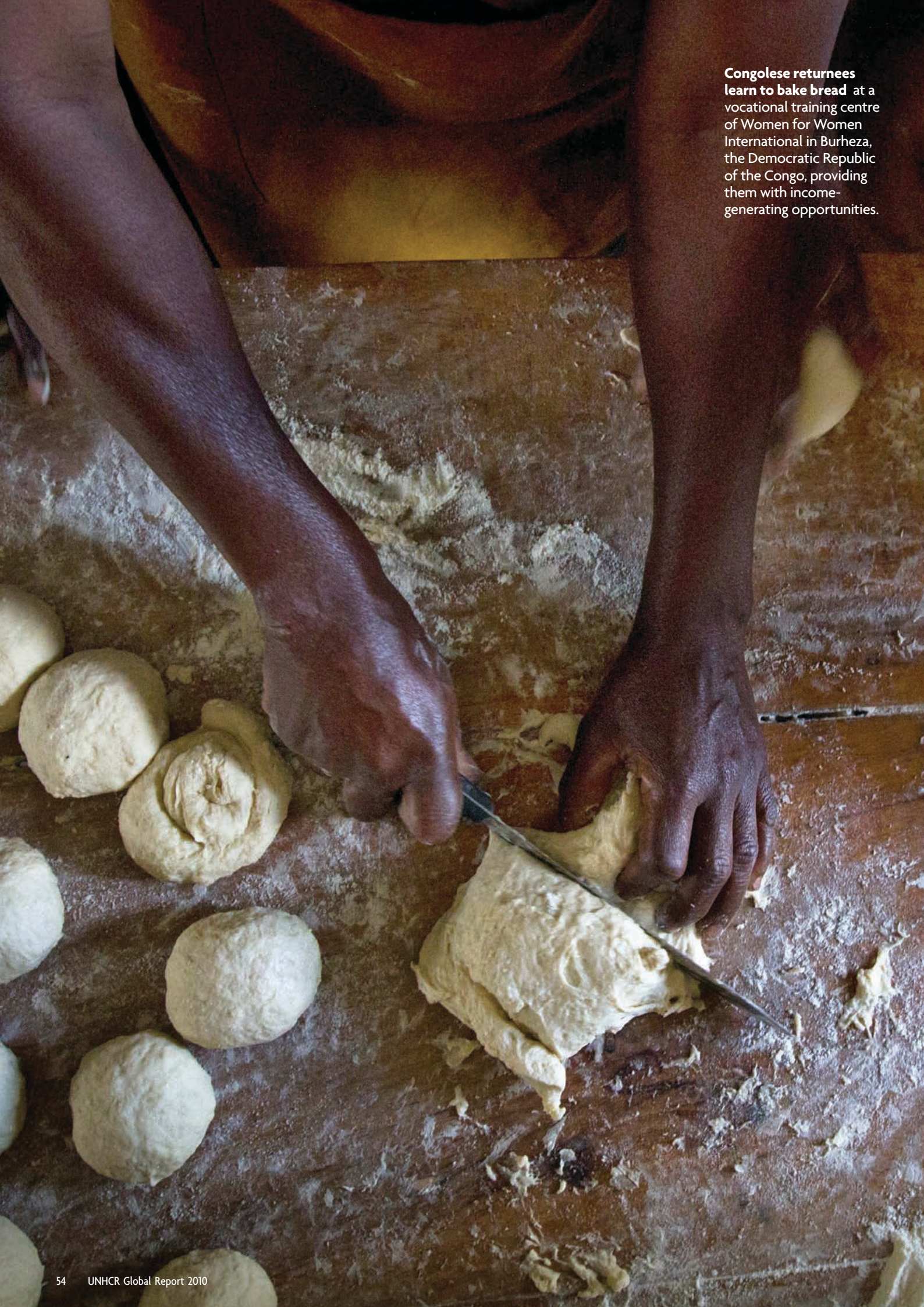


Congolese returnees learn to bake bread at a vocational training centre of Women for Women International in Burheza, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, providing them with income-generating opportunities.



Encouraging Self-Reliance

Livelihood strategies in protracted and urban displacement

FOR REFUGEES IN protracted situations to be able to contribute positively to the social and economic situations of their host countries, they need to be able to “stand on their own two feet” economically. Yet there are no quick solutions on the road to self-reliance. Many programmes to improve refugee livelihoods, for instance, require support over a long period of time. Such support must often cover multiple needs, ranging from the basics, such as food and shelter, to social justice and economic well-being.

In light of this, UNHCR is trying to devise livelihood programmes that are comprehensive enough to fulfil varied needs and run for a sufficient length of time to be effective. Accordingly, the livelihood programmes developed by UNHCR in 2010 include operational plans covering 2-3 year periods. Projects are based on assessments of the socio-economic profile of refugee or displaced populations and the economic choices available to them.

Key components of the plans are the strengthening of women’s entrepreneurial abilities, the provision

of microfinance and information technology, and the enhancement of staff capacity. New partners have been brought in to implement programmes, especially in business-development assistance, financial services and job placement. Not all of these new partners are familiar with UNHCR’s mandate, however, and there is a need to familiarize them with the rights of refugees, in particular the right to work.

The findings of a review of selected urban operations in Egypt, India and Yemen have been incorporated into new guidelines on the right to work. Accompanied by practical tools and advocacy strategies, these will be disseminated to UNHCR and partner staff.

In addition, UNHCR has developed new programming guidelines to expand the capacity of its staff and partners to conduct high-quality socio-economic assessments, manage planning processes and develop creative partnerships in urban settings. UNHCR staff and their counterparts from key implementing partners held consultative reviews in July and in December 2010 when,

in addition to benefiting from the expertise of UNHCR’s education and public health units, they were able to harmonize technical and policy guidelines for livelihood programmes in urban settings. All livelihood-related publications developed or refined by UNHCR in 2010 will be distributed in 2011.

Finally, coordination forums have been instituted to bring together the various actors implementing livelihood programmes in the field. Such groups are working successfully in Bangladesh, Jordan and Yemen.

In 2010, UNHCR devised livelihood strategies for Argentina, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Senegal and Yemen. Work has begun on similar strategies for Chad, Egypt, Mexico, Panama and Sierra Leone.

REFUGEE WOMEN’S ECONOMIC SELF-RELIANCE

THE WOMEN LEADING FOR Livelihoods (WLL) programme is a UNHCR initiative to promote the economic independence of refugee and displaced women and girls. The programme relies on the generosity

of individuals and other donors from the private and corporate sectors to fund projects around the world. Early supporters include Princess Haya Bint Al Hussein of Jordan, the women's organization Soroptimists International and private individuals in Japan.

Thus far, 20 projects in 14 countries (Bangladesh, Brazil, Costa Rica, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Georgia, India, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Kenya, Liberia, Morocco, Mozambique and Serbia) have been submitted for funding. The projects cover language and vocational training, classes on farming, marketing and business development and the provision of access to savings and loan schemes.

Since 2008, nine WLL projects out of 20 that were proposed have been fully funded, receiving a total of USD 628,590. Another USD 283,590 has helped partially fund three more projects. However, full funding of all projects would require USD 4.5 million and at the end of 2010, eight projects remained unfunded.

In 2009–2010, UNHCR piloted new projects in Bangladesh, Cameroon, Mali and Uganda. Implementing partners were NGOs accredited as Master Trainers by the ILO for its entrepreneurship training packages (such as *Generate Your Business Idea*, *Start Your own Business* and *Improve Your Business*) or other partners offering courses of similar quality.

From 2011 onwards, these pilots will be developed and a new concept of support for the economic development of women and young people will be inaugurated. The goal is to multiply initiatives to strengthen entrepreneurial qualities in refugee women and young people and to support them in small-enterprise projects or the search for employment. Programmes will focus on operations that meet established criteria, such as

the existence of a coherent livelihood strategy with a multi-year perspective, and the availability of baseline data which will aid assessment of a project's impact.

ACCESS TO MICROFINANCE

A new and innovative agreement with the ILO's Social Finance Department led in the second half of 2010 to the seconding of a microfinance expert to UNHCR for one day per week. Several operations, including Chad, Ethiopia, Mauritania and Morocco benefited from the ILO guidance. In addition, a technical support mission to Egypt helped to define a new partnership arrangement with the Social Fund for Development, a government umbrella organization for microfinance institutions in the country.

New programming guidelines on microfinance were developed in 2010 that highlight the importance of partnering with established microfinance institutions and establishing adequate "performance-based" monitoring procedures. UNHCR delivered a panel presentation, "Microfinance in Crisis Situations", at the Sanabel Microfinance Regional Network workshop in Damascus in June 2010. The goal was to alert microfinance providers in the Arab region to the benefits and challenges in delivering financial services to refugees.

Joint missions with the Grameen Trust planned for 2010 had to be postponed. However, a study is under way to identify opportunities for collaboration in refugee operations in countries where the Grameen Trust is already present.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

THE COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY Access (CTA) programme has been implemented in 13 countries. In total, 31 centres have been set up

in urban, semi-urban and remote camp settings, enabling refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities to acquire skills and knowledge by connecting to global resources on the web.

Country operations are at different stages in the implementation of their CTA projects. The programmes in Bangladesh, Georgia and Rwanda have been running for over a year and the facilities provided are much used. The programmes in Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Mauritania and Yemen are in the initial phases of implementation. Four centres in Kenya, Nepal, eastern Sudan and Uganda are due to open in early 2011.

CTA centres are now being used to hold computer literacy classes and to aid distance learning, as well as to help displaced people to establish contacts with family, find jobs and develop business and other skills. The CTA projects in Mauritania and Rwanda also support the formal education of children.

A survey of distance-education needs conducted in December 2010 documented the positive social and economic impact of the CTA programme in helping refugees find jobs. Indeed, many refugees say that the computer skills they have acquired through the CTAs have strengthened their capacity to respond to the demands of the labour market. In Bulgaria, UNHCR found that those beneficiaries who acquired word-processing skills considerably improved their chances of gainful employment. In Uganda, data-entry skills have helped to prepare refugees for the clerical work that is in heavy demand among employers.

The CTA programme has been developed in partnership with private-sector companies such as Microsoft and Hewlett-Packard, as well as with IOM, local universities and government-affiliated vocational-training centres.

These vital partnerships enable the CTA projects to deliver nationally-certified training and diplomas, and ensure their long-term sustainability.

GLOBAL CAPACITY

UNHCR'S TECHNICAL CAPACITY to design and implement quality livelihood interventions remains critically stretched. These activities are supported by one expert at Headquarters and two others in the Field, in the Americas and West Africa. Global partnerships are therefore essential to ensure adequate capacity for livelihood programming given the high demand in this area from operations worldwide.

In 2010, technical support missions were undertaken to the following operations:

- Uganda – to help prepare and facilitate a workshop in Mbarara to design a livelihood strategy;
- The Syrian Arab Republic – to discuss the development of livelihood plans and resources focusing on urban refugees;
- Egypt – to support the formulation of a livelihood strategy, including a model of microfinance for refugees;
- Brazil – to evaluate and provide technical assistance on the implementation of microfinance activities; and
- Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger and Togo – to support livelihood activities in urban and rural areas, in the latter by providing agricultural tools, seeds and animals.

Throughout the year, UNHCR worked to provide operational guidance on microfinance, urban livelihood programming and the right to work. This has led to the elaboration of a new set of key principles which incorporate best practices in these areas.

GLOBAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	
TARGETS 2010-2011	PROGRESS IN 2010
SELF-RELIANCE AND LIVELIHOODS	
In at least 6 of 47 countries targeted , refugees have the right to engage in gainful employment.	In 3 targeted countries , refugees gained the right to engage in gainful employment. Refugees already had the right to work in 72 other countries, while asylum-seekers have the right to work in 43 countries.
In at least 5 of 16 countries targeted , the livelihoods and self-reliance potential of IDPs significantly improved.	In 3 targeted countries , the livelihoods and self-reliance potential of IDPs significantly improved.

In West Africa, UNHCR's regional office and the Danish Refugee Council conducted a training workshop in Accra, Ghana, on local integration and livelihoods which was attended by 48 participants from UNHCR and its partners. The workshop aimed to help participants to implement local integration and livelihood strategies by improving their knowledge of microfinance, market assessment and other core elements of programming in this area.

UNHCR began talks with the Norwegian and the Danish Refugee Councils on developing a database of livelihood experts. Both organizations plan to increase their capacity to respond to such requests in 2011. Following similar discussions, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation identified staff with appropriate experience and expertise to undertake livelihood activities.

UNHCR took part in the revision of the guidebook, *Minimum Standards for*

Economic Recovery after Crisis, during a workshop organized by the Small Enterprise Education and Promotion Network in Washington, D.C. in June 2010. As a result, the second edition of these guidelines will be available in early 2011, providing much-needed global standards for many aspects of livelihood programming.

UNHCR is also collaborating closely with the Women's Refugee Commission on urban livelihood assessments in India, South Africa and Uganda. In addition, UNHCR and the Women's Refugee Commission have agreed to collaborate on the development of a global training programme on livelihoods in 2011. ■