As of 2022, more than 100 million people around the world have been forced to flee their homes due to war, violence and persecution—including more than 30 million who fled as refugees across international borders. Recognizing this unprecedented global challenge, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation’s Refugees Initiative aims to partner with and improve the lives and livelihoods of refugee children and families, as well as their host communities. Through our investments in evidence-based programming, research, evaluation, advocacy and locally led responses, we will advance refugee inclusion and integration, ensuring that children receive care that enables their healthy development, and that parents and caregivers have sustainable economic opportunities that foster self-sufficiency. The Refugees Initiative supports partners in Colombia, Ecuador, Ethiopia and Uganda.

### Ideal state

In refugee-hosting communities, children ages prenatal to age five receive quality care that enables their healthy development, and families access dignified economic opportunities that enable them to not only meet their basic needs but thrive.

Refugees are welcomed and accepted as contributors in their communities and have access to identity documents, legal rights and equitable services. Refugees, refugee-led organizations and refugee leaders receive direct support and shape policy and program decisions affecting their lives.

The global refugee field delivers evidence-based programming focused on quality outcomes for displaced people, and service delivery is localized—shifting power and resources to local and national organizations and institutions.

### History and background

The Hilton Foundation has a long history of providing emergency relief in the United States and around the world. The Foundation’s Disaster Relief and Recovery funding began in 1989 and has included providing safe water for refugees in Kenya, education for Syrian refugees and resettlement support for refugees in the United States. The Refugees Initiative was created in 2020 and approved by the board of directors in November 2021 with the goal of investing in, advocating for and catalyzing solutions to address an existing key global challenge. It builds on the Foundation’s experience and expertise in early childhood development (ECD) and workforce development. The Refugees Initiative is now separate from the Foundation’s Disaster Relief and Recovery work.

### Strategy architecture

#### 1. Support Children and Caregivers with a Two-Generation Approach

- **3 sub-strategies**
  - Children’s early learning and health
  - Caregiver wellbeing and parenting practices
  - Caregiver employment and entrepreneurship

#### 2. Create Enabling Communities

- **2 sub-strategies**
  - Reduce refugees’ and migrants’ legal and procedural barriers to employment and ECD services
  - Build social cohesion

#### 3. Build the Field

- **3 sub-strategies**
  - Global advocacy and funder partnerships
  - Voices of lived experience*
  - Improved cross-sector data infrastructure

* Also woven into grants for many other sub-strategies

#### 4. Research and Evaluation

- **2 sub-strategies**
  - Conduct design research to develop scalable two-generation approaches that integrate caregiver wellbeing, employment and child wellbeing
  - Evaluate our investments and approaches; use that information to modify based on learning
POSSIBLE GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

- The Foundation’s Refugees Initiative supports partners in Colombia, Ecuador, Ethiopia and Uganda

EQUITY FOCUS

- Invest in equitable approaches that achieve outcomes for refugees and those who are most marginalized, including children and parents/caregivers

OTHER KEY METRICS

- Target a 25 percent investment of grant funds in local and refugee-led organizations to serve their communities
- Test and implement two-generation approaches that achieve ECD outcomes and livelihood outcomes for caregivers
- Facilitate participation of 25 refugee-led organizations and leaders in the Global Refugee Forum and other relevant national, regional and global policy-making venues

CHALLENGES

- COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted refugees and the communities that host them; these populations face lost livelihoods and education, food insecurity, spiraling poverty, social unrest and increasingly restrictive policies negatively impacting mobility and access to services and markets
- Xenophobia and anti-refugee sentiment could disrupt social cohesion and the policy environment, and make it difficult for refugee-focused organizations to operate in the open, with full transparency
- Coordinating with governments, donor governments and organizations to ensure refugee livelihoods and ECD are prioritized in the midst of unprecedented global emergencies and funding needs, along with domestic considerations related to COVID-19

OPPORTUNITIES

- Elevating the voices of refugees and collaborative models that develop local leadership and solutions
- Investing in research and programming that will inform the global knowledge and evidence base and advance effective and scalable solutions for refugees and their host communities
- Helping create enabling environments that ensure decision-makers at all levels of government, donors and relevant stakeholders mobilize sufficient resources and implement policies that accelerate progress toward self-sufficiency and improved early childhood outcomes among refugees and their host communities

PROGRAM COSTS Strategy25 (2021-2025): Est. $140,500,000

Refugees STRATEGY25 SUMMARY
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