

The Umbrella Refugee Committee project



Project Context

- Unique and operational refugee empowerment project , taking place under RBE second line countries directives.
- Pursuant to GRF recommendation on refugee participation , project aims at providing local authorities with template on how to concretely implement refugee participation from codesigning policies , to planning up to implementation and evaluation phases .

Refugee Committee Definition

Made of asylum seeker and refugees as its core members and leaders, this refugee led organization is working across nationalities, cultural groups, and gender orientations. The main goal for this community-based structure is to establish effective working relationship with local authorities , ensure opening of all the rights and benefits , optimum service delivery towards the refugee communities while keeping with social cohesion principles. Wide scope of work : conducting surveys to support evidence based advocacy strategies around refugee reception and refugee integration .



Definition continued

- Carving a central space for refugees in integration administrative spheres
- Directly shape the refugee narrative in national conversation on migration , systematically counter misconception and misinformation .
- Play an interface role between communities and the authorities
- Play an operational role with institutions , conduct community consultation ,
- Built partnership with key stakeholders in refugee reception , support or run activities for these reception stakeholders
- Partner with stakeholders in labor market , institution dealing with diploma and expertise certification
- Partner with housing market stakeholders ,
- Partner with Education stakeholders

UNHCR Methodology

- Decision to embark on the project taken in 2019
- Approaching municipal authorities in brussels 2019
- Monitoring and assessing refugee community assembly point community by community .(2019)
- Approaching formal and informal leader , using AGDM approach (2019)
- Booking community venues for refugee community consultations to gather their perception on integration , possible solution feedback (2019)
- Second round of information briefing introducing an outline of the refugee committee project to the communities at large .(2019)

UNHCR Methodology

- Mobile team - Hiring 30 facilitators covering all the main refugee population groups ; keeping with AGDM . (LGBTQ facilitators and woman groups facilitators) roles: intensive engagement with community structures. 2019/2020
- Partnership with academia with psychosocial faculty of ULB, KU Leuven, Liege to monitor and play an advisory role in the process of establishing a model of governance in the refugee committee select 2019/2020
- They also had a role in the conduct of surveys ,data collection method and focus groups discussion 2019/2020



Activities undertaken in the first phase

- 7 Community consultations on their integration priorities
- Supporting local authorities in the prevention of covid 19
- Getting invited to join municipal bodies (comite de la diversite Bruxelles 1000)
- Building partnership with financial institution (Microstart)
- Supporting MSFB mobile clinic
- Supporting Actiris activities towards newly arrived refugees for their insertion in the labor market
- Partnership with DLA PIPER capacity building
- Survey on covid impact in refugee communities

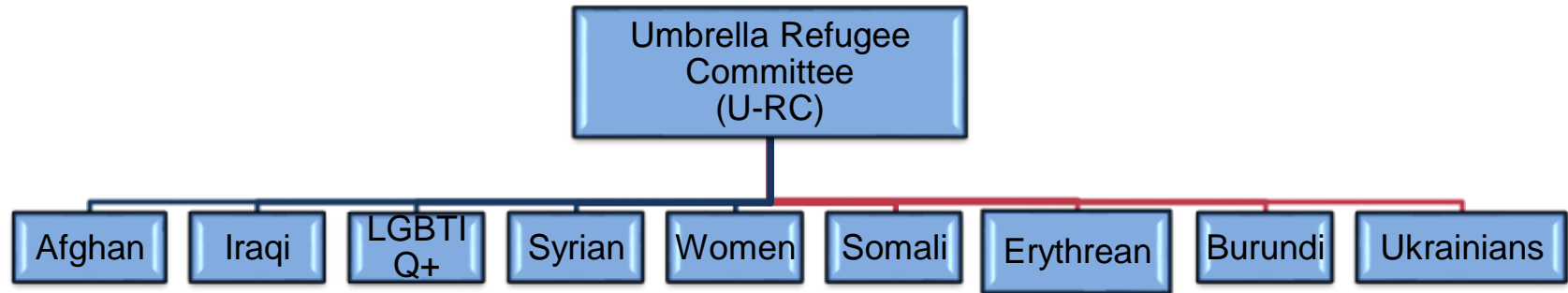
Specific delivery

- Refugee mobile teams for COVID19 prevention activities with msfb
- Refugee mobile team organized 5 focus group discussion to assess opposition to vaccination
- Over 2 years 58 LGBTQi+ training of 500 Fedasil and partner staff on engagement and protection of LGBTQi+ asylum seekers
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Specific delivery

- Microstart and URC collaboration generated 250 microloan to refugee's entrepreneur
- The covid survey reached 300 respondents
- 10 Mobile teams surveying homelessness , establishing list and linking up with housing focal point in the region
- Rainbow Refugee committee was the first one created in Belgium by December 2019

Current status and Ukraine operation





Current status of Ukraine operations

- 1 refugee committee supported by 10 mobile teams
- 9 refugees Special Person Of Contact contracted working at cabinet level with decision makers to shape operations and facilitate service delivery
- 7 collective shelters directly and entirely managed by the committee with over 600 refugee's residents
- One community center 7 storey building directly and entirely managed by refugees , providing 35 activities and visited in average by 250 refugees per day
- UNHCR and the SPOC attend dozens of weekly meeting with decision makers to assess results versus objectives and suggest corrective approach
- RC's are constantly are connecting the communities with the information and processes through social media and community consultations
- Over 100 community consultation held
- Since 2023 over 9600 refugees have received services through our center and mobile teams



Ukrainian focus versus Universalist focus

- Ukrainian operation has brought sharply into focus the refugee reception crisis and the perceived double standard to access rights and benefits .
- UNHCR and the refugee committee have supported the authorities in the search for ad hoc and structural solutions in the housing and job sector moving gradually from a Ukraine only focus to a universalist approach .
- URC and Ukraine Voices refugees committee joined forces and now conduct joint activities (collective shelter services , facilitation services during relocation from occupied buildings , information session and dissemination) at the request of federal and regional authorities when possible
- The regional government has decided to formally provide the Ukrainians Voices and URC with collective shelter and community center manager status with 7 collective shelter managed by the Ukraine voices RC
- One collective shelter is managed jointly by UKRN and URC covering BIP (afghans /Palestinians and sub-Saharan nationals) with others collective shelter in the pipelines



Thank you