugee Forum Pledges	Current Status	Next Steps	Final prospect
Documentation (protection)	<p>In the camp, more than 70% of refugees have a national identification number (NNI).</p> <p>Requesting an ID card can take up to 2 years. Out of camp, 14% of refugees have an NNI. No ID card has been delivered out of camp.</p>	Support governmental (ARNPTS) efforts to deliver NNI and ID cards	<p>100% of refugees with an NNI</p> <p>100% of refugees with an ID card</p>
	<p>Partial inclusion of refugees in national surveys and data systems.</p> <p>Refugees are part of the national census of the population.</p>	Refugees to be included in the EPCV, and plans to include in EHCVM, MICS and LFS.	National statistics, which includes refugees, are used to inform policy decisions.
Health (Development)	<p>Until mid-2020, health was 100% funded and implemented by humanitarians in the camp.</p> <p>In Mbera camp, transfer to the Ministry of Health happened mid-2020. Support from UNHCR continues (camp/urban refugees).</p> <p>A 2023-2027 roadmap on refugee inclusion in national health services was adopted by the Government of Mauritania.</p> <p>Health Center built by UNHCR in Bousteilla, Government to allocate health personnel in the center.</p> <p>Ticket moderator system put in place for extremely and moderately vulnerable refugees, and payment system for least vulnerable refugees.</p>	<p>The offer of specialized care in Hodh Chargui available for refugees and nationals is increased, including via telemedicine (ongoing).</p> <p>Refugees are included in the CNASS, the National Health Solidarity Fund on par with nationals.</p> <p>UNHCR support gradually decreases, and Ministry of Health investments gradually increase (ongoing).</p> <p>Construction of a branche for a purchasing center for medical drugs, equipment and consumables, and for the office of the health district management team (ongoing).</p> <p>Development of a UNHCR 2025-2030 Health Strategy.</p>	Refugees have access to sustainable health services provided by the Ministry of Health on par with nationals, and national systems have been strengthened
Economic self-reliance (Development)	<p>Limited self-reliance (approx. 5 % in the camp).</p> <p>Refugees face difficulties in accessing formal jobs.</p> <p>National employment services (Techghil) are accessible to refugees.</p> <p>Increasing availability of financial services and increasing use of bank accounts (but limited access to loans).</p> <p>Refugees have limited access to public vocational/technical training services.</p> <p>Large-scale training and (green) jobs programmes are launched in Hodh Chargui.</p>	<p>Refugees can access job creation programmes on par with nationals.</p> <p>Refugees can better access formal jobs through enhanced employers and national labour services awareness and the reduction of administrative barriers.</p>	<p>Refugees' self-reliance increases through access to effective and large-scale job creation programmes, training and employment services.</p> <p>Financial inclusion and employability of refugees is strengthened (removal of administrative hurdles, increased access to loans)</p>

Asylum Law (protection)	<p>Asylum law currently being drafted</p>	<p>The draft bill will be shared by the National Consultative Commission on refugees and people to protect with UNCHR for revision and inputs.</p> <p>Submit law to the assembly for adoption</p> <p>Implementation of the law.</p>	<p>Mauritania has an asylum law</p>
Social protection (Development)	<p>Vulnerable refugees are highly dependent on UNHCR and WFP.</p> <p>Refugees in Nouakchott, Nouadhibou and Mbera camp are included in the national Social Registry.</p> <p>Government-run social transfer services (Tekavoul/Elmaouna) serve vulnerable refugees in and around Mbera camp and in Nouadhibou.</p> <p>Amount of cash transfer from the national social assistance programme Tekavoul has been aligned between nationals and refugees as of Q3 2024.</p>	<p>Government-run social transfer services (Tekavoul) serve vulnerable refugees in Nouakchott, Nema and neighbouring areas.</p> <p>Continuous registration of refugees in the national Social Registry (with a 6-month buffer period post-arrival).</p> <p>A national roadmap on inclusion of refugees in national social protection plans is adopted.</p> <p>Refugees are included in the National social protection strategy (SNPS 2) 2024-2034.</p>	<p>Social protection services supported by more diversified stakeholders, including Government-run programmes.</p> <p>Refugees are included in all national social protection programmes.</p>
Education (Development)	<p>Refugees follow the Malian curriculum in the camp coordinated by UNHCR and UNICEF.</p> <p>Education in Mbera camp is supported by humanitarian funding.</p> <p>Refugees residing outside the camp in rural and urban areas attend local schools with ad hoc UNHCR support.</p> <p>Refugee inclusion is costed and included in the national education strategy (PNDSE 3).</p>	<p>The gradual transition from Malian to Mauritanian curriculum starts (school year 2024-2025, Mbera camp).</p> <p>A detailed roadmap for refugee inclusion in the national education sector is adopted by the government.</p>	<p>Refugees are gradually integrated in the national education system in Mbera camp.</p> <p>Refugees' children in Mbera camp have access to quality education. Out of camp refugees can fully access national schools and quality education.</p>
Transformation of Mbera camp (Development)	<p>WASH systems are mostly funded by UNHCR in Mbera camp.</p> <p>Government, with WB funding, created a new borehole in the camp</p> <p>Refugees use non-renewable energy sources, such as wood or charcoal, for cooking, which has a negative impact on both the environment and people's health.</p> <p>Environmental protection is funded by humanitarian and small-scale funding streams.</p>	<p>The transfer of WASH systems in Mbera is effective (expected by the end of 2025).</p> <p>Access to WASH services is maintained for all refugees in Mbera, including the most vulnerable.</p> <p>Solarisation of the boreholes is underway</p> <p>Increasing number of refugees use LPG or other clean energy for cooking in Mbera camp.</p> <p>The Ministry of Urban planning elaborates an urban plan (SDAU) by 2025.</p> <p>Mbera camp and surroundings areas are electrified (on going).</p>	<p>WASH services are integrated in the national system in Mbera camp.</p> <p>Refugees in and around Mbera have access to clean and renewable energy.</p> <p>Mbera camp and surrounding areas are climate adapted and resilient.</p>

	Refugees can access Liquid Petroleum Gaz (LPG) and biogas solutions in Mbera camp. Territorial planning of Mbera camp is planned by UNHCR.	Access road to Mbera camp is asphalted (planned). Camp governance is strengthened. Study is underway on the decongestion of the camp Planned construction of the latrines in camp.	Mbera camp is transformed in a sustainable and integrated human settlement. Access to land plots is secured and housing is improved in Mbera camp.
Crosscutting	Refugee coordination model is fully functional. In the Hodh Chargui region, coordination mechanisms held at regional and district levels include refugee issues.	Refugees are included in all nation-wide or local relevant strategies and surveys. In the Hodh Chargui region, coordination mechanisms held at regional and district levels allow enhanced coordination for greater refugee inclusion (undergoing for out of camp refugees).	The coordination of humanitarian interventions and development activities ensure that social cohesion (nexus) is strengthened.

Annex I - UNHCR joint projects with development partners

Ongoing projects:

World Bank projects (non-transactional relationship with UNHCR):



Water & Sanitation - WASH

March 2020 – November 2025

\$44m incl. \$14m from Refugee Sub-Window (RSW)

Objective : Increase access to improved water and sanitation services in selected rural areas and small towns (including Mbera camp) and strengthen the performance of sector institutions.

Social Safety Nets - TEKAVOUL

March 2020 – September 2025

\$45m incl. \$18m from RSW

Objective : Increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the nationwide adaptive social safety net system and its coverage of poor and vulnerable households with targeted social transfers, including in refugee and host communities.

Health - INAYA

Phase 1: May 2017 – December 2023

Phase 2: Janvier 2024 - 2030

\$23m incl. \$15m from RSW

Objective: Scale up the Performance-Based Financing (PBF) system Inaya to improve the utilization and quality of reproductive, maternal, neonatal, and child health and nutrition services in Hodh Chargui, benefiting refugees and the Mauritanian host population by addressing health needs of refugees and reinforcing the health facilities of Mbera camp.

Decentralization and productive intermediate cities - MOUDOUN

March 2020 – May 2025

\$66m incl. \$20m from RSW

Objective : Improve access to local services in selected localities (including Mbera camp), electrify the camp and strengthen the capacities of Local Governments to plan and manage local public services.

BMZ/GIZ (German Development Cooperation):



Support to UNHCR in facilitating the operationalization of the Global Refugee Compact in the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus (SUN Global Programme)

January 2021 – December 2024

€9.8m

Objective: Build capacity to promote the socio-economic inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable members of host communities in Mauritania. This project builds on the commitments made by the Mauritanian government during the Global Refugee Forum relating to the development of a legal framework, access to documentation and the inclusion of refugees in national protection systems as well as access to the labour market. The project also aims at complementing the projects supported through the World Bank's IDA18 Refugee Sub-Window.

These investments and the increased involvement of development actors require support in the transition period towards inclusion in national systems.

European Union: NDICI Global-Europe, MFF 2021 – 2027



Durable solutions for forcibly displaced in Sub-Saharan Africa

Indimaj Project

January 2023 – December 2024

€1.8m

Objective : Strengthen protection and socio- economic inclusion for populations displaced by instability in Mali and support social cohesion between host and refugee communities in Mauritania.

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA):



Tamasuk – Supporting resilience, social cohesion and inclusion of populations facing climate change and forced displacement in Mauritania

March 2024 – December 2026

\$4m

Objective: Providing a comprehensive response at the nexus, through emergency preparedness and protection activities, community driven development projects as well as livelihoods and community activities while fostering peaceful coexistence.



Malian refugee artisan crafting handmade products. ©UNHCR/OMAR DOUKALI

Past projects

African Development Bank:



Support project for G5 Sahel member States in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic

July 2020 – December 2022

\$4.2m

Objective: Strengthen the capacity of the G5 Sahel countries to reduce the spread of the virus, halt the COVID-19 pandemic and support the resilience of vulnerable communities in the Hodh Chargui region.

Past projects:

European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF in Africa):



[Strengthening the resilience of populations displaced by instability in North Mali and supporting peaceful coexistence between communities](#)

July 2017 – June 2021

€5.29m

Objective: Contribute to the reduction of instability and vulnerability factors through the creation of socio-economic opportunities for displaced populations and their host communities while facilitating the reintegration of repatriated refugees who have returned spontaneously to their areas of origin.

UN Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF)



Joint UNHCR - IOM project

October 2020 – March 2022

\$1.5m

Objective: Strengthen social cohesion in the Hodh Chargui region thanks to a better inclusion of women and children in institutional and community decisions and in socioeconomic life to reduce intra and inter community tensions around access to natural resources.

Joint UNHCR - UNDP project

January 2022 – June 2023

\$1.5m

Objective: Peacebuilding through environmental activities among young refugee men and women and host communities in the Hodh Chargui region of Mauritania.