

# UNHCR support to the host community

October 2022



*June 2021, Nouakchott, Mauritania. Donation of two medical ambulances and medical supplies to the Ministry of Health in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. UNHCR/Viola Bruttomesso*

The Government of Mauritania is a generous host to more than 100,000 refugees and asylum-seekers on its territory. Out of this total population, 89,468 Malian refugees reside in the arid south-eastern region of Hodh Chargui, which is prone to climatic shocks. While refugees are able to access their full range of rights in Mauritania, their presence places additional pressure on scarce natural resources and local services with limited capacity. As such, and in line with the Global Compact for Refugees, UNHCR's initiatives in Mauritania have been designed to have a positive impact on refugees and host communities. This information note provides some concrete examples of what UNHCR describes as an area-based approach to its refugee response in Mauritania.

From 2020 to 2022, UNHCR invested nearly \$6 million (USD) in the host population in Mauritania to provide cash assistance, strengthen infrastructure and support civil society.

**+** Support to the host community in the health response against Covid-19

**2020/2021**

- **Contribution to the national pandemic response plan:** delivery to the Government of batches of hygiene, medical and laboratory equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE) and medicines
- **Provision of prefabricated buildings (Refugee Housing Units - RHU)** to serve as isolation, vaccination and testing units

**2021/2022**

- **Contribution to national awareness campaigns on barrier gestures and vaccination:** television clips and radio spots in five languages, poster campaign, training of caregivers and publishing of information materials (posters and information booklet)

**!** Humanitarian assistance for affected households

**2020**

- **Cash assistance to 500 households** affected by flooding in Fassala

**2021**

- **Cash assistance to 3,798 vulnerable households** threatened by food insecurity in the four localities of Bassikounou, Dhar, Fassala, and Mevge.
- **Cash assistance to 1,700 households** to acquire agricultural inputs for livestock and to 40 households to replace livestock lost to rabies.

**2022**

- **Life-saving humanitarian assistance** (water, food, shelter, hygiene kits) and water supply to **850 households** (e.g., Mauritians who returned from Mali due to insecurity and Mauritians affected by heavy rains in Fassala).
- **Cash assistance to 158 households** affected by the heavy rains and high winds in Laghdaf and Elbeyidh, including 31 female heads of household.
- **Cash assistance to 1,961 vulnerable households** within the host population in Hodh Chargui

From 2020 to 2022, UNHCR distributed more than USD 1M in cash among the host population in the Hodh Chargui region.



2 February 2022, Mauritania. Volunteers from the host population in Bassikounou are supported by a joint-project UNHCR and GIZ to promote environmentally friendly waste management techniques. UNHCR/Malika Diagana



## Access to Livelihoods

### 2020

- Construction of an **agro-food center** in Fassala
- Construction of an **artisan house** in Bassikounou, which includes separate rooms for training, administration and storage, and workshops for sewing, leather, carpentry and metalwork/welding.
- **90 trainings provided to the host population** at ILO training school in Mbera camp
- Construction of the **access road** between Bassikounou and the Mbera camp
- Support to **80 income-generating activities and ten green small and medium enterprises (SMEs)** in 16 villages in the Hodh Chargui to support reforestation activities

### 2021

- Construction of a **cattle feed bank** in Avernane and Koussana
- Construction of **two community stores** in Avernane and Alhamedou
- Provision of **three grain mills** to the localities of Avernane and Koussana
- Support to **66 small SMEs** consisting of **821 members** in the localities of Bassikounou, Dhar, Fassala and Mevge: cash investment and trainings

### 2022

- Support for the set-up of **three employment counters of the national employment agency** Techghil in Bassikounou, Nouadhibou and Nouakchott
- Support to **47 SMEs** in the localities of Bassikounou, Dhar, Fassala and Mevge: 20 under programs initiated in 2021 and 27 under new support
- Support to **15 collective income-generating activities** provided through the national economic inclusion programme Al Baraka: trainings, coaching and cash investment



## Strengthening of health structures

### 2020-2021

- Acquisition of **two medicalized ambulances** for medical facilities in Nema and Bassikounou.
- Construction of **incinerators for six health centers** in the Hodh Chargui region and for the Nema Hospital Center
- Construction of **18 latrines** in the **health centers** of Nema, Bousteilla and Adel Bagrou
- Acquisition of equipment and **resuscitation kits** for the health structures in the Hodh Chargui
- Acquisition of equipment for four **reference laboratories** in Mauritania

### 2022

- Creation of a **mobile eye clinic** in the Hodh Chargui region



## Strengthening water access and management

### 2020

- Construction of a **dam** in Lemghaiss

### 2021

- Provision of **water supply infrastructure for 20 water points** in Dhar, Amourj, Djiguenni, Bassikounou
- Rehabilitation of a **water point** in Avernane

### 2022

- Provision of **two generators** to Eichteiba and Hai

In addition to the abovementioned interventions, UNHCR supports the newly created governmental unit dedicated to enhancing coordination and monitoring of humanitarian and development investments and projects implemented in Hodh Chargui. Specifically, UNHCR is assisting this new unit to develop capacity for communication and partnerships management.

From 2020 to 2022, UNHCR has invested more than USD 4.8M to strengthen infrastructure within the host community for health, livelihood access, and water access and management.

## Action with civil society

### 2020

- Creation of **12 conflict management committees** to resolve tensions around natural resource management in Bassikounou and surrounding villages.

### 2021

- Establishment of **14 women's clubs** on peaceful coexistence, fight against gender-based violence and the promotion of women's leadership in the Moughataa of Bassikounou
- Expansion of **conflict management committees** to two new localities
- Rehabilitation of the **Bassikounou Youth Center** and opening of new spaces (e.g., library)
- **Mobile journalism and life skills trainings** for young people in Bassikounou
- Opening of **seven literacy centers** in the moughataa of Bassikounou
- Capacity building for **seven Mauritanian journalists, three project managers and four young refugees from Mbera** in two intensive trainings on forced displacement (June 2021) and environmental issues (October 2021) in Nouakchott

### 2022

- Hiring of **50 volunteers in Bassikounou** and surrounding villages to collect garbage and raise awareness about **waste management** (“Volontaires Ville Verte”). Volunteers promote environmentally friendly waste management techniques and strengthen social cohesion by sharing knowledge and best practices within the refugee and host communities
- Capacity building and experience-sharing workshop, in partnership with the German Agency for Development Cooperation (GIZ), for **10 Mauritanian journalists** and **10 refugee students** on access to asylum.

From 2020 to 2022, UNHCR has invested **nearly USD 130,000** to strengthen community initiatives and civil society actors on issues of conflict management, women's rights, resource management, environmental protection, peace and tolerance.

<sup>1</sup> Cellule de Coordination de Projets et Programme d'Investissement du Hodh Chargui

## Studies conducted by UNHCR and its partners

[Value chain analysis: Identification of economic opportunities for the population of the Mbera refugee camp and neighboring host populations](#), 2018

[Diagnosis of the impact of refugees on host populations](#), 2019

[Mapping of potential sources of conflict between Malian refugees and the host population in the Bassikounou Moughataa](#), 2021

[Study on the vulnerability of youth in communities in the border areas of Hodh Chargui, Mauritania](#), 2021

### UNHCR is grateful for the support of donors to projects benefiting the host community in Mauritania:

**European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTFa)** | [Strengthening the Resilience of Populations Displaced by Instability in Northern Mali and Supporting Peaceful Coexistence between Communities](#) | July 2017 - June 2021

**African Development Bank (AfDB)** | [Support Project for G5 Sahel Countries to Combat the Coronavirus Pandemic \(COVID-19\)](#) | July 2020 - June 2022

**Peace Building Fund (PBF)** | Consolidation of the "Green Peace" in Mauritania: Support for the peaceful coexistence between young refugee men and women and host communities in the Hodh El Chargui region of Mauritania | January - November 2022

**Germany (BMZ)** | [Pronexus: Capacity Building for Better Socio-Economic Inclusion of Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Vulnerable Members of Host Communities in Mauritania](#) | January 2021 - August 2023

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