

As of 2023, more than 110 million people around the world have been forced to flee their homes due to war, violence and persecution—including more than 36 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 formally 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.

Initiative Priorities

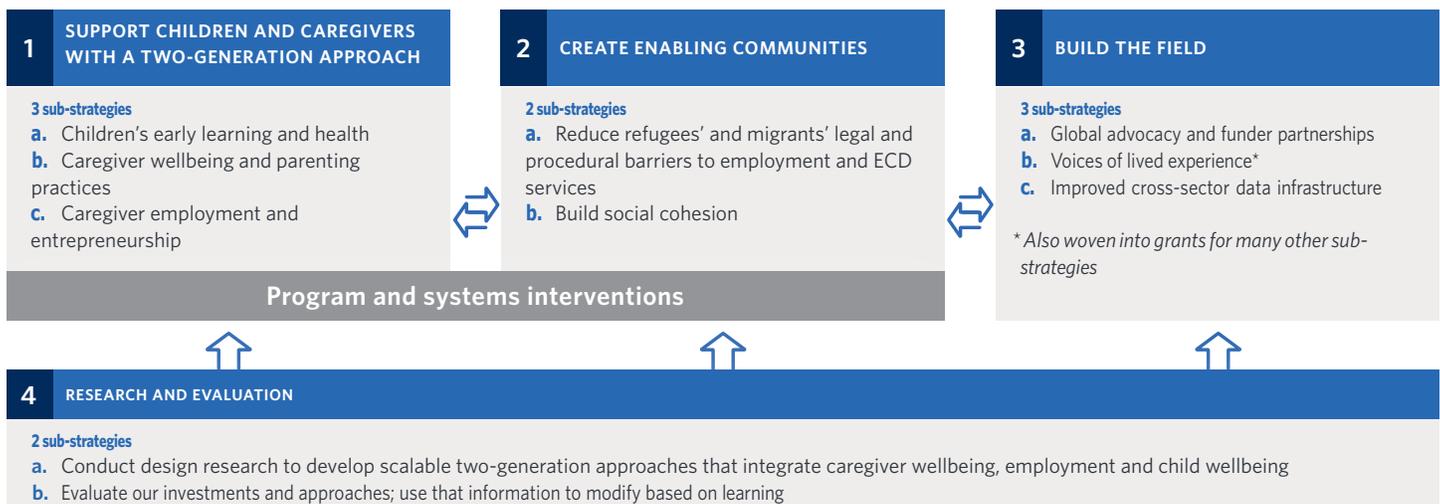
Investing in partners with a “two-generation” approach focusing on integrated early childhood development and livelihoods programs

Establishing strong relationships with stakeholders in each geography, including governments, municipalities and local organizations, and investing in refugee-led organizations

Analyzing and contributing to the global research and evidence base to drive innovative, sustainable and locally-led solutions

Building our advocacy and learning partnerships at local, regional and global levels

Strategy architecture



GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

- 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 their parents and/or caregivers.

OTHER KEY METRICS

- Target a 50 percent investment of grant funds in local and refugee-led organizations to serve their communities
- Test and implement two-generation approaches that achieve early childhood development outcomes and livelihood outcomes for caregivers
- Facilitate meaningful participation of refugee-led organizations and leaders in relevant national, regional and global policy-making venues

PROGRAM COSTS **Strategy25 (2021-2026):** Est. \$140,500,000



CHALLENGES



- COVID-19 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 amid unprecedented global emergencies and funding needs, along with other domestic policy considerations

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