

Innovation presents opportunities to make the humanitarian system more agile, efficient, and effective. UNHCR focuses on empowering refugees so they not only have more agency, but can also keep UNHCR and others, accountable. UNHCR can harness more effectively innovative problem-solving methodologies, by adopting technologies, open innovation platforms, and strategic partnerships to help UNHCR achieve global goals and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the organisation.

Practical examples of innovation in the field:

- **Predictive Analytics Engine (Sub-Saharan Africa):** A predictive analytics platform aimed at providing better data to deliver better decisions. We measure multiple variables to see how changes may affect internally displaced populations. This is an experimental project to better understand how data can be used to predict movements of people, particularly in the Horn of Africa, to help prepare for the emergencies of the future;
- **Social Media Monitoring (Europe Crisis, DRC, Venezuela):** The Innovation Service with the support of UN Global Pulse started a Big Data sentiment analysis with the Regional Bureau for Europe during the Europe Refugee Crisis with the aim of providing decision makers with additional context to the situation as it unfolded within Europe. Additionally, UNHCR has leveraged media and social media monitoring tools to analyse reported protection concerns in a number of contexts, strengthening organisational early warning systems;
- **Establishing feedback and complaints mechanisms (FYROM – Europe Crisis):** Innovation uses data-driven implementation, with the most important data is feedback from communities. Innovation has established feedback mechanisms operating across multiple channels and establishing due referral protocols, all the while incorporating robust data analysis (qualitative/quantitative) and visualisations;
- **UNHCR Innovation Fellowship - changing mindsets and building the organisational capacity to innovate (Global):** The UNHCR Innovation Fellowship is a year-long learning programme for UNHCR's workforce. The Fellowship programme focuses on building Innovation Fellows' innovation skills and competencies in addition to supporting them to facilitate innovation with colleagues, partners, and refugees in their own operations or divisions. Over the course of the year, Fellows learn and use innovation methods, tools, and embed new approaches in innovation projects. The Fellowship is grounded in the idea that to have sustainable innovation you need to focus on mindset change and culture. Since 2014, over one-hundred UNHCR staff and affiliates have been trained through the Innovation Fellowship.
- **RefugGIS (Jordan):** UNHCR, along with the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) and International Relief and Development (IRD), created Refugee GIS, or RefuGIS, an innovative project that empowers refugees living in Zaatari to learn and build the GIS services needed to bolster the camp's continually growing community. Though a number of capacity-building initiatives have been implemented for refugees around the world, RefuGIS—which is funded by a grant from the UNHCR Innovation Fund—is the first project wherein refugees are wholly involved in community decision-making processes, from emergency planning to infrastructure classification. By employing their newly acquired GIS skills, participants in RefuGIS can create the maps that support discussions about camp management and community engagement.
- **Mobilizing government actors through host community benefits (Tanzania):** UNHCR presented the government the benefits that connectivity brings to refugees and the host community; demonstrating how it could improve

livelihoods, raise living standards, and reduce the burden on donors. After establishing three new towers, the MNO recovered its investment in less than three months and its customer base had increased 200 percent;

- **Humanitarian Innovation Lab – Reimagining refugee communication through technologies (Lebanon):** The HiL is a UNHCR project focused on refugee communication technologies in Lebanon. HiL works with refugees and service providers to develop technologies and frameworks that offer new approaches and solutions to how we respond to a refugee crisis. One current project is a Facebook analytics and monitoring platform that utilizes machine learning technologies to help UNHCR and refugee volunteers quickly identify, respond to, and track important protection, health, education and livelihood issues being shared across Facebook groups.
- **Help.unhcr.org (Global):** help.unhcr.org is an online platform that aims to deliver relevant and easy-to-access information to refugees and asylum seekers based on their country of interest. Help.unhcr.org as a solution was developed through UNHCR’s crowdsourcing platform UNHCR Ideas. The first high-fidelity functional prototype was developed by UNHCR Costa Rica field office and was built in a collaborative effort, using inputs from: persons of concern, government authorities, main UNHCR field operation units, regional bureau and partners. Since then, it has expanded to other UNHCR operations. The project was adopted by UNHCR global digital engagement team, which is currently scaling the solution at an international level.
- **Refugee Food Festival (Europe):** The Refugee Food Festival is a citizen initiative created by Food Sweet Food and co-organized by UNHCR to promote the integration of refugees, provide livelihood opportunities, and change the perceptions around refugee communities. Born from a citizens’ initiative, the Refugee Food Festival is an itinerant event through which restaurants open their kitchens to refugee chefs during a gourmet and solidarity event. Since initial launch, there have been over 100 restaurants participating in the event, hosting refugee chefs across fifteen cities in six European countries.

Previous UNHCR - private sector partnerships

- **Instant Network Schools (UNHCR and the Vodafone Foundation):** Since 2013, UNHCR and the Vodafone Foundation have partnered to enhance the quality of education in refugee camps. UNHCR and Vodafone designed the fit-for-purpose, instant classroom “digital school in a box” solution. Each box provides power, connectivity, and tablets or computers so that students and teachers can access online and offline digital educational content and interactive tools. As of January 2017, 31 INS had been deployed, benefiting more than 40,000 young refugees and 600 teachers every month across seven camps in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania.
- **Refugee Housing Unit (Better Shelter, Ikea Foundation, and UNHCR):** A unique collaboration between the IKEA Foundation and UNHCR resulted in an innovative and durable shelter for refugee families around the world. Developed by the Ikea Foundation, Better Shelter and with UNHCR over the past five years, the Better Shelter consists of a sturdy steel frame clad with insulated polypropylene panels, along with a solar panel on the roof that provides four hours of electric light, or mobile phone charging via a USB port. Since production started in June 2015, over 16,000 have been deployed to crisis locations such as Nepal, where MSF used them as clinics following the devastating earthquake. Several thousand have been sent to Iraq, and hundreds to Djibouti to house refugees fleeing Yemen.