Case for Support

Investing in Socioeconomic Inclusion and Self-Reliance Across the Americas

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Mexico. More than 50,000 refugees and asylum-seekers find stability and rebuild their lives

Francois shares technical knowledge with fellow Haitian colleagues—refugees turned teammates, building skills and solidarity on the factory floor. Since 2016, UNHCR has supported the integration of more than 50,000 refugees who first arrived in southern Mexico. After being screened and granted asylum by the government, they have been successfully relocated to industrial cities through UNHCR's Local Integration Programme, implemented in close coordination with federal and local authorities and the private sector.

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Helping over 70,000 people to rebuild their lives through improved access to jobs, services, and legal identity, while strengthening local systems, expanding private-sector engagement, and driving sustainable economic inclusion that reduces long-term humanitarian costs.

Across the Americas, millions of refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, stateless people, and forcibly displaced families are seeking safety and stability. Most settle in urban areas where their ability to support themselves depends on timely documentation, available jobs, financial services, and the capacity of local services to include them.

This regional package provides a targeted, cost-efficient investment opportunity built on a coherent, integrated approach to socioeconomic inclusion. By combining documentation, employment, entrepreneurship, financial inclusion, and local strengthening as interdependent pillars, it delivers results at scale rather than through isolated interventions. With modest investment over a two-year implementation period, displaced families can transition from reliance on humanitarian assistance to full, productive participation in local economies.

Why Your Investment Matters

- **Obtain documentation and secure legal stay**, unlocking access to employment, education, financial services, freedom of movement, and essential public services—foundations for rebuilding their lives.
- **Access decent work and have their skills recognized**, enabling immediate income for their households, reducing dependency on aid, and expanding opportunities—particularly for women and youth.
- **Start and grow businesses**, with improved access to financial services such as savings, credit, and financial literacy, fostering self-reliance and economic participation.
- **Actively participate in their communities and local economies**, strengthening social inclusion, confidence, and long-term stability for their families.

The Multiplier Effect

- **Entrepreneurship and financial inclusion** stimulate local markets, especially in underserved areas, creating jobs and increasing economic activity.
- **Stronger municipal systems** improve service delivery for both displaced and host communities, reducing bottlenecks and increasing efficiency.
- **Increased economic participation** reduces dependency on humanitarian assistance, while boosting local consumption and tax contributions.
- **Enhanced social cohesion and inclusion** foster stability and peaceful coexistence, as families feel secure, contribute productively, and build shared futures with host communities.

Year-1 Results Within a Two-Year Implementation Framework	
70,000+ people	Gain access to documentation, decent work, financial tools, and essential services.
40-60 local authorities	Equipped to manage inclusion sustainably.
4,000-6,000 businesses	Engaged in inclusive hiring, skills recognition, and entrepreneurship initiatives.
14,000-18,000 families	Move towards self-reliance, contributing to stronger, safer, and more resilient communities.

Regional Overview

Displacement across the Americas remains one of the most complex and multi-dimensional urban challenges in the world, driven by violence, persecution, and declining access to jobs and services. At the same time, forced displacement trends and mobility dynamics are changing, including return movements. Despite strong legal frameworks in many countries, displaced people still face major obstacles to rebuilding their lives — including informality, limited recognition of skills, financial exclusion, administrative bottlenecks, and overstretched municipal systems.

In parallel, **the region presents a unique opportunity** to scale socioeconomic inclusion. Governments increasingly prioritize inclusion, private sector engagement is expanding rapidly, and proven national models—such as Mexico's labour integration programme and Brazil's Companies with Refugees Forum—demonstrate that large-scale, system-level integration is both feasible and effective.

UNHCR's work in the Americas focuses on **helping governments to remove practical obstacles** to documentation, jobs and services —so refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), returnees, stateless persons, and host communities can seize economic opportunities. Our comparative advantage lies in connecting governments, employers, financial institutions, and development actors to jointly achieve sustainable solutions, while ensuring protection standards.

This package strengthens the systems that make inclusion work:

1. Documentation & Legal Pathways
Enabling people to work, study, rent a house, and access services.

2. Development Skills & Employment
Expanding access—especially for women and youth—to skills development and training aligned with labour market demand, and recognition of skills and qualifications, enabling access to decent employment.

3. Entrepreneurship & Financial Inclusion
Partnering with banks, cooperatives, and fintech actors to expand access to banking, credit, savings, and financial literacy—unlocking small business growth.

4. Municipal Strengthening
Supporting cities to coordinate services, manage referrals, and include displaced people in local development plans.

5. Community-Based Initiatives & Social Cohesion
Reducing discrimination and misinformation while fostering peaceful, inclusive communities.

This package builds on proven, scalable national models that deliver cost-efficient results across the region. By promoting sustainable solutions, it reduces reliance on humanitarian aid, discourages onward movement, and strengthens local economies —supporting UNHCR's priority to decrease long-term dependence in protracted displacement contexts.

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Argentina

Beneficiaries: 3,500 | **Funding Request:** USD 1,000,000

Context

Argentina hosts more than 180,000 forcibly displaced and stateless people, primarily from Venezuela. As with other countries in the Southern Cone, it has become a destination country for forcibly displaced people in Latin America. Forcibly displaced people primarily reside in urban centres, where integration outcomes depend largely on job opportunities, financial services, and effective local coordination. While the national legal framework guarantees the right to work and access to public services, many refugees face practical barriers to labour market entry.

Challenges to integration

- Limited recognition of qualifications
- Gaps in financial inclusion, including access to banking and credit systems
- Insufficient employer linkages
- Insufficient coordination between employers, municipalities and training institutions.
- Limited entrepreneurship pathways and business development support.

How this project creates impact

UNHCR translates legal access and documentation into tangible economic opportunities by strengthening partnerships with employers, training institutes, financial actors, and municipalities.

Through this initiative, UNHCR:

- Expands inclusive hiring through partnerships with private-sector employers
- Facilitates access to formal employment through skills profiling, training, and job matching, including through *Talento sin Fronteras* (Talent without Borders)
- Promotes entrepreneurship and improve access to financial services
- Supports municipal authorities to plan and coordinate inclusive local responses.

Together, these actions address key structural barriers and foster pathways towards sustainable economic inclusion and self-reliance.

A UNHCR-supported initiative opened the door for Abelis, 29, a migrant displaced from Venezuela, to use her skills again and build a new future.
© UNHCR/Markel Redondo

Expected Results

- 3,500 forcibly displaced people reached through livelihoods and economic inclusion interventions
- At least 50 companies engaged through Talento sin Fronteras and adopting inclusive hiring practices
- Municipal capacities strengthened through *Ciudades Solidarias* (Cities of Solidarity), including technical assistance and coordination mechanisms
- Strengthened data systems, including a digital dashboard, enable evidence-based decision-making by identifying gaps, targeting interventions, and monitoring progress towards socioeconomic inclusion.

Argentina offers strong legal frameworks but needs catalytic support to unlock real economic inclusion.

Brazil

Beneficiaries: 15,000 | **Funding Request:** USD 5,000,000

Context

Brazil is home to over 824,000 forcibly displaced individuals from more than 150 nationalities, and some stateless persons. The country's progressive legal and policy framework positions it as a regional leader in protection and integration. Despite this enabling environment, many refugees still struggle to translate legal status into real inclusion.

Challenges to integration

- Language barriers, limited knowledge of Brazilian institutions, and high poverty among new arrivals.
- Indigenous refugees—particularly Warao—face compounded vulnerabilities.
- Barriers to adequate housing and exposure to protection risks, including violence.
- Documentation and administrative obstacles that delay access to services and work.

How this project creates impact

UNHCR strengthens local integration and economic inclusion by helping refugees translate legal status into access to services, skills development and pathways to decent work—prioritizing women, youth and Indigenous refugees.

Through the Companies with Refugees Forum, UNHCR expands private-sector partnerships, promotes inclusive hiring, and supports diploma revalidation, Portuguese language courses and opportunities for entrepreneurship.

Local integration is reinforced through advocacy for public housing and social rent schemes, support for naturalization processes and Brazil's internal relocation programme (*interiorização*), connecting people with better opportunities in receiving cities.

This model is highly scalable and already backed by more than 100 companies.

Through the Mujeres Fuertes project, Yuglenis Gamboa Cabrera, a Venezuelan lawyer and entrepreneur is gaining skills and opportunities to build a new livelihood in Manaus. © UNHCR/Alef Kaf

Expected Results

- 5,000 individuals access economic inclusion interventions, including skills development, job placement pathways, and entrepreneurship support
- 5,500 people obtain identity, civil status, or legal stay documentation
- 7,500 individuals receive protection information, counselling, and referrals
- 1,000 refugees relocated within the country (government-led relocation programme), improving access to employment and services
- 750 individuals supported to apply for naturalization or permanent residency.

Brazil combines a strong protection framework with high demand for labour and a private sector committed to inclusion. Strategic investment accelerates self-reliance and reduces dependency by expanding access to documentation, skills, services, and formal employment. It strengthens national and local systems to deliver durable, sustainable integration outcomes with regional impact.

Chile

Beneficiaries: 3,500 | **Funding Request:** USD 1,000,000

Context

Chile hosts over 677,000 forcibly displaced primarily from Venezuela and some stateless people. While national protection frameworks are in place, local governments—where integration happens—struggle to respond at the scale required. Municipal systems face limited capacity, fragmented services, and increasing social tensions, which affect access to housing, basic services, and economic opportunities for both displaced and host communities. Negative public perceptions and xenophobia further undermine inclusive policies.

Challenges to integration

- Limited municipal capacity to plan, coordinate, and deliver inclusive services
- Fragmented service delivery systems and weak referral pathways across institutions and providers.
- Social tensions and misinformation resulting in discrimination.
- Barriers to formal employment, skills recognition, and financial services.

How this project creates impact

UNHCR strengthens local systems by supporting municipalities to improve coordination of services, enhance referral pathways, and integrate refugee inclusion into local development plans. In Chile, this includes targeted support to two Integrated Service Centres (ISCs—one-stop hubs offering legal, employment, and referral support) in Estación Central and Puente Alto, focusing on capacity strengthening, technical assistance, and selected service components such as legal orientation, job counselling, and access to financial and social services.

UNHCR also partners with employers, training centres, and financial institutions to expand access to employment opportunities, skills recognition, and financial services, building on existing national systems and initiatives. To foster peaceful coexistence, UNHCR will support targeted social cohesion and anti-discrimination initiatives that address misinformation and promote inclusive communities.

With UNHCR's support, Ralph Jean Baptiste, a long-time resident of Chile shared language skills that helped newcomers connect, grow, and navigate daily life.
© UNHCR/Stephanie Rabi

Expected Results

- 3,000 people receive legal assistance and orientation.
- 500 government officials trained on integrated, multisectoral responses.
- 2,500 people access economic inclusion support such as job placement pathways, skills recognition, or financial services.
- 3,500 people counselled and referred to public services through the ISCs.

Strengthening local systems is essential for lasting inclusion in Chile. Municipalities are committed but overstretched; targeted investment will help them deliver coordinated services, reduce tensions, and expand opportunities for refugees and host communities alike. This approach aligns with national priorities and supports sustainable, locally anchored solutions that improve stability and social cohesion.

Colombia

Beneficiaries: 15,000 | **Funding Request:** USD 5,000,000

Context

Colombia faces one of the world's most complex displacement situations, hosting nearly 10 million people affected by internal and cross border displacement. This includes over 7 million internally displaced people (IDPs) and 2.8 million refugees and in need of international protection Venezuelans. Urban centres and conflict affected regions struggle to absorb new arrivals, and many people still face barriers to services, jobs, and stability due to informality, lack of documentation, discrimination, and limited local institutional capacity.

Challenges to integration

- Employment and skills recognition gaps, including limited validation of foreign qualifications and restricted pathways into formal work.
- Documentation and financial barriers, related to insufficient access to asylum and legal stay mechanisms, limited banking services, credit.
- Discrimination and social barriers, where stigma, misinformation, and inequalities challenge opportunities and services
- Weak local systems and institutional capacity, that reduces coordination, service delivery, and effective support.

How this project creates impact

UNHCR bridges the gap between legal stay and socio-economic inclusion by strengthening coordination with public institutions, the private sector, civil society, and other partners. Through the *Juntos por la inclusión* strategy, it expands access to documentation, employment, skills training, and financial inclusion.

UNHCR promotes inclusive hiring practices, strengthening engagement of companies and business associations. This work facilitates linkages to value chains and markets. Also, UNHCR supports the development of public policies by the Government of Colombia to ensure access to rights and services. Communities remains at the centre of this work to strengthen socio-economic inclusion processes.

In Turbo, Colombia, Esneda Pino is rebuilding her community and its mangroves—proving that restoring nature also restores hope. © UNHCR/Marina Calderon

UNHCR sustains support to local governments to improve service delivery. This includes advancing settlement regularization and territorial stabilization strategies, reducing vulnerabilities and fostering more resilient and inclusive communities.

Expected Results

- 10,000 people receive information, counselling, and legal guidance on documentation and protection.
- 2,000 people access employment pathways, training, entrepreneurship support, or financial services.
- 10 solidarity firms formally commit to inclusive hiring or value chain integration.
- 5,000 individuals benefit from settlement regularization and land tenure support.

Supporting inclusion in Colombia stabilizes the entire region. Colombia plays a central role in regional stability hosting the largest population of refugees and others in need of international protection in the world, the majority form Venezuela, while also being home of millions of IDPs affected by recurrent crisis. Investing now strengthens national and local systems, expands economic opportunities, and reduces the need for onward or irregular movement. UNHCR's approach promotes self-reliance, supports local economies, and creates sustainable conditions for long-term inclusion in both urban and rural areas

Costa Rica

Beneficiaries: 3,500 | **Funding Request:** USD 1,000,000

Context

Costa Rica hosts more than 250,000 forcibly displaced and stateless people, the majority from Nicaragua. While the country has strong protection and inclusion frameworks, sustained displacement continues to strain asylum, documentation, municipal services, employment pathways and social protection systems. Its high-income classification reflects institutional capacity but can limit access to traditional cooperation despite Costa Rica's significant regional protection role. Refugees and asylum-seekers still face barriers to documentation, skills recognition, health insurance, financial services and formal employment.

Challenges to integration

- Administrative delays in documentation and work permits
- Limited recognition of prior studies and experience
- Gaps in vocational and digital skills training
- Barriers to health insurance and social protection
- Financial exclusion, especially for women and youth.

How this project creates impact

UNHCR provides catalytic, time-bound support to strengthen national institutions and accelerate socioeconomic inclusion. Through engagement with development partners, it helps ensure larger investments benefit refugees, asylum-seekers, and host communities.

Your support enables:

- Improved access to documentation for formal employment
- Stronger skills certification pathways with national training institutes
- Expanded private sector partnerships for jobs, apprenticeships, and entrepreneurship
- Connections to national employability and training programmes
- Enhanced municipal referral systems and inclusion planning
- Greater financial inclusion, especially for women and youth
- Stronger community networks and social cohesion

Known in her community as Mama Tara, a dedicated educator from Nicaragua continues to share knowledge and strength after a lifetime marked by displacement and loss. © UNHCR/Jeoffrey Guillemard

Expected Results

- 2,500 people gain documentation, legal pathways, and access to services.
- 1,800 individuals connected to employment, training, or apprenticeships.
- 600 entrepreneurs supported with business development and financial services.
- 5 municipalities strengthen inclusion planning and coordination.
- 2,000 people enrolled in health insurance, social protection, or financial services.
- Community-based networks expanded to enhance referrals and prevent discrimination.

Costa Rica has the policies; UNHCR makes them work. Dedicated investments turn rights into real opportunities, strengthens national systems, unlocks the potential of youth and women, reduces onward movement, and delivers high impact at a low cost.

Dominican Republic

Beneficiaries: 3,500 | **Funding Request:** USD 1,000,000

Context

The Dominican Republic is home to over 229,000 people in need of international protection, including refugees, asylum-seekers, stateless persons, and individuals at risk of statelessness, many of whom face obstacles to documentation, recognition of rights, and inclusion in national systems.

Challenges to integration

- Limited access to documentation, formal employment and social protection
- Vulnerability is heightened among Dominicans of Haitian descent – and increases risks of exploitation, wrongful deportation and statelessness.

How this project creates impact

UNHCR reinforces protection and documentation systems to ensure access to asylum, civil registration and nationality solutions. In parallel, it expands socio-economic inclusion by linking displaced people to public services, by facilitating access to government- and partner-led public services, skills training, employment pathways and social protection through system strengthening, partnerships and policy support, rather than direct implementation.

Partnerships with authorities, private-sector actors and local organizations, who lead Implementation, help anchor these opportunities in national systems. Community engagement—through dialogue, youth initiatives and coexistence activities— reduces tensions, counter misinformation and strengthen resilience. Overall, efforts aim to reduce vulnerability, prevent onward movement and support coherent, locally rooted solutions for both displaced and host communities. In line with UNHCR's catalytic role, the project does not directly implement livelihoods activities but focuses on enabling access through national systems and partners.

Zulema, a 58-year-old community leader from Juan Felipe (Elías Piña), dedicates her life to guiding and supporting families in one of the most vulnerable areas of the Dominican Republic. Known for her commitment and solidarity, she works to ensure her community has access to information, care, well-being, and solutions. © UNHCR/Loeny Santana

Expected Results

- 2,500 people obtain civil status, identity, or legal stay documentation (asylum, nationality, or ID) through legal orientation, case management, and accompaniment
- National and local authorities strengthen protection-sensitive registration and documentation systems, improving access to asylum and legal identity.
- 1,500 people participate in coexistence and community-based activities (intercultural dialogue, youth initiatives, community projects), improving trust, accurate information, and peaceful relations between displaced and host communities.
- Increased referrals to national services and social protection systems; engagement with local authorities/private sector supports inclusion within national systems, through government and partner-led programmes.

Investing in this initiative closes critical protection gaps, presents statelessness at scale and reduces onward movement by anchoring people in safety and inclusion

Ecuador

Beneficiaries: 9,000 | **Funding Request:** USD 2,500,000

Context

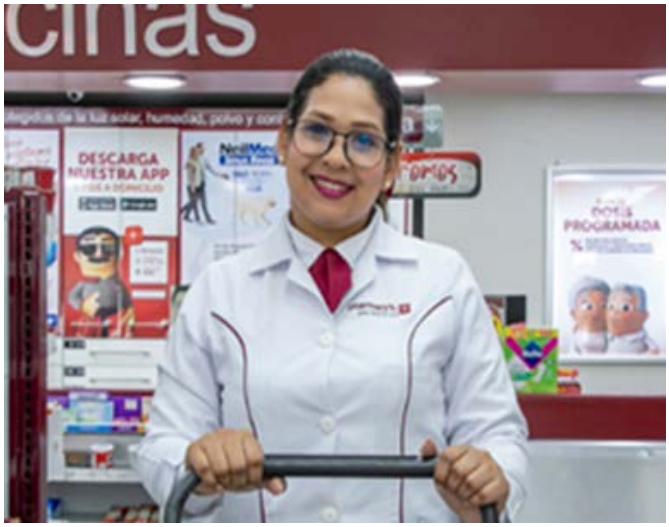
Ecuador hosts one of the largest displaced populations in Latin America—mainly Colombians and Venezuelans—amid a deteriorating economic outlook and rising insecurity, particularly along the northern border and coastal areas. While employment opportunities cluster in Quito, Guayaquil, and Manta, barriers to formal work, financial services, and social protection persist. Although the context reflects a worsening macroeconomic environment, projected socioeconomic inclusion targets remain ambitious and should be interpreted in light of these constraints, particularly regarding employment and entrepreneurship outcomes. Border areas such as Tulcán, Lago Agrio, and Esmeraldas remain critical for screening, documentation, and asylum referrals.

Challenges to integration

- A deteriorating socioeconomic context and volatile security environment push many forcibly displaced people into informal work, limiting income stability and access to social protection
- Women face disproportionate barriers to labour market integration, including significantly higher unemployment rates than men
- Financial exclusion remains acute, with limited access to savings accounts, credit, and social security systems.

How this project creates impact

UNHCR acts as a catalyst and convener, testing scalable models and bringing partners together to expand protection and sustainable solutions within existing systems. It improves access to asylum, services, labour markets, and financial inclusion—building on Companies with Refugees (300+ firms) and partnerships with 10+ local governments to strengthen referral systems, social cohesion and protection at community level. Financial institutions are engaged to improve access to basic accounts, digital payments, savings and responsible credit.



After fleeing Venezuela, Nélida rebuilt her life in Manta, where she accessed a dual training programme run by UNHCR, Humboldt Zentrum, and DIFARE—enabling her to secure formal employment in the pharmaceutical sector. © UNHCR/Omar Ganchala

Expected Results

- 4,000 people receive information, counselling or legal assistance on asylum and documentation
- 3,000 people access economic inclusion pathways (employment services, training/TVET, job-matching, entrepreneurship or financial services).
  - Of these, 400 obtain skills certification/recognition and 500 entrepreneurs receive market-oriented support (business advisory, market linkages, or commercialization).
- 5,000 people participate in community-based protection and social cohesion activities that reduce violence, xenophobia and exclusion.
- 10+ municipalities strengthen coordinated service delivery through practical toolkits, referral protocols and local action plans.

Investing now will accelerate access to asylum and documentation, link displaced people to jobs and entrepreneurship, expand financial inclusion, and strengthen municipal systems. This will support 9,000 people while building scalable, sustainable models that governments and private-sector partners can sustain and expand.

Honduras

Beneficiaries: 3,000 | **Funding Request:** USD 1,000,000

Context

Honduras faces a complex internal displacement situation driven primarily by widespread violence of criminal organizations. These dynamics are compounded by structural poverty and climate-related shocks that further increase vulnerability in already fragile communities. Thousands of people are forced to flee within the country or seek international protection. At the same time, Honduras also hosts asylum-seekers and refugees, while institutional and service capacities remain limited. Many affected families live in situations of high vulnerability, with restricted access to documentation, basic services, livelihoods and protection systems.

Challenges to integration

- Limited access to documentation and basic services
- Barriers to formal employment (violence, discrimination, unrecognized skills)
- Weak social cohesion and stigmatization
- Uneven institutional capacity for identification, referral, and response

How this project creates impact

UNHCR continues strengthening national and local protection systems to improve identification, documentation, and access to services for forcibly displaced persons, including refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons. In addition, UNHCR promotes socioeconomic integration through private sector partnerships that expands access to employment, training, and financial services, contributing to durable solutions and reducing onward displacement.

Mabel, a community leader in Tegucigalpa, brings people together in one of the city's most violence-affected areas to create spaces for connection, learning, and socio-economic opportunities, especially for women and youth. © UNHCR/Lucía Martínez

Expected Results

- 700 people receiving legal assistance to obtain documentation to support socio-economic integration.
- 1,000 people accessing training, entrepreneurship support and pathways that connect them to employment opportunities.
- 1,700 people accessing financial services and financial literacy support.
- 50 national companies receive support to integrate forcibly displaced people in their enterprises.

Investing in stronger protection systems in Honduras will expand access to rights and services, helping communities affected by violence become more stable and resilient while reducing forced displacement.

Mexico

Beneficiaries: 15,000 | **Funding Request:** USD 5,000,000

Context

Mexico has become a major destination in the Americas for people fleeing violence and persecution, with large concentrations in southern border states and urban hubs such as Mexico City and the Bajío region. Many would face serious risks if returned to their countries of origin, making timely documentation and sustainable, locally rooted integration essential.

Challenges to integration

- Delays in asylum processing due to limited institutional capacity, leaving people without documentation for prolonged periods
- Few job opportunities available in locations with high refugee concentration
- Insufficient access to services such as housing, education, childcare, financial services, and social protection
- Gaps in municipal coordination, hindering access to local programs needed for stable integration
- Barriers to naturalization, including complex administrative procedures, high costs, and documentation requirements, restricting long-term security and belonging.

How this project creates impact

Mexico hosts a leading large-scale labour integration programme, supporting over 50,000 people. Building on this model, UNHCR expands access to protection and documentation, connect people to jobs and relocation opportunities, and strengthen private sector engagement through Alianza por la Inclusión.

The project also facilitates access to essential services—such as banking, education, health, childcare, and housing—supported by follow-up assistance to promote sustainable integration outcomes. UNHCR provides technical support to federal, state, and municipal authorities to improve documentation systems, strengthen inclusive public policies, and reduce barriers to naturalization, reinforcing long-term integration within national systems.

Thalía, a leader at FEMSA, shows how inclusive workplaces transform lives. With partners across Mexico, UNHCR has helped more than 50,000 refugees restart their futures with dignity. © UNHCR/Jeoffrey Guillemard

Expected Results

- 7,000 people received tailored support services, including protection, legal assistance, and access to basic and socioeconomic services
- 5,000 people obtain civil status, identity, or legal documentation (asylum, nationality, or ID)
- 3,000 people gain access to employment and economic-inclusion support, including job placement, voluntary relocation, essential services, and tailored accompaniment.
- 20 employers and public institutions engaged through advocacy and technical support, leading to improved inclusive hiring practices and expanded access to formal employment for forcibly displaced people
- Improved access to naturalization processes, supported by training of 100 government and institutional stakeholders to reduce administrative barriers.

UNHCR requests USD 5 million to help Mexico scale a proven, nationally anchored integration model—expanding documentation, access to services, and pathways to decent work.

Panama

Beneficiaries: 2,500 | **Funding Request:** USD 750,000

Context

Panama is both a country of destination and transit for people forced to flee, with most refugees and asylum-seekers living in Panama City and surrounding urban areas. Their ability to rebuild their lives depends on timely documentation, access to services, and fair access to the labour market. Despite a generally supportive legal framework, many still face structural barriers that limit full social and economic inclusion. Panama's strong financial sector offers important opportunities to expand access to banking and financial services for forcibly displaced people.

Challenges to integration

- Delays in obtaining legal status and work permits, which prevent access to services and formal job opportunities.
- Limited access to banking services, credit, and financial tools, excluding many from safe, regulated economic activity.
- Gaps in skills recognition and access to certified training, restricting access to jobs that match refugees' professional backgrounds.
- Discrimination and limited private sector engagement, reducing hiring opportunities.
- Uneven municipal capacity, leading to inconsistent service referrals and integration support.

How this project creates impact

UNHCR strengthens Panama's national systems so refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons can turn legal status into access to services and opportunities. It improves asylum and documentation, expands access to training and jobs through partners such as the National Institute for Vocational Training and local technical institutes, and promotes inclusive hiring.

UNHCR also supports financial inclusion through system-level partnerships, strengthens municipal referral systems, and promotes social cohesion—focusing on self-reliance within national systems.

Thirteen women, refugees and asylum seekers in Panama, united through Made by Refugees initiative that allows them to design unique products using recycled materials. © UNHCR/Tito Herrera

Expected Results

- 1,500 people supported through documentation assistance, referrals, training access, financial-inclusion support, or social-cohesion activities.
- 800 people receive legal assistance to obtain documentation and work-related permits.
- 500 people gain access to certified training, entrepreneurship support, or pathways that connect them to employment opportunities.
- 2,000 people reached through information, awareness, and digital social-cohesion initiatives.
- Public and private institutions are engaged to strengthen service referrals, training pathways, and hiring practices

UNHCR aims to strengthen Panama's national systems, so refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless persons can obtain documentation, access essential services, benefit from certified skills training, and connect to safe, dignified economic opportunities. This investment will support 2,500 people to advance their self-reliance, contribute to host communities, and foster greater social cohesion across Panama.

Paraguay

Beneficiaries: 2,500 | **Funding Request:** USD 750,000

Context

Paraguay hosts a growing but still modest number of refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from Venezuela, most of whom live in urban areas. The country has a stable economic environment and a supportive legal framework, yet practical barriers—particularly delayed asylum procedures and a highly informal labour market—continue to limit opportunities for sustainable inclusion.

Challenges to integration

- Limited capacity within the asylum system, resulting in backlogs and delayed documentation.
- High levels of informality in the national labour market, restricting access to stable work for displaced people.
- Limited recognition of skills, qualifications, and work experience obtained abroad.
- Insufficient municipal and national coordination to connect displaced people to services and opportunities.
- Underdeveloped pathways to access training, job placement services, and financial tools.

How this project creates impact

UNHCR strengthens Paraguay's national and municipal systems to improve access to documentation, services, and economic opportunities. It supports the asylum authority (CONARE) to streamline procedures and work with the Ministry of Labour, the National Professional Promotion Service, and Entrepreneurship Support Centres to expand inclusive training and job placement.

The project also develops a labour inclusion pathway and strengthen partnerships with employers and financial institutions, while using data tools to track results and inform decisions.

Diego and his wife received support for certified training and entrepreneurship support that allowed him to start his cooking business in Asunción, Paraguay. © UNHCR

Expected Results

- 2,000 people supported across documentation, employment pathways, referral and financial-inclusion activities
- 1,000 people receiving legal assistance to obtain documentation and resolve administrative barriers
- 200 people accessing certified training, entrepreneurship support, or job-placement pathways
- 20+ employers, financial institutions, and public entities engaged to improve service delivery and hiring pathways.
- National and municipal institutions supported through technical assistance and capacity building

UNHCR requests support to reinforce Paraguay's asylum system, expand access to documentation and create practical pathways to employment, training and financial inclusion, enabling people to participate fully in the local economy and strengthen community stability.

Peru

Beneficiaries: 7,000 | **Funding Request:** USD 2,000,000

Context

Peru hosts the second largest displaced populations in the region, with Venezuelans representing the vast majority. While national policies provide avenues for protection, documentation gaps, informality, discrimination, and uneven municipal capacity continue to hinder inclusion. Many displaced people—especially youth and skilled professionals—struggle to secure legal status, enter formal employment, or access essential services.

After fleeing Venezuela, 71-year-old Adalina found safety in Peru—rebuilding her life, teaching local children, and becoming a beloved figure, whose resilience and kindness strengthen her community. © UNHCR/Jaime Giménez

Challenges to integration

- Complex, slow or inaccessible asylum and regularization procedures.
- High labor-market informality and limited recognition of qualifications.
- Barriers to essential services such as education, protection mechanisms and legal aid.
- Discrimination and limited municipal capacity to coordinate services at scale.
- Financial exclusion affecting both displaced people and low-income host communities.

How this project creates impact

UNHCR strengthens Peru's national asylum and documentation systems, expanding access to registration, legal residency, and essential services in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Migration, and local authorities. Support includes mobile registration, legal counseling, and school-regularization initiatives so children can continue their education, and families can achieve and demonstrate their legal status.

UNHCR reinforces specialized services for women, children, and survivors of violence through existing protection centers. To advance economic participation, UNHCR promotes recognition of prior qualifications, expands access to vocational training and higher-education opportunities for refugee youth, and strengthens pathways to employment through partnerships with employers, training centers, and financial institutions. A network of refugee outreach volunteers supports community engagement, referrals, and social cohesion across key districts.

Expected Results

- 5,000 people obtain civil status, identity, or legal documentation through legal assistance, case management, and accompaniment
  - Of these, 1,500 school-aged children and their families are supported to regularize their status and continue education
- 2,000 people reached through border-area registration, guidance, and asylum orientation, including legal and social assistance to secure legal stay and access to rights

By strengthening Peru's asylum and documentation systems, expanding access to essential services, and creating real pathways to training, education, and safe economic participation—7,000 displaced people are supported to build stable, dignified futures and contribute to their host communities.

Uruguay

Beneficiaries: 3,500 | **Funding Request:** USD 1,000,000

Context

Uruguay has taken important steps to strengthen protection—introducing *Residencia por Arraigo* and a pilot for *prima facie* recognition for Venezuelans—while advancing a transition to a nationally led asylum system (CORE). Consolidating these gains now requires final investments in case-management, documentation interoperability, and practical pathways that connect documentation to services and decent work.

Challenges to integration

- Asylum system still finalizing digital case management and interoperability, affecting timely decisions and documentation
- Recognition of academic and professional credentials remains limited, slowing entry into formal employment.
- Uneven connections between national programs, municipal services, and employers for people with international protection needs.

How this project creates impact

UNHCR supports the transition to a sustainable, government-managed asylum system by helping the Refugee Commission (CORE) finalize and operate an interoperable case-management platform, align procedures, and strengthen staffing and budget planning.

In parallel, UNHCR helps national and local institutions (e.g., the Migrant Reference Centre, ministries of Labour, Social Development, Education and Culture) map services, profile skills, and strengthen job-placement and training linkages, while engaging employers and financial actors to expand inclusive hiring and access to services. Improved evidence systems help track outcomes, guide public policy, and ensure results are sustained within national systems.

Migrants during a training course in commercial management and training in care services. These training programs, aimed at promoting employment integration, are conducted in collaboration with UNHCR, the Municipality of Montevideo, and a local organization.
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Expected Results

- 3,500 people reached through documentation support, referrals to public services, skills profiling, and employment pathways.
  - 2,600 people receive documentation/registration support (orientation, case updates, or issuance steps) to enable access to rights and services.
  - 700 people connected to employment pathways, training, skills recognition, or financial-services access (delivered with government and employer partners).
  - 200 officials and service providers supported through coaching and tools that improve asylum processing, referrals, and inclusion practices.

An investment of USD 1,000,000 will enable Uruguay to consolidate a nationally led asylum and inclusion system—transforming recent policy advances into sustainable, long-lasting structures that support 3,500 refugees and asylum-seekers and reduce future reliance on humanitarian assistance

Venezuela

Beneficiaries: 5,000 | **Funding Request:** USD 1,500,000

Context

Venezuela is experiencing sustained spontaneous returns from neighboring countries. Returnees often arrive with documentation gaps, limited access to services, and heightened protection risks, while communities of return face fragile services and social tensions. Targeted support to documentation, basic services, and community-based reintegration is essential to reduce vulnerability and prevent secondary movements.

Challenges to integration

- Lack of civil documentation, especially for children born abroad, limits access to services and rights.
- Strained local services (health, education, housing) in communities of return.
- Discrimination and social tensions, including towards deported returnees, undermining peaceful coexistence.
- Limited pathways to safe economic participation and financial services for returnees and vulnerable locals.

How this project creates impact

UNHCR helps translate return into sustainable reintegration by supporting civil documentation (birth registration, IDs, nationality verification), legal assistance, and referrals to essential services. Community-based approaches strengthen local networks, protection spaces, and social cohesion.

In coordination with public programs and partners, UNHCR expands access to certified training, skills recognition, entrepreneurship support, and financial literacy, with a focus on youth and women—linking people to safe, dignified economic participation within national systems.

Rosmary participated in a training programme that UNHCR, along with its institutional partners, offers in her community, where people who have returned to the country are involved. © UNHCR/Santiago Escobar-Jaramillo

Expected Results

- 5,000 forcibly displaced people are reached through an integrated package of documentation, legal assistance, education support, and access to essential services.
  - 2,000 individuals receive legal and social assistance to secure legal stay and access rights
  - 1,500 school-aged children and their families are supported to regularize their status and continue education
  - 2,000 people receive border-area registration, guidance, and asylum orientation.

An investment of USD 1,500,000 will help returnees and host communities secure documentation, reconnect to services, and access training and safe economic opportunities. This support will enable 5,000 people to re-establish their lives and strengthen community resilience in areas of high return

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