UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

End of Year Report 2023

UNHCR's Economic Empowerment Achievements and Impact in Honduras

In 2023, UNHCR dedicated efforts to enhancing economic support and empowerment for people forced to flee and those at-risk in Honduras.

This involved expanding access to job training, financial services, and entrepreneurial opportunities. These initiatives aimed to bolster financial independence and facilitate the seamless integration of internally displaced people, refugees, and asylum-seekers into their host communities, ultimately promoting economic self-reliance and to support families, women, and youth in achieving a dignified and safe future.

Ana Cristina (54) was the only woman to graduate from the refrigeration workshop at the community training center.

Currently, in addition to dedicating herself to her business, she knows about repair and maintenance services for air conditioners and refrigerators.

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Key Achievements

Direct Economic Empowerment

UNHCR directly supported over **470 people** with programmes aimed at promoting self-employment, employment, and financial inclusion, with over **70% being women.** These programmes have indirectly impacted more than 2,100 people.

Skill Development and Certification

UNHCR teamed up with the private sector and public institutions to provide **technical and vocational skills training and certifications to over 120 people,** including women and youth, enhancing their qualifications and employment prospects in competitive sectors.

Educational Advancement through Scholarships

UNHCR provided scholarships, **co-sponsored by the private sector,** to enable adults to complete formal education and receive training in graphic design, equipping them for opportunities in the digital economy.

Entrepreneurial Support

UNHCR delivered financial assistance for business startups or vocational training to over **250 people,** fostering economic self-sufficiency and resilience.

Internship and Employment Integration

UNHCR's pilot internship programme marked a significant success with over **90 graduates, achieving a 49% employment rate upon completion,** showing the potential of internships programme in transitioning participants into the workforce. It also provides UNHCR and employers with valuable lessons to apply in 2024 to increase employment rates.

Private Sector Collaboration

UNHCR collaborated with **over 60 private sector entities** to develop joint solutions for forcibly displaced persons, through a three-month internship programme. This collaboration culminated in a commitment from one company, which submitted a pledge at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF).

Enhancement of Technical and Vocational Education

UNHCR and its partners extended their support to **28 technical and vocational education centres (TVET),** improving curriculum content, teaching quality, and infrastructure to ensure competitive training programmes for the workforce.

Community-Level Social Entrepreneurships

UNHCR gave support to **seven community-level social entrepreneurship initiatives in high-risk areas,** aimed at stimulating local economic growth and creating sustainable community benefits.

With the support of UNHCR, private companies and GraphXAcademy, it has been possible to provide displaced people with the necessary tools to pursue a career in graphic design and facilitate their inclusion in the labor market.

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Working with partners

UNHCR deepened its commitment to fostering economic self-reliance among displaced populations through strategic partnerships and coordination mechanisms. UNHCR contributed to sector working groups and clusters, and with technical and financial support to key governmental agencies such as the Secretariat of Human Rights (SEDH). UNHCR's collaboration with SEDH, the Secretariat of Labour and Social Security (SETRASS), and the National Vocational Training Institute (INFOP) enabled a comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges of forced displacement.

In addition, UNHCR's advocacy efforts within the Comprehensive Regional Protection and Solutions Framework (MIRPS) have been crucial in sharing and adopting regional best practices on economic empowerment. Locally, UNHCR focused its initiatives on municipalities including La Ceiba, Choluteca, Ocotepeque, and San Pedro Sula, where UNHCR worked to strengthen the capacities of local NGOs and other stakeholders. These collaborations have not only enhanced the effectiveness of response programmes but also ensured that UNHCR's interventions are well-aligned with the needs of the communities UNHCR supports, leading to more sustainable and impactful outcomes in 2023.

Challenges and Adaptations

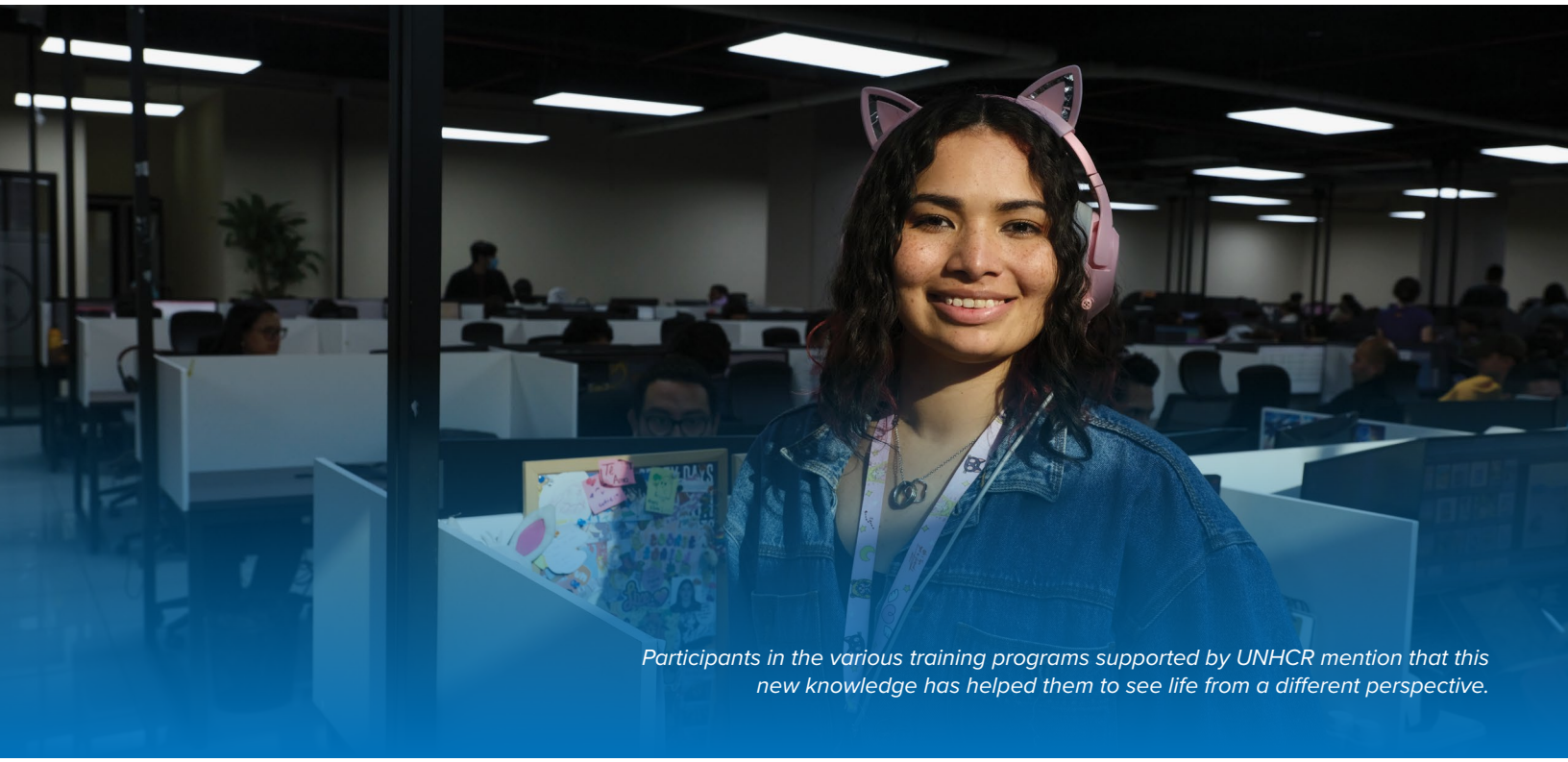
Despite these achievements, challenges such as economic instability, generalized violence, ongoing stigmatization of people from high-risk communities, and a significant skills mismatch with labour market demands may hinder the potential expansion and long-term impact of these programmes. In response, UNHCR enhanced its online training options and expanded collaborations with the private sector to increase opportunities for participants.

Impact on Community and Future Outlook

UNHCR's initiatives contributed to improved economic well-being of many and have fostered local economies by advancing skilled workers and promoting small business growth. In 2024, UNHCR plans to double the reach of its economic empowerment programmes, focusing on digital skills and environmentally sustainable jobs to align with global economic trends and sustainability goals.

Conclusion

UNHCR's initiatives in Honduras in 2023 have enhanced economic stability and community integration for people forcibly displaced and those at-risk. UNHCR is committed to expanding these successful programmes to ensure greater impacts in the future, continually adapting to meet the evolving needs of its participants and the broader economic landscape.



Participants in the various training programs supported by UNHCR mention that this new knowledge has helped them to see life from a different perspective.

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