

SOLIDARITY INITIATIVE FOR REFUGEES (SIR)

OPERATIONAL UPDATE

JUNE 2024





BI-ANNUAL OPERATIONAL UPDATE

INTRODUCTION

Over the past six months, Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR) has taken significant steps towards supporting the refugee and host communities in Kakuma. The organization has also focused on enhancing its institutional capabilities and promoting climate resilience.

SIR has achieved notable milestones in digital solutions and innovations, women empowerment, and community agency. In digital training, 255 youth have completed basic ICT courses laying a foundation for advanced technological education. Additionally, 68 girls have transitioned from digital skills training to earning an average of Kenya Shillings Five Hundred (Kshs. 500) daily through online work. We are also pleased to have assisted eight additional learners in securing international job contracts and provided advanced ICT training in web development to 25 learners.

Our organization has implemented financial literacy and entrepreneurship training for girls promoting their financial independence. Our training on social-emotional learning (SEL) reached 65 parents and 15 community leaders, enhancing children's support systems. Collaborations with parenting groups and schools, and environmental initiatives such as tree planting involving 455 children, underscore SIR's comprehensive community engagement.

In the last quarter, SIR staff underwent various trainings to strengthen their capacity. These trainings include one on Financial Management and Accounting Software aimed at improving financial practices through QuickBooks, a two-day Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) Training on Management Information Systems, and a training on Resource Mobilization.

These achievements highlight the organization's commitment to economic empowerment, sustainable development, gender equality, environmental stewardship and institutional growth.

PROGRAMME UPDATES

1) DIGITAL SOLUTIONS AND INNOVATIONS

Digital Solutions and Innovations is a critical component that underscores SIR's commitment to strengthen market-driven skills development training and advanced digital skills. Additionally, the organization is dedicated to enhancing employability skills through this pillar, thus creating dignified job opportunities and increasing income for refugee and host community youth.

Basic ICT Training

As of 10 June 2024, our organization had successfully trained two hundred and fifty-five (255) youth in basic Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills.

The Basic ICT Training is a comprehensive program designed to equip participants with essential digital literacy, enabling them navigate and utilize digital tools effectively. By building a strong foundation, the program prepares these individuals for advanced technological education and enhances their employability in the growing digital economy.

Transitioning from Digital Skills Training to Mentorship

In an impressive development, 68 girls who completed the digital skills training have transitioned into our mentorship program.

Through this initiative, they have commenced online work, earning an average of Kenyan Shillings Five Hundred (Kshs. 500) per day. This transition not only equips these young women with valuable practical work experience but also empowers them economically, promoting financial independence and enhancing their socio-economic prospects. This milestone underscores our commitment to fostering sustainable development and gender equality by providing young women with the tools and opportunities to thrive in the digital economy.



Leda Chancelin, a Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR) student who successfully completed the digital training program and transitioned into mentorship. She is currently working online and earning an income.

Global Client Connections

We have successfully connected eight additional learners with global clients, enabling them to secure yearly contractual work. This engagement provides invaluable international work experience and the opportunity to expand their professional networks.

This accomplishment is a reflection of the high quality of our training program and the exceptional competence of our learners. The achievement also encourages us to continue upholding our commitment to preparing our beneficiaries for success in the global workforce.

Advanced ICT Skills and Web Development Training

In addition to the basic ICT training, the organization has provided advanced ICT skills training and web development courses to 25 learners over the last two quarters. These advanced programs equip participants with specialized skills in web development thereby enhancing their employability and offering greater access to advanced career opportunities in the technology sector.



Newly constructed classroom at the Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR) centre in collaboration with Source Humanitarian Network.

Construction of New Classroom

In June, the construction of a new classroom in collaboration with Source Humanitarian Network was completed. This vital addition is set to enhance access to digital skills training, mentorship, and job linkages for refugee youth in Kakuma Refugee Camp. The new facility will enable us continue empowering young refugees with the necessary tools and opportunities to thrive in the digital economy.

2) WOMEN EMPOWERMENT AND COMMUNITY AGENCY

The goal is to provide life skills training (Financial Literacy, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights), and business development support, to empower refugee and host community youth and women to build economic resilience and enhance Community Support for Children's Education and Social and Emotional Learning.

Financial and Entrepreneurship Training for Girls

The organization's business unit model has successfully provided training in financial literacy and entrepreneurship to a group of girls. This particular initiative is designed to empower young women by equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to manage their finances effectively and embark on entrepreneurial ventures. The training encompasses key areas such as budgeting, saving and business planning all aimed at fostering financial independence and entrepreneurial success.

Social Emotional Learning for Parents and Community Leaders

Over the past two quarters, the organization has made significant progress in promoting social-emotional learning (SEL) within the community.

We have trained 65 parents and 15 community leaders on SEL principles. This training program is designed to help these individuals better support the education and well-being of children in their care. By fostering emotional intelligence, empathy, and effective communication skills, parents and community leaders are better equipped to create nurturing and supportive environments for children.



Community outreach session at the Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR) premises at the beginning of a UNHCR project.

Collaboration with Parenting Groups and Local Schools

SIR is actively collaborating with six parenting groups, each comprising 20 to 25 parents. These groups are working closely with six local schools to enhance child education development and well-being. The partnership focuses on holistic educational support, emphasizing the importance of creating a conducive learning environment both at home and in school.

3) CLIMATE RESILIENCE

In April 2024, Kakuma Refugee Camp experienced severe flooding caused by the El Niño rains. The heavy rains have severely affected the refugee population as they live precarious lives in temporary or semi-permanent shelters. Many families have faced significant displacement and loss. According to the UNHCR, more than 75 people have lost their lives, whilst others have been injured or reported missing.¹



Severely damaged shelter and eroded land in Kakuma Refugee Camp following flooding caused by the El Niño rains.

¹ UNHCR Kenya. “UNHCR Lends Support to Flood-Affected People in Nairobi - UNHCR Kenya.” April 30, 2024. <https://www.unhcr.org/ke/25125-unhcr-lends-support-to-flood-affected-people-in-nairobi.html>.



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The ongoing floods have particularly impacted the Kakuma 1 area near the torrential river 'laga'. Our team conducted a needs assessment that highlights urgent challenges at the community level including congestion and poor living conditions. The relocated families face overcrowding and unsanitary conditions, particularly in shared facilities. The lack of proper hygiene and sanitation facilities poses a risk of disease outbreaks. There is also an increased risk of theft and insecurity in the new settlements that needs to be addressed.

Some families are unwilling to move due to concerns about the harsh living conditions in Kalobeyei and the transition from in-kind assistance to cash transfers. Some families were relocated with only a few accepting to move to Kalobeyei while others remained in Kakuma.

The relocated families disclosed their immediate needs which include food and bedding. The children require school fees, school uniforms, shoes, school bags, books and pens to facilitate their education and ensure their continued learning despite the displacement. It was also reported that the families require sanitary pads, soaps, lotions and other hygiene products to maintain personal hygiene and prevent the spread of diseases.

The SIR Centre has also been significantly affected by the floods. The grounds are waterlogged, making access and movement within the premises difficult. The muddy conditions have compromised cleanliness, raising concerns about potential health issues for both staff and refugees utilizing the center's services.

Our team remains committed to collaborating with local authorities, community leaders, our donors and partners to identify practical solutions that prioritize the well-being and dignity of those affected by the floods. Support and partnerships are essential as we strive to provide effective and sustainable assistance during this difficult period.

Environmental Initiatives: Tree Planting Activities

As part of our commitment to environmental sustainability, SIR has integrated environmental activities, particularly tree planting, into our educational programs. This past quarter, the initiative has successfully reached 455 children, instilling in them the values of environmental stewardship and responsibility. The tree planting activities are conducted with parenting groups and local schools, promoting a hands-on approach to environmental conservation learning.

4) INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH AND STRENGTHENING

SIR is committed to strengthening its institutional capacity in key functional and operational areas. This pillar focuses on refining and enhancing SIR's governance structures and management processes to ensure transparency, accountability and effective decision-making. Furthermore, we are dedicated to building and sharing capacity with other local organizations. The advancement of this pillar has been supported through partnerships such as that of the DANIDA SPA Civil Society Engagement Project.



Bahana Hydrogene, Executive Director, Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (far right) among other leaders at the launch of the Resource Mobilization Strategy event in Nairobi organized by the Danish Refugee Council as part of the DANIDA SPA Civil Society Engagement Project.

Organizational Resilience

Significant progress was made in organizational resilience including, the launch and implementation of the Resource Mobilization (RM) strategy. In the second quarter, the team underwent a two-day training on Resource Mobilization. These steps have played a role in

improving our team’s capacity to navigate complex funding landscapes and adapt to changing financial environments.

Financial Management



An external finance consultant explaining a concept to the Finance Officer at the Financial Management Training held at the SIR Centre, Kakuma.

In the realm of Financial Management, we began implementing the revised Financial and Procurement Manual along with new organizational policies to combat fraud, corruption, and money laundering.

Additionally, key staff underwent a two-day training on Financial Management and Accounting Software, aimed at improving financial practices through the use of QuickBooks.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL)

In May, the organization’s management and programme staff participated in a two-day Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (MEAL) Training. The focused on Management Information Systems.

The training enhanced our team’s ability to gather and analyze data more effectively thus contributing to a stronger foundation for evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement in our programs.



Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) Officer at the hybrid MEAL Information Systems Training

Governance and Leadership

We are pleased to have finalized the design and publication of a 5-year Strategic Plan. In addition, we reviewed the Human Resource Manual to enhance organizational effectiveness through clear job descriptions and equitable compensation.

The SIR Management team has been meeting over the past two quarters to ensure strategic planning, oversight and alignment of operations with the goals.

PARTNERS



Loughborough University



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Solidarity Initiative for Refugees (SIR) staff and two consultants (far right and far left) at a Resource Mobilization Training held in Kakuma.



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