



# First Quarter Report 2024



89 South Street, Suite 802  
Boston, MA 02111  
[info@RefugePoint.org](mailto:info@RefugePoint.org)  
[RefugePoint.org](http://RefugePoint.org)

# Introduction

In February, RefugePoint and Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative (RSRI) leaders, including Sasha Chanoff (CEO), Amy Slaughter (Chief Strategy Officer), and Kari Diener (Executive Director of the RSRI), met with National Security Council staff at the White House and representatives from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; the U.S. Department of State - Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration; the World Bank; and several think tanks and NGOs working on refugee topics.

Discussions focused on learning, programming, and policy priorities related to refugee self-reliance. The meetings aimed to elevate the topic of refugee self-reliance, increase awareness of the RSRI with these key stakeholders, and identify opportunities for closer collaboration around shared priorities. In particular, the participants discussed strategies to bridge the historic divide between humanitarian and development actors and funding to leverage resources for refugees in protracted situations to pursue livelihoods and achieve greater economic and social inclusion. Each meeting revealed enthusiasm for the work of the RSRI and for collectively moving this agenda forward.





# Self-Reliance

For refugees who remain indefinitely in the country to which they've fled, we help them move from vulnerability towards self-reliance.

[Read more →](#)

**Direct Services**

**Providing lasting solutions for refugees is at the core of our work. RefugePoint focuses on equipping urban refugees in Nairobi, Kenya to become self-reliant through our Urban Refugee Protection Program (URPP). We achieve this by providing stabilizing support services to ensure access to food, shelter, medical care, and empowerment through counseling, skill-building, and livelihood assistance.**

This quarter, the URPP reached 3,230 refugees and Kenyans with health services and health education outreach. At a time when many operational partners faced limited funding, RefugePoint supported core clients in accessing medical assistance, which included prescription medication, referrals for lab testing, and specialized medical care. This enabled clients to quickly return to their livelihoods and other activities.

The URPP resumed an apprenticeship and vocational skills training project, which supported seven students in pursuing courses in videography, photography, auto mechanics, hairdressing, and beauty. Most students will complete their training by the end of 2024.

Schools in Nairobi reopened for the first term of the year, and most learners transitioned to the next grade. The education unit identified and provided additional support to students who will need to repeat their grade level.

The economic environment for refugees running small businesses remained challenging in the first quarter. In Nairobi, sales at the beginning of the year are typically low for most businesses as households redirect spending to their children's education. RefugePoint issued grants to 37 clients to start, expand, or diversify their businesses after they successfully completed our business development skills training.

In January, the Kenyan government announced its intention to roll out a new national health insurance plan in July 2024. RefugePoint paid insurance premiums for our core clients to ensure they remain covered during the transition. RefugePoint joined an interagency team of partners that provide input and insight for Nairobi County's plan to integrate urban refugees into existing services.

# RefugePoint's Urban Stabilization Path

## Clients Graduated to Self-Reliance

Q1

98

## Community Health Outreach

Q1

3,230

## Empowerment and Stabilization



Food Assistance

Q1 743



Rent Support

Q1 429



Medical Assistance

Q1 657



Counseling

Q1 93



Education Support

Q1 262



Businesses Launched and Expanded

Q1 37

### Field Building & Systems Change

**In addition to the direct services we provide to urban refugees in Nairobi, Kenya to achieve self-reliance, we also work to make large-scale impact through field building and systems change. One way we aim to achieve that is through the Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative (RSRI), which promotes opportunities for refugees around the world to become self-reliant and achieve a better quality of life. The RSRI, co-founded by RefugePoint and the Women's Refugee Commission, aims to collectively reach five million refugees with self-reliance programming in five years and, in the process, to identify the most effective models and measurements to aid the global expansion of self-reliance opportunities.**

During the first quarter, the RSRI and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) co-published the findings of a multi-year project that reviewed the state of the evidence on refugee self-reliance. Through the project, RefugePoint and DRC collaborated to produce the first-of-its-kind knowledge mapping and assessment of research and evidence on self-reliance programming for refugees. The main outputs of this project include a 'living' resource library of more than 160 resources on refugee self-reliance, a series of thematic evidence briefs, and a blog post.

The RSRI hosts the Refugee Self-Reliance Market Systems Development (MSD) Working Group, which focuses on the principles, frameworks, and good practices that guide the analyses of market systems (the complex web of people, trading structures, and rules that determine how a particular good or service is produced, accessed, and exchanged). In the first quarter, the MSD Working Group developed an MSD Principles and Terminology Brief. The Brief articulates core principles that govern market system approaches for displacement-affected communities and clarifies key terminology to facilitate learning and discussion among stakeholders working on MSD in displacement contexts.

In February, RefugePoint staff participated in an event celebrating the UN Refugee Agency's 2023 Nansen Global Laureate, Abdullahi Mire, and the important work of refugee-led organizations (RLOs) in Kenya. Two RLOs, R-SEAT, and the Refugee Youth Education Hub co-hosted the event, which government officials, UN and civil society representatives, and refugee leaders attended. Simar Singh, RefugePoint's Chief Program Officer, spoke on a panel at the event, which explored the impact and meaningful role of refugees and RLOs in the refugee response system.

Throughout the quarter, RefugePoint continued to share and exchange knowledge, skills, and resources with RLOs to support and strengthen the important work they do to support their own communities. This included providing ongoing mentoring and other technical support to three of RefugePoint's 2023 RLO grantees in Kenya: Youth Voices Community, Umoja Refugee Group, and Oak Solutions Centre. Our staff also invited RLOs working in Nairobi to join the 2024 cohort for a series of mutual learning and capacity-strengthening exchanges and visited 17 new RLOs that will join the group.



# Resettlement & Other Pathways to Safety

We help refugees who cannot remain safely where they are to permanently and legally relocate to a safe, new country through various visa channels and government programs.

[Read more →](#)

**Direct Services**

**In addition to equipping refugees to become self-reliant, we also work to relocate refugees to safety through resettlement and other legal migration pathways, such as visa programs for family reunification, employment, and education. This quarter, RefugePoint helped 4,419 refugees access pathways to safety, including resettlement, family reunification, employment, sponsorship, and other pathways, from 100 locations in 26 countries worldwide.**

During the first quarter, RefugePoint’s staff continued working on cases that were referred for resettlement in past quarters. We introduced a new Client Satisfaction Survey in Nairobi to strengthen accountability and ensure that we use feedback from clients to improve services. The survey collects feedback from clients on the quality of RefugePoint’s resettlement services.

During missions to Kenya’s Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps, staff interviewed prospective candidates for Canada’s Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP) program and convened information sessions with community leaders and candidates. The team also supported candidates who participated in a virtual job fair Talent Beyond Boundaries organized with employers in Ontario. In addition, the team engaged in rapid design workshops to develop a new database that streamlines casework, reporting, evaluation, and management for our growing labor mobility program.

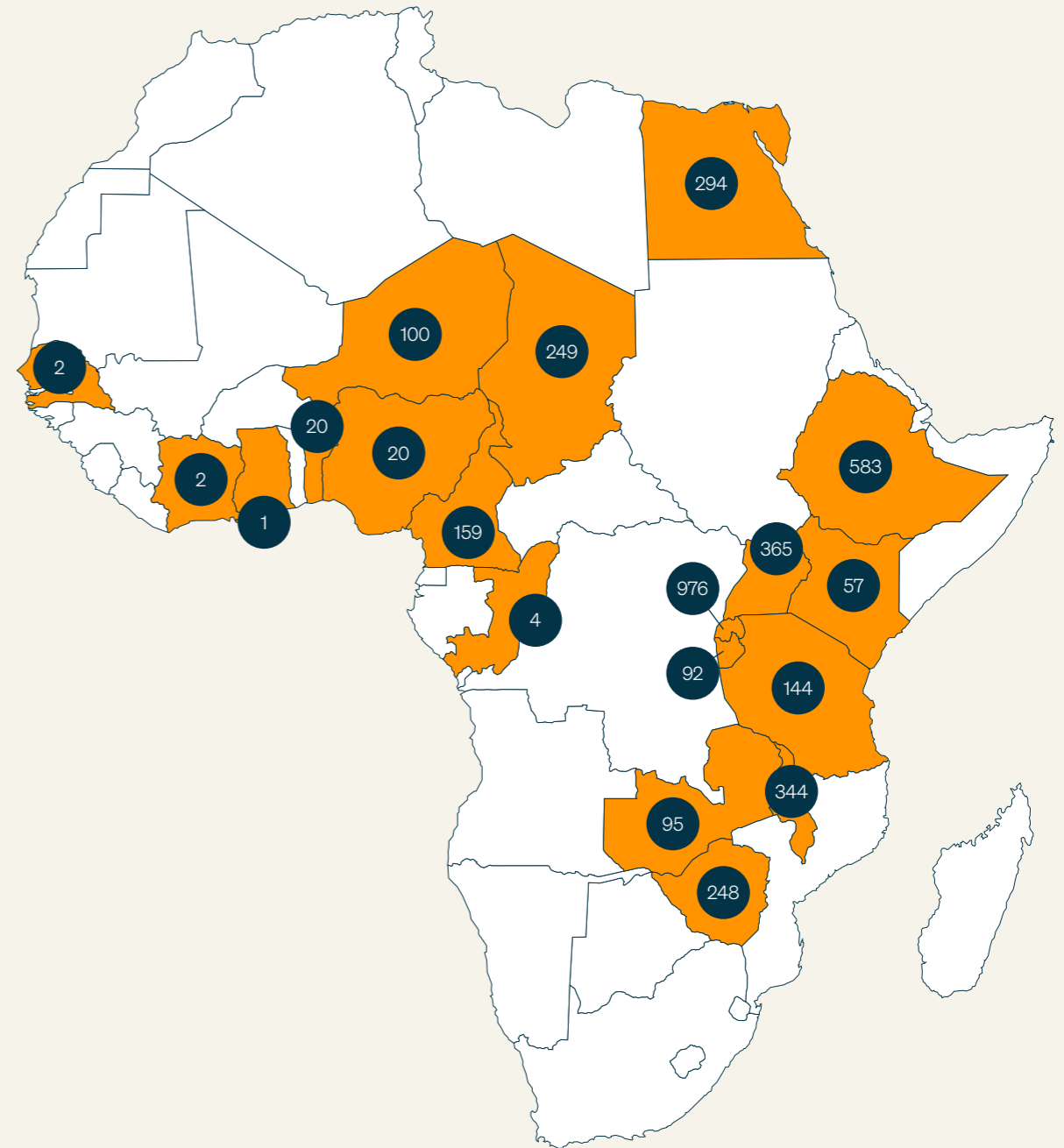
Mapping continued to inform our new family reunification program in Kenya. Staff met with refugees and key actors to explore collaboration and gather input on program design. Accessing information on family reunification, navigating complex systems and processes, and connecting with legal services emerged as top needs. During an outreach session in Nairobi, refugees expressed gratitude for RefugePoint’s efforts to promote their fundamental human right to family unity.

RefugePoint’s deployment program continued to advance equitable access for refugees most in need of resettlement, striving to ensure the use of each available resettlement spot. In the first quarter, 51 Experts, including 17 new Experts, were deployed to UNHCR offices around the world to build systems, train and mentor peers, and complete casework submissions and reviews. Notably, three deployed to Colombia for the first time, while two additional Experts deployed to Guatemala.

In Southern Chad, our Expert traveled more than 100 miles from UNHCR’s office to reach Salim\*, a child with urgent medical needs. After days of interviews to prepare Salim’s case for submission, our Expert reflected, “This process held hope that a resettlement country would extend its hand before it was too late. The family prays that decision-making and departure will be hastened to safeguard Salim’s fragile life. My hope is now intertwined with theirs.”

**Refugees assisted in accessing resettlement and other pathways in Q1**

**4,419**



**Refugees Assisted in Q1**

**Countries where RefugePoint assisted refugees to access resettlement and other pathways to safety.**

1. Benin	20	13. Kenya	57	25. Zambia	95
2. Burundi	92	14. Malawi	344	26. Zimbabwe	248
3. Cameroon	159	15. Niger	100		
4. Chad	249	16. Nigeria	20		
5. China*	37	17. Pakistan*	133		
6. Colombia*	37	18. Rwanda	976		
7. Congo-Brazzaville	4	19. Senegal	2		
8. Cote d'Ivoire	2	20. Tanzania	144		
9. Egypt	294	21. Thailand*	128		
10. Ethiopia	583	22. Trinidad & Tobago*	35		
11. Ghana	1	23. Turkey*	219		
12. Guatemala*	87	24. Uganda	365		
				<b>Total:</b>	<b>4,419</b>

\* Country not shown on map

### Field Building & Systems Change

**In addition to helping refugees relocate to safety through direct services, RefugePoint also hosts trainings, develops and shares tools to enhance capacity across our partners, and makes policy recommendations to improve global systems related to resettlement and other pathways. During the first quarter of 2024, our staff trained 138 individuals from UNHCR and partner organizations on topics ranging from child protection to resettlement and other pathways.**

This quarter, RefugePoint provided training around resettlement knowledge and skills to 60 HIAS staff, 28 members of our URPP team, and seven new UN Collaboration Project (UNCP) Experts. As partners in the Equitable Resettlement Access Consortium, RefugePoint and HIAS often refer cases to each other for resettlement and wraparound services. Training provided for HIAS staff aimed to support these referrals, which increase refugees' access to the US Refugee Admissions Program. The seven new Experts then deployed to augment UNHCR's resettlement and child protection capacity in their respective duty stations.

Capacity-building activities over the past quarter also sought to expand resettlement access for historically overlooked refugee populations. RefugePoint engaged current and prospective partners in training focused on strengthening their capacity to generate resettlement referrals for more diverse refugee profiles, including refugees with legal and/or physical protection needs, women and girls at risk, children and adolescents at risk, survivors of violence and/or torture, and refugees with medical needs. We also worked with partners to facilitate referrals to legal services for resettlement cases that require child custody support in order to submit them for resettlement consideration.

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada invited RefugePoint and other stakeholders to provide feedback on draft public policy for its Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP). Because the current public policy expires next year, this important exchange enabled us to share insights from our labor mobility experience to inform the development of a permanent pathway, advocating that protection and refugee-centeredness serve as the pathway's foundation.

In Chad, Rwanda, Senegal, Türkiye, and Uganda, RefugePoint's Experts trained 43 UNHCR and partner staff on completing and reviewing Resettlement Registration Forms (RRFs), understanding Child Protection Best Interests Procedure, building referral networks, considering Complementary Pathways for eligible refugees, and using UNHCR's ProGres database. Our Child Protection Expert in Türkiye, who is responsible for reviewing child protection Best Interest Determinations (BIDs), wrote that "Reviewing BID reports not only ensures quality and safeguards on decisions that affect children but also offers guidance to caseworkers on how best to manage their cases and that feedback increases their capacity to deliver high-quality case management services."



Vallerie Ochieng, RefugePoint Senior Resettlement Officer, discusses different resettlement categories during the quarterly joint HIAS/RefugePoint resettlement training. Photo: Samuel Mbugua



Irene Kariuki (left), Deployment Program Coordinator, and Yukabeth Otieno (right), Senior Logistics Officer for the UNCP, at the RefugePoint office with four Experts during the UNCP expert orientation and training. Photo: Jessica Masimbo



# Cross-Cutting Protection Priorities

## Child Protection

**RefugePoint prioritizes refugee children in all our programs and we collaborate closely with partners to fill critical gaps in refugee child protection. During the first quarter of 2024, our staff conducted and reviewed child protection assessments for 432 refugee children.**

During the first quarter, RefugePoint's URPP team partnered with UNHCR and HIAS Kenya, to train BID panelists from the UNHCR, Refugee Consortium of Kenya, RefuSHE, Directorate of Children Services, and Refugee Affairs Secretariat. The training focused on the panelist's role and panel review process.

By the end of the quarter, the RefugePoint Deployment Program had deployed 11 Child Protection Experts in Burundi, Guatemala, Malawi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Thailand, Türkiye, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. Child Protection Experts in Türkiye, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe have collaborated closely with partner organizations to complete BIDs.

In a small but meaningful success, RefugePoint's Expert in Malawi, who had long appealed for the refurbishment of the children's waiting area as an essential part of child-friendly service, reported that the waiting area was finally remodeled.



Photo: Chris Jensen

**A child refugee and his family being interviewed for their resettlement case at a refugee camp in Rwanda. The family arrived in Rwanda in 2005 and have lived there since.**

## Mental Health and Psychosocial Support

During the first quarter, RefugePoint's Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) focus was centered around the foundational and structural development of community-based MHPSS programming (CB-MHPSS). CB-MHPSS programming works directly with the communities and holds at its core the knowledge of those living with mental illness and/or with psychosocial support needs, those providing care to them, of refugee communities, and of mental health specialists.

During the health program's education outreach, the Community Liaison provided education on the psychological impact of gender-based violence. The Liaison engaged in listening tours during RLO engagement visits, improving programmatic understanding of community MHPSS needs, resources, and healing strategies. These informal conversations with community members served to build rapport and deepen understanding of community perspectives. Within our Community-Based Needs and Asset Mapping exercise, the final stages of secondary mapping data are underway, supporting evidence-based project development through critical examination of best practices.

Children assisted in Q1

# 432



Staff trained in child protection & other pathways

# 138



## Acha's Story

In 2016, Acha\* and her sisters had to flee their home due to political violence in their country. After arriving in Nairobi, Kenya as refugees, Acha and her family struggled to survive. In 2021, RefugePoint staff identified Acha as someone who could benefit from our program, and she began working in partnership with RefugePoint to meet her basic needs and support her to move toward self-reliance. As a URPP client, Acha completed the Business Development Skills (BDS) training and received a grant to start her own business. Through her business selling clothes and shoes in several Nairobi neighborhoods, Acha has reached a point of stability in her life.

“Ever since I was a little girl, I have loved fashion a lot. There is a TV show that I used to love to watch about someone who was in love with fashion. In the show, the character's parents supported her to be able to venture into that business, so that is how my passion grew. When the opportunity came to start a business, it was a no-brainer. I did not have to think twice about the type of business I would start. I went straight into fashion.”

Acha delivers clothing orders throughout the city of Nairobi, either in person or through trusted motorbike riders and couriers. Over time, Acha has learned to use the power of social media to market her products. She advertises on Facebook Marketplace and WhatsApp, and receives referrals to potential customers daily. Recently, she started selling her products internationally on several online platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp marketing.

In 2024, Acha began working as a mentor at RefugePoint's BDS training sessions—the very sessions she once attended—to help other refugees start their own businesses. Acha's business and mentoring activities demonstrate her innovative and entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to growing her business through creative marketing strategies. (\*Name changed for protection purposes)

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**“For those who are in business, I would advise them to consider taking the business online because it is really convenient and I am able to control everything from my phone. It is less hectic because I don't necessarily need to physically move around.”**

Acha, a refugee living in Nairobi, Kenya, has built a successful fashion enterprise by using social media platforms to sell clothes both locally and internationally. Photo: Jessica Masimbo



## Finances

RefugePoint finished the first quarter with revenues of \$1,269,014 and expenses of \$2,701,441. This negative variance is quite usual for this time of year, and we fully expect our revenue to pick up later in the year.

## Development

RefugePoint was thrilled to be the official charity partner for the Harvard National Model United Nations in February, the largest and longest-running Model UN in the world. RefugePoint's Chief Development Officer, Sarah Hidey, spoke at the opening ceremonies about our work to help refugees access pathways to safety through a partnership with the UN Refugee Agency.

## We would like to welcome:

### Diana Nyaata

Information Technology Officer

### Cleusisus Ondieki

Social Work and Resettlement Intern

### Julius Wandolo

Social Work and Resettlement Intern

### Sifa Chomba

Human Resources Intern

### Ayan Mohamed

Community Navigator

## Press and Publications

Transforming the migration system to make it work for displaced talent, by **David Manicom, World Economic Forum**

Helping refugees settle in the U.S., one family at a time, by **Sasha Chanoff, WBUR (Cognoscenti)**

Seminar held locally on refugee situation: 'There's a need for this in this world', by **Jessie Castellano, Your Arlington**

Arlington's approach to immigration, refugee situation: past, present and future, By **Brynn OConnor, Your Arlington**

Traditional Approaches to Displacement Are Not Working, by **Elizabeth Ferris, Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy**

What gets lost in the immigration debate, by **Sasha Chanoff, WBUR**

Donor-advised funds: Do the billions really go to charity?, by **Thomas Lee and Macie Parker, The Boston Globe**

North Texas family trying to reunite with nieces through refugee program, by **Caroline Vandergriff, CBS Texas**

