JNAMUN 2026

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISOINER FOR REFUGEES

UNHCR

AGENDA ITEM:

Helping refugees build new lives and contribute to their new communities

USG: Efe Alkan Ergün
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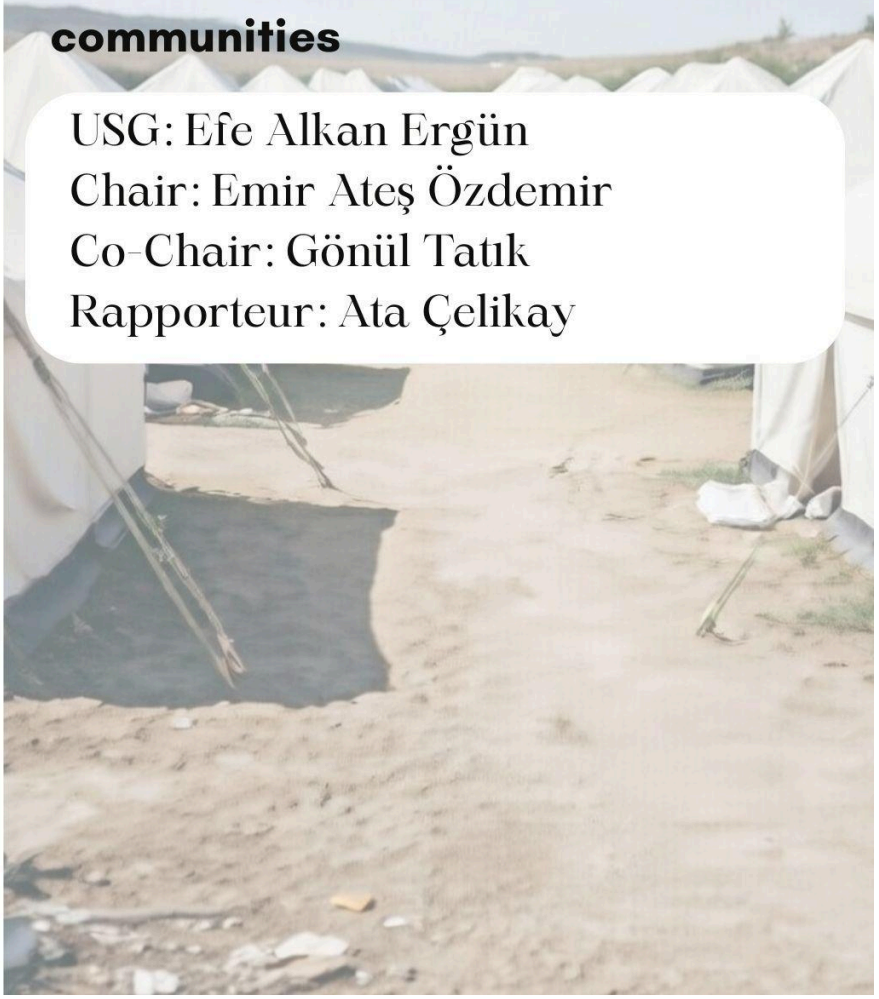

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Letter from the Secretary General

Most honourable participants of Junior Nesibe Aydın Model United Nations 2026 (JNAMUN'26),

It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to JNAMUN'26, which is organized by the hardworking and talented middle school students of Nesibe Aydın Gölbaşı Campus. I extend my sincere thanks to our academic team, who have researched every detail with great care to ensure that you enjoy such a prestigious and diplomatic conference. I also offer my appreciation to our organisation team for planning activities that will allow you to build friendships and collaborate with fellow delegates while having an enjoyable and memorable experience.

As the JNAMUN'26 team, our mission is to support our delegates in every respect, to help you gain insight into diplomacy, to develop your public speaking abilities, and to strengthen your language skills. Another valued aspect of attending JNAMUN'26 is the opportunity to form lasting friendships and create memories that will stay with you. Both our academic and organisation teams have worked with dedication to offer you the most enriching Model United Nations experience possible.

*This year in JNAMUN'26 we are hosting nine committees which are **UNHCR** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), **FAO** (Food and Agriculture Organization), **WHO** (World Health Organization), **UNESCO** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), **CSW** (The Commission on the Status of Women), **UNICEF** (The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund), **DISEC** (Disarmament & International Security Committee), **ECOSOC** (Economic and Social Council), and **SPECPOL** (Special Political and Decolonization Committee). The agenda items for each committee have been selected in line with the policies of their respective United Nations bodies.*

We wish you an exceptional Junior Nesibe Aydın Model United Nations experience. As the JNAMUN'26 team, we look forward to meeting you and supporting you as you achieve your goals to the very best of your ability.

Best of luck,

Mustafa COŞKUN

Secretary General of JNAMUN'26

1. Introduction to the Committee

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the UN's lead agency for refugees and other forcibly displaced and stateless people. It was created by the UN General Assembly in 1950 to protect refugees and find durable solutions, and it works as both a protection authority and an operational humanitarian actor. UNHCR's core mandate is built around international refugee law, especially the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol, which define who is a refugee and set out state responsibilities, including the principle of non-refoulement, meaning people should not be sent back to places where they face serious harm. UNHCR also has a major role on statelessness, supporting states to prevent and reduce it and to protect stateless people.

Unlike committees that mainly set norms, UNHCR runs field operations. It registers displaced people, coordinates emergency shelter and essential services with partners, supports protection monitoring and legal assistance, and works with governments on asylum systems and documentation. It also coordinates the broader refugee response architecture through plans that align host governments, UN agencies, NGOs, donors, and development banks so support is not only short-term relief but also access to schooling, health systems, and livelihoods. UNHCR's leverage is practical: it can set protection standards, mobilize resources, collect and share displacement data, and negotiate access and solutions with states, but it cannot force a country to accept refugees or grant rights. That makes persuasion, coalition building, and implementable policy design central to what this committee does.

This agenda, "Helping refugees build new lives and contribute to their new communities (SDG 10)," fits UNHCR because displacement is an inequality amplifier. Refugees often arrive with skills, ambitions, and work capacity, but face legal and structural barriers that trap them in dependency: limited right to work, non-recognition of qualifications, language barriers, restricted mobility, discrimination, lack of banking access, and insecure legal status. Host communities can also feel pressure on housing, schools, jobs, and public services, creating social tension that politicians can exploit. SDG 10 is about reducing inequality within and among countries, and refugee inclusion is a direct test of whether systems can distribute opportunity fairly while maintaining social cohesion.

UNHCR's policy space on this topic is about turning "hosting" into "inclusion" in ways that are realistic for states with very different capacities. That includes legal pathways to work and self-reliance, documentation that unlocks services, recognition of skills and credentials, access to education and vocational training, targeted support for women and youth, anti-discrimination enforcement, and financing models that strengthen host-community services rather than competing with them. It also includes durable solutions: voluntary repatriation when safe, local integration where possible, and resettlement or complementary pathways when neither safety nor integration is viable. In this committee, delegates should treat refugees as participants in a local economy and society, not temporary burdens, and design policies that help refugees become net contributors while also protecting host communities from real service strain and political backlash.

2. Introduction to the Agenda Item

"Helping refugees build new lives and contribute to their new communities (SDG 10)" focuses on the shift from emergency survival to inclusion: how people displaced by conflict and persecution move from aid dependence into stable work, schooling, services, and community life, while host communities gain capacity instead of strain. The scale makes this unavoidable policy, not charity. UNHCR's Global Trends reporting estimates 123.2 million forcibly displaced people worldwide at the end of 2024, and about 122.1 million by the end of April 2025. When displacement persists for years, "temporary hosting" becomes a long-term governance challenge: legal status, labor markets, housing, education systems, and social cohesion all get stressed unless states build frameworks that turn arrivals into participants.

The core problem is that refugees often arrive with skills and strong incentives to rebuild, but face barriers that systematically block contribution. The biggest are legal and administrative: limited or slow access to work authorization, restrictions on movement, lack of recognized documentation, and non-recognition of diplomas and prior experience. Then come market barriers: language gaps, discrimination, lack of banking access, limited credit and collateral, and segmentation into informal jobs with low pay and high exploitation risk. These barriers do not just harm refugees. They also harm host states by shrinking the tax base, depressing decent work standards through informality, and fueling resentment when refugees are perceived as competing unfairly or receiving unequal support.

"Contribution" also depends on host community realities. Many refugees live in regions where host populations already face unemployment, weak public services, and high housing costs. If policy expands refugee access without expanding local capacity, the political backlash can be predictable and severe. That is why modern refugee policy increasingly treats inclusion as shared development, not parallel aid tracks. Instruments like the Global Compact on Refugees frame this as responsibility-sharing with objectives that include easing pressure on host countries and enhancing refugee self-reliance. Financing models from development actors reinforce the same logic by supporting host community services alongside refugee inclusion so the local system does not buckle.

This agenda fits SDG 10 because refugee inclusion is an inequality test inside national systems. SDG 10 targets reducing inequality within and among countries and explicitly connects to migration governance and inclusion, meaning barriers based on origin and status are not side issues, they are central. Delegates should treat “safe and fair inclusion” as a package: predictable legal status and documentation, real access to work and mobility, recognition of skills, pathways into education and vocational training, anti-discrimination enforcement, and support that strengthens host community services at the same time. The goal is not to romanticize refugees as “economic miracles,” but to remove structural blockers so self-reliance becomes the default outcome and hosting becomes socially and fiscally sustainable.

3. Keywords & Definitions

1. **Refugee**

   A person outside their country of nationality who cannot return because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group, under the 1951 Refugee Convention framework.

2. **Asylum Seeker**

   A person who has applied for international protection and is waiting for a decision. They may later be recognized as a refugee or receive another protection status.

3. **International Protection**

   Legal protection a state provides to people who cannot safely return home, including refugee status and other forms of protection depending on national law.

4. **Non-Refoulement**

   A core principle prohibiting states from returning a person to a country where they face serious threats to life or freedom, including persecution or other grave harm.

5. **Temporary Protection**

   A group-based protection status often used during mass influx situations, providing rapid, time-limited protection and access to basic rights without full individual refugee status determination.

6. **Complementary Protection**

   Protection for people who may not meet the strict refugee definition but face serious harm if returned, such as torture, inhuman treatment, or indiscriminate violence.

7. **Durable Solutions**

   Long-term outcomes that end a refugee's displacement, typically voluntary repatriation when safe, local integration in the host country, or resettlement to a third country.

8. **Local Integration**

   A process where refugees gain legal status, rights, and access to services and livelihoods in the host country, often leading toward permanent residence or citizenship where available.

9. **Resettlement**

   The transfer of refugees from an asylum country to a third country that admits them and grants a more secure legal status and long-term rights.

10. **Complementary Pathways**

    Additional legal routes to safety and stay beyond resettlement, such as education pathways, labor mobility schemes, family reunification, and humanitarian admissions.

11. **Self-Reliance**

    The ability of refugees to meet essential needs sustainably and with dignity, using their own capacities and access to decent work, services, and social networks.

12. **Socioeconomic Inclusion**

    Policies and practices that enable refugees to participate in the economy and society on fair terms, including access to work, education, housing, healthcare, and finance.

13. **Legal Status**

    The recognized position of a refugee or asylum seeker under national law, which determines rights like work permission, movement, and access to services.

14. **Documentation**

    Official papers proving identity and legal stay, such as registration documents, residence permits, and work permits. Lack of documentation increases exploitation risk and blocks services.

15. **Registration**

    A process to record and verify individuals in a displacement response, enabling documentation, protection referrals, aid targeting, and access to services.

16. **Right to Work**

    Legal permission for refugees or asylum seekers to access employment. Restrictions often push people into informal work and reduce tax revenue and labor protections.

17. **Work Permit**

    An authorization that allows a non-citizen to work legally. Permit design matters, including cost, renewal frequency, employer tie-in, sector limits, and portability.

18. **Labor Market Access**

    Practical ability to get a job, shaped by legal permission, language, transport, discrimination, credential recognition, and availability of matching work.

19. **Informal Employment**

Work outside formal regulation and contracts. It can be the default for refugees when legal barriers exist, increasing wage theft and unsafe conditions.

20. **Exploitation**

Unfair or abusive treatment in work or services, including underpayment, excessive hours, coercion, unsafe conditions, and threats linked to legal status.

21. **Discrimination**

Unjust treatment based on nationality, ethnicity, religion, language, or status. It reduces access to housing, jobs, and services and fuels social tension.

22. **Social Cohesion**

The level of trust, cooperation, and perceived fairness between refugees and host communities. It is affected by service strain, misinformation, and unequal access narratives.

23. **Host Community**

The local population and institutions in areas receiving refugees. Their access to services and livelihoods strongly influences political support for inclusion.

24. **Burden and Responsibility Sharing**

International cooperation to support countries hosting refugees through financing, technical support, resettlement, and policy coordination, so protection does not fall on a few states.

25. **Protection Risk**

Conditions that increase the likelihood of harm to refugees, such as violence, trafficking, detention, discrimination, and lack of legal status.

26. **Gender-Based Violence**

Harm based on gender, including sexual violence, intimate partner violence, and forced marriage, with heightened risk during displacement and economic precarity.

27. **Child Protection**

Systems and services that prevent and respond to abuse, exploitation, neglect, and violence affecting refugee children, including schooling access and case management.

28. **Family Reunification**

Processes that allow refugees to join close family members legally, reducing protection risks and improving stability.

29. **Freedom of Movement**

The ability to travel and live within a host country without restrictive permits or confinement. Limits can trap refugees away from jobs and services.

30. **Encampment**

A policy that requires refugees to live in camps or designated areas. It can support service delivery but often restricts work and mobility, increasing dependency.

31. **Urban Refugees**

Refugees living in towns and cities rather than camps. They often have better market access but face higher living costs, housing insecurity, and less visible protection risks.

32. **Housing Insecurity**

Unstable or unsafe housing, including overcrowding, eviction risk, and informal settlements. It increases health and protection risks and fuels tensions.

33. **Public Services**

State-provided services such as education, healthcare, water, sanitation, and social assistance. Inclusion depends on capacity, funding, and administrative access rules.

34. **Education Access**

Ability to enroll, attend, and progress in school. Barriers include language, documentation, costs, transportation, and lost schooling years.

35. **Credential Recognition**

Formal acceptance of foreign diplomas, licenses, and prior learning. Without it, skilled refugees are pushed into low-skill work.

36. **Skills Assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning**

Tools to evaluate practical competencies when documents are missing, enabling faster matching to jobs and training.

37. **Language Integration**

Programs that build language proficiency needed for schooling, work, and services. It is often the highest leverage inclusion investment.

38. **Financial Inclusion**

Access to bank accounts, payments, savings, credit, and insurance. It reduces cash risk, supports business creation, and enables rent and salary payments.

39. **Microenterprise and Livelihoods Support**

Training, small grants, business mentoring, and market linkages that help refugees and hosts start or expand income-generating activities.

40. **Cash Assistance**

Direct financial support used to meet basic needs. It can stabilize families while they transition to work, but it is not a durable substitute for legal access and jobs.

41. **Targeting**

Rules used to decide who receives assistance. Poor targeting can create exclusion errors, resentment, and perceptions of unfairness.

42. **Data Protection and Privacy**

Safeguards ensuring personal data collected during registration and service delivery is stored and used safely, preventing misuse that could expose refugees to harm.

43. **Integration Policy**

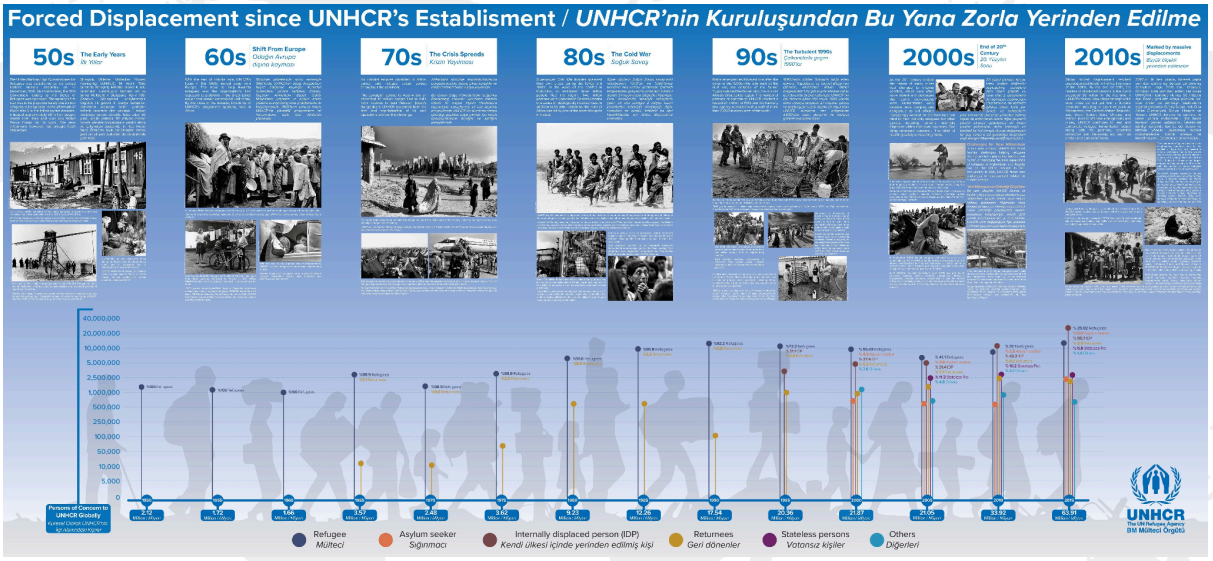
A national or local framework that sets rights, responsibilities, and services for inclusion, often covering work, education, housing, health, and social cohesion measures.

44. **Naturalization**

A pathway to citizenship that can apply in some contexts. It is often the strongest form of long-term inclusion but politically sensitive and legally constrained.

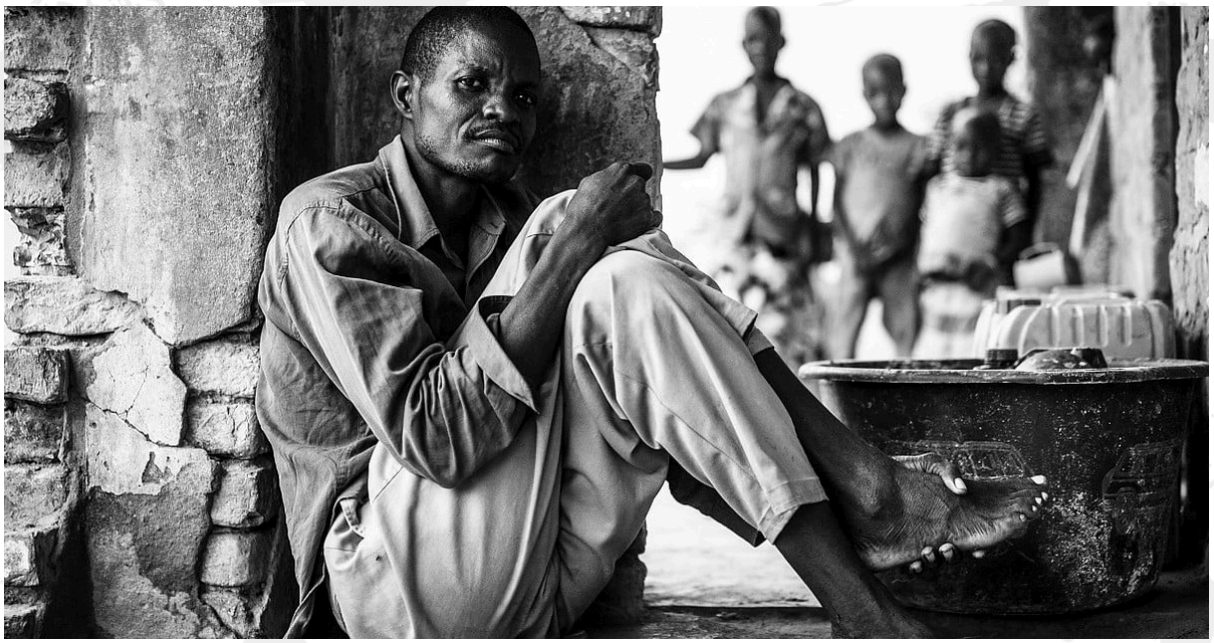
4. Historical Background

After World War II, the international system began rebuilding refugee protection around a simple premise: displacement is not only a humanitarian problem, it is a legal and political one that requires predictable rules. UNHCR was created by the UN General Assembly in December 1950 through Resolution 428, with a protection mandate and a solutions mandate, and it began operations in 1951. In its early years, UNHCR worked in a world that often assumed displacement would be temporary and geographically limited, with responses focused on emergency assistance and legal status rather than long-term inclusion into labor markets and public systems.



The key legal anchor arrived with the 1951 Refugee Convention, which defined who is a refugee and set standards for treatment, with the principle of non-refoulement becoming the cornerstone rule preventing forced return to serious danger. That framework was later universalized through the 1967 Protocol, which removed the Convention's original time and geography limits, expanding the relevance of international refugee protection beyond post-war Europe. This matters historically for your agenda because it set the baseline rights logic, but it did not, by itself, build the practical pathways that allow refugees to rebuild lives through work, education, and stable residence.

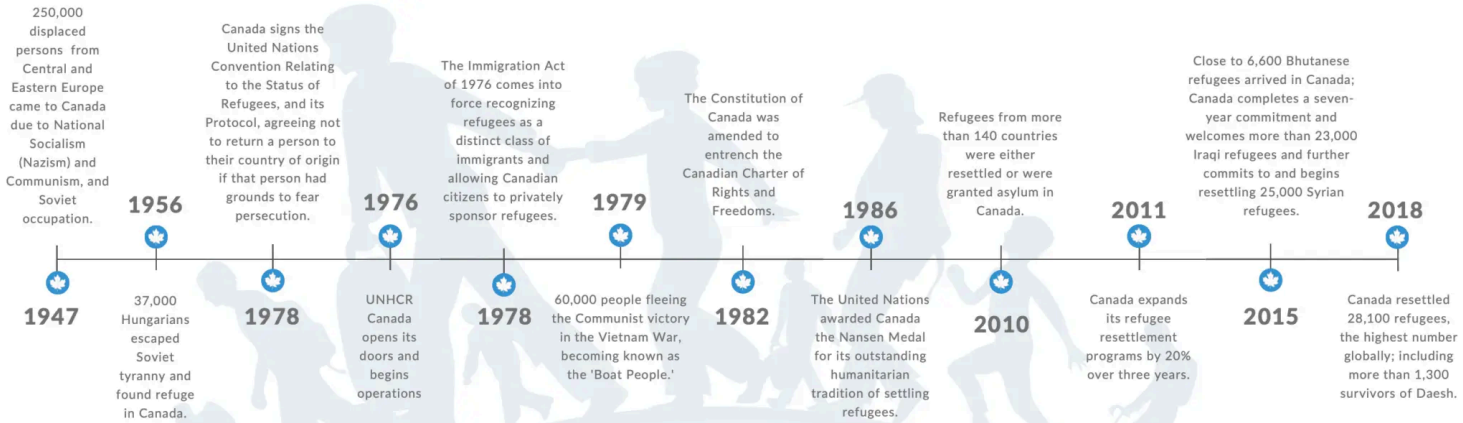
From the 1970s into the 1990s, refugee movements became larger, more diverse, and more politically entangled with regional conflicts. Over time, displacement also became longer. The international system increasingly faced situations where refugees were not in short transit, but stuck for years without return, integration, or resettlement. UNHCR developed the concept of “protracted refugee situations” to describe the long-term absence of solutions, often operationalized as large groups remaining in exile for many years. This era exposed a structural gap: protection standards could prevent immediate harm, but they did not automatically create access to livelihoods, credentials recognition, housing, or social services. Refugees were often protected from return but blocked from rebuilding, creating dependency, informality, and social tension in host areas.



By the 2000s and 2010s, the policy center of gravity shifted toward what is now called the humanitarian-development nexus: if displacement lasts for years, host countries need more than emergency aid, and refugees need more than subsistence support. That logic culminated politically in the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, adopted by the General Assembly, which launched the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and pushed the system toward easing pressure on host countries, supporting refugee self-reliance, and expanding solutions beyond camps and short-term relief. The Global Compact on Refugees, adopted in 2018, carried the same core direction: make responsibility-sharing more predictable and make inclusion and self-reliance explicit objectives, not optional add-ons.

The same period produced practical "compacts" that linked refugee inclusion to development incentives. The Jordan Compact (2016) is often cited because it explicitly tied international support, including trade-related measures and financing, to expanding legal access to work for Syrian refugees, aiming to shift refugees from aid dependence into labor market participation. In parallel, development finance tools began to treat refugee hosting as a macroeconomic and public services challenge, not only a humanitarian one. The World Bank's IDA18 Regional Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities created dedicated financing for low-income countries hosting large refugee populations, reinforcing the idea that schools, clinics, water systems, and jobs markets in host areas must be strengthened if inclusion is to be politically and socially sustainable.

This historical arc explains why the agenda is framed around "building new lives and contributing." The international community moved from emergency protection toward systems that can absorb long-term displacement without creating permanent inequality traps. The current challenge is implementing that shift consistently: turning legal protection into practical inclusion through documentation, mobility, work access, skills recognition, and host-community investment, so refugee presence becomes economically and socially manageable rather than a permanent crisis mode.



5. Examples of the Topic

States and institutions use different approaches to help refugees rebuild lives and contribute, combining legal status and work access, documentation, skills recognition, service inclusion, targeted cash support, and host-community investment so inclusion becomes economically and politically sustainable rather than a permanent emergency.

In Jordan, the Jordan Compact and related reforms focused on formalizing refugee work through expanded access to work permits, paired with international support for host communities and economic programs. World Bank reporting shows work permits issued to Syrians rising from 45,000 in 2019 to 90,000 in 2023, with a cumulative total around 340,000 permits, alongside growth in financial inclusion via e-wallets and accounts. The lesson is that contribution increases when refugees can work legally and use the formal financial system, not when they are pushed into informality.

In Jordan's labor market governance, the ILO has analyzed how permits change "decent work" access for Syrians, noting that permits provide a legal pathway to rights, even while deficits remain in sectors employing refugees. The lesson is that legalization is necessary but not sufficient: work access must be paired with labor standards enforcement so contribution does not mean tolerated exploitation.

In Uganda, the "self-reliance model" is often cited because refugees have the right to work and more freedom of movement than in many host settings, with research emphasizing how policy design shapes whether markets form and whether refugees can trade, farm, and start enterprises. The lesson is that restricting movement is an economic self-sabotage strategy: mobility is what connects skills to demand and turns refugees into local economic actors.

Uganda's model also shows the dependency of inclusion on predictable financing. When host services and rations are cut, political tolerance and policy openness can weaken. Recent reporting highlights how funding shortfalls have increased pressure on the system and sparked policy shifts. The lesson is that "inclusion policy" needs long-run financing or it becomes politically fragile.

Through development financing, the World Bank's IDA18 Regional Sub-Window for Refugees and Host Communities provided dedicated funding for low-income host countries. The lesson is that inclusion becomes more realistic when money strengthens schools, health systems, and local infrastructure for everyone, reducing the perception that refugees are competing with hosts for scarce services.

On education inclusion specifically, joint UNHCR and World Bank work estimates the costs of educating refugee children through host-country systems. The lesson is that integrating refugees into national education is not only a right choice, it is a budget and planning choice, and quantifying costs helps donors and governments fund inclusion instead of improvising parallel systems.

In cash assistance programming, UNHCR evaluation synthesis finds cash-based interventions can improve welfare outcomes and are often more efficient and dignity-preserving than in-kind delivery when markets function. The lesson is that cash can stabilize households during transition, but it should be designed as a bridge to self-reliance, not a permanent substitute for work rights.

In joint WFP and UNHCR livelihood approaches, programs combine short-term assistance with skills, market linkages, and financial inclusion tools when local markets allow it. The lesson is that "jobs" are not created by training alone: livelihood programs work best when they connect refugees to real market demand and reduce barriers like payments, transport, childcare, and documentation.

In policy frameworks tied to the Global Compact on Refugees approach, responsibility-sharing aims to support host countries while enhancing refugee self-reliance, making inclusion a shared international project rather than a bilateral burden. The lesson is that host countries are more likely to expand rights and access when international support is predictable, not episodic.

6. Questions to be Addressed

1. **How can host states design legal status that is predictable and renewable so refugees can plan, invest, and work without constant fear of losing residence?**
2. **How can states prevent exploitation while expanding work access, including labor inspections, complaint mechanisms, and penalties that reach abusive employers?**
3. **Which policies best reduce wage undercut narratives and protect host workers, including minimum wage enforcement, sectoral standards, and support for local job creation?**
4. **How can credential recognition be accelerated when refugees lack documents, including skills testing, recognition of prior learning, and fast-track licensing for shortage occupations?**
5. **What language and integration services generate the highest returns for employment and education outcomes, and how should they be targeted by age and skill level?**
6. **How can refugee entrepreneurship be supported without distorting local markets, including business registration access, microcredit, and mentorship tied to real demand?**
7. **What financial inclusion rules are needed so refugees can open accounts, receive salaries, pay rent, and access credit while meeting KYC and anti-fraud requirements?**
8. **How should housing policy address rent inflation, overcrowding, and eviction risk in high-arrival cities, including rental support, regulation, and new supply incentives?**
9. **How can education systems integrate refugee children into national schools while funding teacher capacity, language support, and catch-up programs?**
10. **What strategies best prevent child labor and early marriage among refugee populations, especially when families face high living costs and limited work rights?**
11. **What community-based approaches reduce xenophobia and tension, including joint service projects, local mediation, and transparent communication about aid and rights?**
12. **How can freedom of movement be balanced with security concerns without turning restrictions into economic traps and exploitation drivers?**
13. **How can international financing be structured so support for host communities is predictable, multi-year, and linked to measurable inclusion outcomes?**
14. **What data collection and registration practices protect privacy while enabling service access, fraud prevention, and targeted protection responses?**

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