

Global Compact on Refugees

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The Global Compact on Refugees in Nigeria: Inclusion and self-reliance for increased well-being of refugees and their hosts



UNIFARM supports a host community widow with food items in Adagom 3 community of Ogoja, Cross River State. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende.



Nigeria has a robust approach to hosting refugees and provides an enabling protection environment. The fact that refugees who arrive in Nigeria can move freely and have the right to work puts all the right conditions in place for achieving self-reliance, inclusion and well-being of refugee populations across the nation.

The Roadmap for the Implementation of the GCR in Nigeria

Nigeria's GCR Roadmap was adopted at a high-level ministerial event on 30 November 2021 and was presented to the international community at the High-Level Officials Meeting on the GCR in December 2021 by the Honourable Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development, Hajia

Sadiya Umar Farouq. It sets out a series of concrete steps to achieve Nigeria's four ambitious 2019 pledges and improve the well-being of refugees and their hosts.

At the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in December 2019 Nigeria committed to:

- (1) Include refugees, IDPs, returnees and their host communities in National Government development plans;
- (2) Strengthen its protection capacity;
- (3) Ensure the availability and access to durable solutions for refugees and IDPs, and
- (4) Continue playing an active and constructive role in regional and sub-regional efforts to address the root causes of displacement.

In the two and half years since the Global Refugee Forum, Nigeria has achieved progress on the pledges made. Today, refugees are included in the National Development Plan. They access national education, health, and water services. Refugees can enrol in the national identity management system to obtain identity documents and they have access to the national justice system. The asylum system and protection capacity show signs of progress, such as development of a National Action Plan to end Statelessness.

The Global Compact on Refugees aims to improve the international response to new and existing refugee situations.

Its four global objectives are to:

- (1) Ease pressures on host countries;
- (2) Enhance refugee self-reliance;
- (3) Expand access to third-country solutions;
- (4) Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

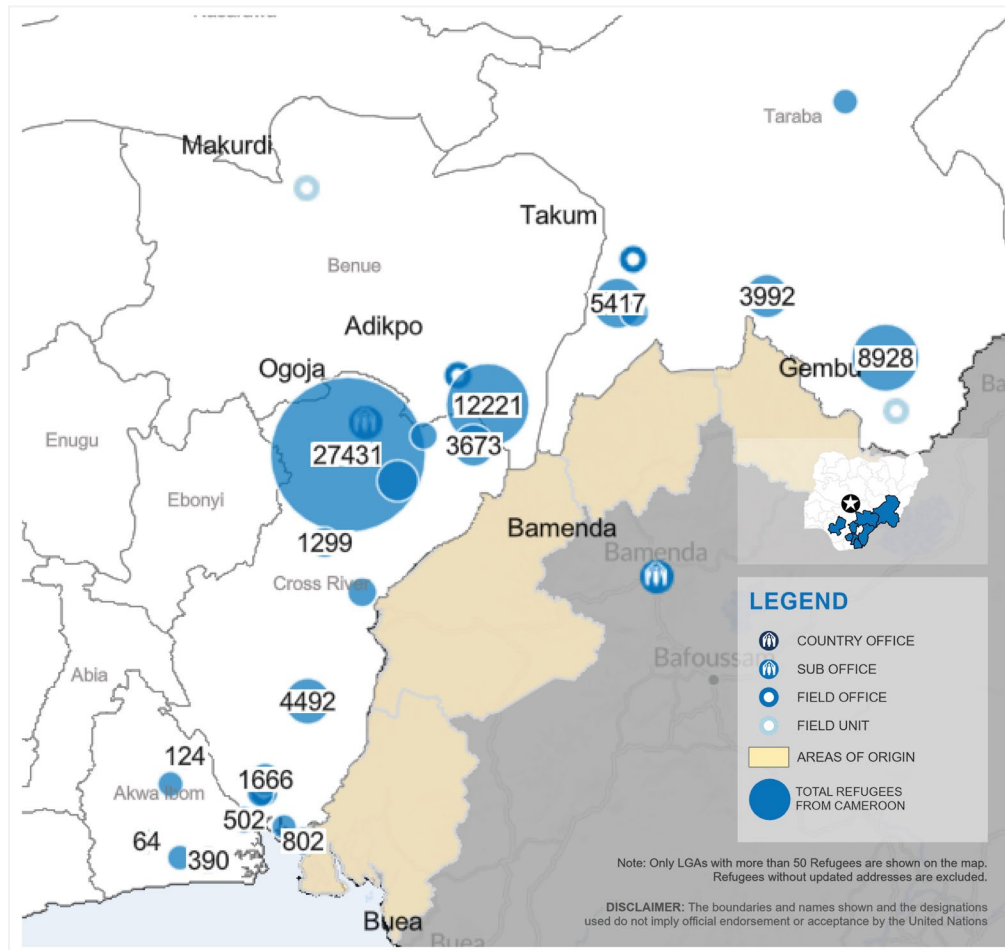


Validation event for the Roadmap of the Implementation of the GCR in Nigeria, November 2021. From left to right: Edith N. Onyimenam, Assistant Comptroller General, Nigerian Immigration Service; Chansa Kapaya, UNHCR Representative, Nigeria; Honourable Muhammad U. Jega, Chairman, House of Representatives – Committee on IDPs and Refugees; Honourable Senator Yusuf A. Yusuf, National Assembly, Senate Committee on Special Duties; Hadiya Imaan Suliman Ibrahim, Honourable Federal Commissioner, NCFRMI.

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Cross River State: the largest refugee-hosting State in Nigeria

Cross River State is the State in Nigeria hosting the most refugees, over 45,000, the large majority fleeing conflict and violence in Cameroon.



Overview of the Cameroonian refugee population in Nigeria

Early 2022, the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development led a mission together with National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), UNHCR and Federal Ministry of Health to advance implementation of Nigeria’s GCR Roadmap. The State Government, local government officials, refugees and host community members shared their experience with hosting refugees in the State. A sense of welcoming and inclusion was prevalent among communities. “They are our brothers and sisters. I imagine myself in their situation,” explained one host community member in Ikom town.

Yet, all residents feel the rise of food prices and essential goods. The additional refugee population, although welcomed, puts an increased strain on all services, such as education and health. Jobs are hard to find, and most resort to the informal sector. The Federal delegation found much effort had been done in the State, but

education, health and WASH services need additional support. Investment in self-reliance is crucial, as is removing some barriers and discriminatory practices to make it easier for refugees to operate in Nigeria.

Economic Inclusion

Gerard is a refugee that walked three weeks through the wild forest to safety, wrote a business plan, and built up a cooperative in only one year.

Gerard's example shows the potential of refugees to contribute to the local economy, made possible by the open environment provided by Nigeria, where he has the right to work and set up an association of choice. In 2019 Gerard established the United Farmers' Cooperative (UNIFARM), a refugee-led Agricultural Cooperative, with other refugees and members of the Adagom host community in Ogoja, Cross River State.

With land for cultivation allocated by the local government and the State Emergency Management Agency, and seed support from UNHCR in the form of farming inputs, water tanks, and pipes for irrigation, Gerard and over 100 farmers were able to cultivate cabbage, cassava, maize, and rear animals to sell in the market. The Cooperative's aim is to empower participants to earn a living, progressively integrate into the local labour market and achieve self-reliance. UNIFARM is involved in several activities and has farm centres located in the Adagom and Biajua communities in Ogoja and in Boki local government areas, where refugees live integrated with host communities.

Healthcare

"I felt happy and good that I delivered safely and received all the services free of charge".



Eterza Melvis and her son Princely in Ukende refugee settlement, Ogoja, Cross River State. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende.

The Government of Nigeria has granted refugees access to national health systems, where refugees receive services on par with nationals. To strengthen health services that have become overburdened with the arrival of refugees, UNHCR has worked to improve the quality of government-provided medical services for refugees and their hosts by strengthening existing national primary and secondary healthcare structures.

Eterza Melvis, a 23-year-old Cameroonian refugee mother of two children, fled with her husband to Nigeria in December 2017. They left everything behind. Prior to her delivery in July 2021, Eterza registered for her pre-natal care at the Ukende Health centre - a government health facility, where she received basic services including routine drugs, laboratory investigations, vaccinations, malaria prevention therapy, mosquito net, and delivery kits. In the early hours of 20 July 2021, Eterza went into labour in her home at the Ukende refugee settlement and was rushed to the Ukende Healthcare Centre by her husband, where she delivered a bouncing baby boy - Princely. With the help of an experienced midwife, she delivered safely and was discharged within 24 hours.

Before the arrival of refugees, the Ukende Primary Healthcare centre lacked basic medical care facilities and personnel. UNHCR has supported the Government in strengthening the centre with health personnel, medical equipment, WASH facilities, solar electricity, a pharmacy, and a laboratory to improve medical services for refugees and their hosts.

Development Partnerships

FAO and UNHCR are in the process of developing a broader country partnership to support the refugee response in Nigeria. A first partnership initiative is a joint multi-sector project to promote income generation among refugees and host communities, reduce exposure of women and girls to protection risks including GBV, for example while searching for wood fuel, along with efforts to reduce pressure on natural resources.

Using the technical expertise of FAO, an agricultural development agency, vulnerable refugees and host community households in Taraba get started with briquette production and fuel-efficient stoves, tapping into market potential in the area as a means for women to earn livelihoods. To start, FAO will also support 3,100 households with agricultural inputs for farming, home gardening, poultry and livestock inputs enabling refugees to engage in agricultural livelihoods.

This partnership is an example of the GCR in practice. Sustainable refugee response means anchoring it in local development plans and new programmes that directly support national and local service systems-strengthening and more

employment opportunities for all, so that refugees can contribute to the communities that host them – a win-win situation.

UNHCR also collaborates with national institutions such as the Lagos State Employability Trust Fund and Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, that provides skills training and entrepreneurship support to Lagos residents, including refugees. UNHCR works as a catalyst to get more development partners (UN agencies, multilateral development banks, bilateral donors, private sector, NGOs, civil society, academia) engaged in the refugee response, by doing more of what they do best but focusing on the locations in Nigeria that host refugees.



Luti, Mpela and Landu, three refugee women who now work full time as painters in Lagos area, thanks to participation in a Lagos State Employability Trust Fund training. © UNHCR

Global Refugee Forum 2023

The second Global Refugee Forum in 2023 will be an opportunity to share experiences and create new innovative partnerships for sustainable models of refugee inclusion and self-reliance. A series of discussions and briefings will be held in the lead up to the 2023 GRF. The process of **pledge-matching** – of creating new ideas, partnerships, and initiatives for refugees and their hosts – **starts now**. States can engage in the GRF co-sponsorship groups, share good practices, get involved in the GRF thematic areas, take part in the support platforms, participate in briefings, and much more.



GCR Updates by Sector

Sector	Current Situation	Steps to take/ achieve
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Inclusion of refugees in national school system, with access to certification ▼ Low enrollment and completion rates among school-aged refugee children ▼ Not enough teachers ▼ Large out-of-school population ▼ Disincentives such as fees, lack of school-feeding, discrimination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ School enrollment and completion of all school-aged refugees (SDG 4) ▶ Sufficient number of qualified, supported teachers delivering quality education to all
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Refugees access the national health system, referral system functioning ▶ Health interventions (through national health insurance scheme) fully funded by UNHCR ▼ Lack of medicines and health professionals, and facilities including solar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sustainable model whereby refugees self-finance health insurance ▼ Significantly improved SDG3 indicators for refugees and host communities
Economic Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Refugees have the right to work ▲ Informal businesses common, skills among the population ▶ Limited self-reliance among refugees, particularly those living in settlements ▶ Refugees face difficulties accessing formal jobs ▼ Large-scale training or development programs not available in refugee-hosting locations ▼ Limited or challenging access to land to pursue agricultural livelihoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Large-scale job creation programmes for refugees and hosts ▼ Large-scale business development programmes for refugees and hosts ▶ Strengthened national employment services and opportunities ▶ Some efforts to allocate land by State governments to refugees for agricultural livelihoods, but insufficient/ requires significant advocacy/ mediation with host communities
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Refugees have freedom of movement and access to identification documents, including enrollment in the national identity management system ▲ Refugees have access to national justice and policing systems ▶ Response to gender-based violence and child protection provided by UNHCR funded by humanitarian funding streams ▲ Asylum system/ refugee status determination (RSD) processing is in place, but with gaps ▲ Temporary Protection Status (two years) ▲ SOPs on maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Improved access to functioning justice mechanisms ▶ Lack of discrimination due to refugee status ▼ Refugees to be fully included in stronger national Child protection and SGBV systems and responses ▶ Enhanced referral systems for persons in need of international protection identified/caught up in mixed flows of persons ▶ Strengthening of RSD processing/review of RSD standard operating procedures ▶ Need for a longer/more permanent protection status ▶ Operationalization of the SOPs on maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum.
Social Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Many refugees highly dependent on UNHCR support and cash-based interventions for food assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Refugees are included in the NASSCO universal register of beneficiaries (URB) ▼ Vulnerable refugees to be supported through same government programmes as nationals, with diversified financing ▶ Strengthened social protection systems and safety nets for all in Nigeria
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Separate system to collect socioeconomic data on refugees, supported by UNHCR ▼ No poverty analysis of refugees ▼ Refugees missing in national surveys/ data systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▼ Refugees are included in Household Surveys, data collection exercises, SDG indicators disaggregated by status and Age, Gender, Diversity (AGD) ▶ Refugees are included in the Census

Current progress: ▲ Good ▶ Developing ▼ Weak