

ANNUAL REPORT

**URBAN
REFUGEES.ORG**
RAISING THE VOICE OF THE INVISIBLE



A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO
REFUGEE SUPPORT

2017 - 2018

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PROGRAMS

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FELLOW 2018

3 COMMUNITIES

ROHINGYA

AFGHAN

SOMALI

We partnered with three refugee communities through our programs, which have impacted more than 5000

5000 refugees have better access to healthcare, education, livelihoods and safety.

5000

REFUGEES

Abbreviation

ACC Afghan Community Center

RLO Refugee - Led Organisations

RSM Rohingya society of Malaysia

SRC Somali Refugees Community

UNCHR The United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees

UR Urban Refugees

URIP Urban Refugees Incubation Programme

A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO REFUGEE SUPPORT



*Sonia Ben Ali
Founder and director,
Urban Refugees*

“ According to the World Bank 2018, there will be 4 times more refugees and displaced people in the world by 2050. There is growing urgency to find ways to respond to this challenge effectively and sustainably, and above all, to transform it into an opportunity.

Today, 58% of refugees live in urban areas, primarily in developing countries. In these cities, refugees are often invisible, facing precarious living conditions, discrimination, and a lack of access to basic services. We believe those best equipped to build solutions to the global refugee crisis are those at the heart of it: refugees themselves. In cities around the world, refugees are already helping each other find solutions to the challenges they face: starting with basic needs, then education, and employment.

We work directly with refugee leaders in cities of the Global South who are building solutions in their communities, enhancing their capacity to continue this critical work, and enabling them to achieve long-term sustainability.

Our mission : to develop the means and the tools for refugees to be able to rebuild their own lives, with independence and dignity.

”

A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO REFUGEE SUPPORT



12 MILLION

This is the number of refugees living in cities today; on average, they will remain in exile over 20 years. This is also the number of individuals exposed to violence, trafficking, and detention. Most importantly, this is also the number of people who seek to build solutions to the obstacles they face every day.



ACTING WITH, NOT FOR

This is central to Urban Refugees' approach, an effort to break the cycle of perpetual aid, which has become a structural challenge in international development. Our team identifies refugee-led organizations and supports their leaders as true partners, relying on their specific knowledge of the needs and solutions for their communities.



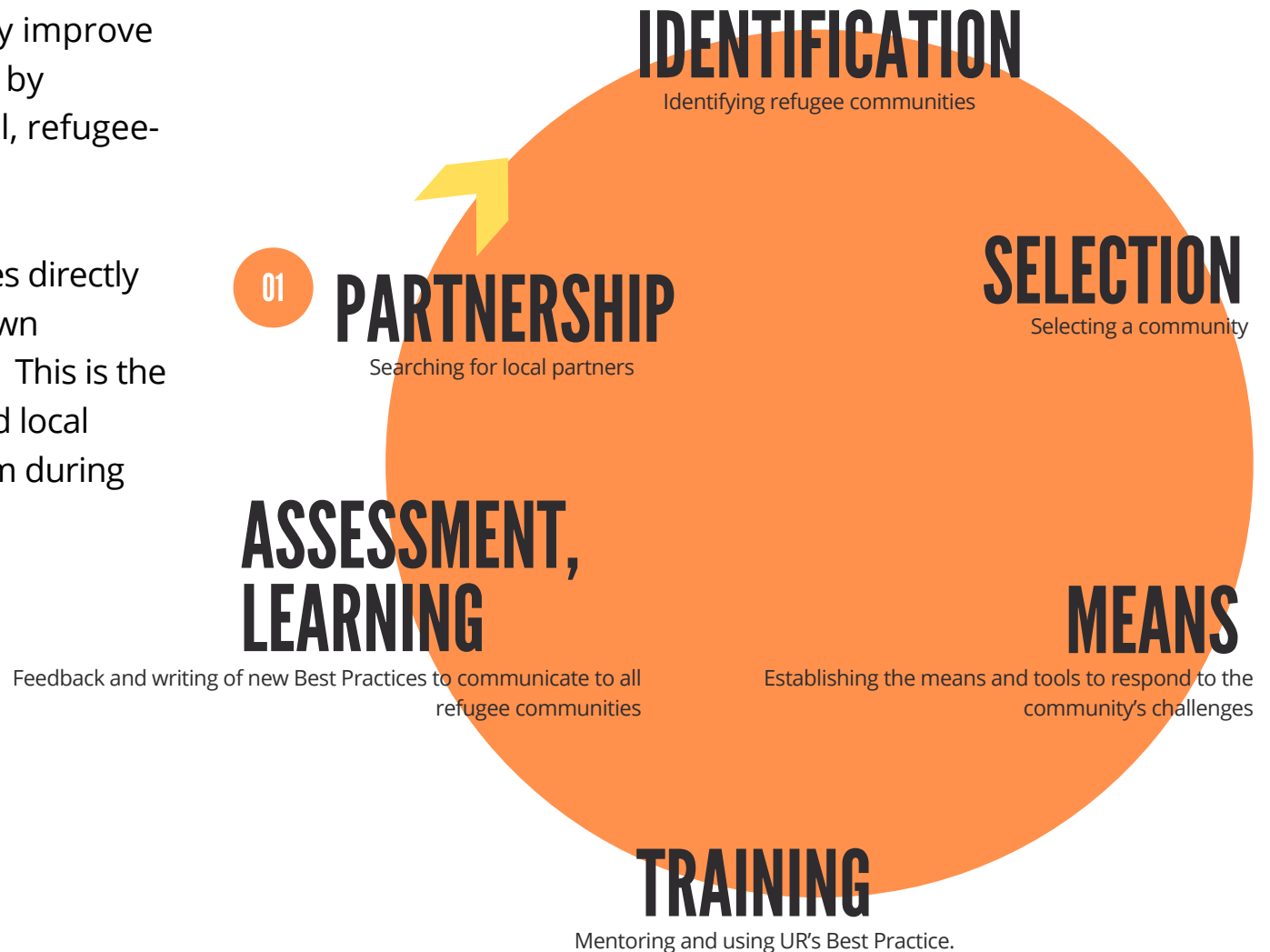
MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

We offer mentorship to the leaders we work with, to identify, develop, and sustain their solutions. Central themes include: training, financial support, networking, communications, sharing of best practices, and project monitoring. Each of our collaborations lasts approximately two years, and impacts several thousand refugees.

OUR APPROACH

Urban Refugees' aims to sustainably improve the lives of refugees in urban areas by strengthening the capacities of local, refugee-led organizations.

Our team provides tools and practices directly to refugees, so they can build their own solutions to the challenges they face. This is the goal of the mentorship programs and local trainings led by Urban Refugees' team during our Incubation Projects.



OUR METHOD: URBAN REFUGEES INCUBATION PROGRAM (URIP)

01

PARTNERSHIP

Searching for local partners

- Looking for and making contact with local partners
- Analyzing cultural and social characteristics
- Identifying communities likely to be able to selfmanage after UR collaboration



02

IDENTIFICATION

Identifying refugee communities

- Calling for applications via the internet and local partners
- Receiving and sorting candidates

03

SELECTION

Selecting a community

According to

- The urgency of identified needs
- The existence of an influential leader capable of leading the group (Urban Refugees Contact Point)
- Possible extension to other nearby communities



04

MEANS

Establishing the means and tools to respond to the community's issues

- A project manager on site.
- Financing and installation of communication equipment (computers, mobile phones)
- Implementing a project management tool
- Using known UR best practices

OUR METHOD: URBAN REFUGEES INCUBATION PROGRAM (URIP)

05 TRAINING

Mentoring and using UR's Best Practices

- Training several members of the community to respond to identified priority needs
- Presenting and connecting the community to potential partner organizations and institutions



06 ASSESSMENT, LEARNING

Feedback and writing of new Best Practices to communicate to all refugee communities

- Learned lessons
- New best practices

OUR WORK: 3 URIP PROGRAMS

JULY 2016
TO
JULY 2018



MALAYSIA 3 COMMUNITIES

Three incubation programs in Malaysia within three refugee communities. On-site support and remote follow-up was carried out from July 2016 to July 2018.

1/ ROHINGYA SOCIETY OF MALAYSIA (RSM)

Charitable organization created in February 2010 by Rohingya refugees to protect the interests of Rohingya refugees and asylum seekers in Malaysia. The Rohingya are a Muslim minority in Burma living in the state of Arakan whose human and civil rights are being violated. RSM is working to eradicate illiteracy, help women find jobs, support access to healthcare, and provide training programs for young people.

ROHINGYA
SOCIETY OF
MALAYSIA



OUR WORK: 3 URIP PROGRAMS

AFGHAN COMMUNITY CENTER



2/ AFGHAN COMMUNITY CENTER (ACC)

Charitable organization created by Afghan refugees to improve the lives of Afghan refugees in Kuala Lumpur, in particular by enabling them to find housing, employment, and helping prevent and manage arrest and detention. The organization represents 900 refugees and the center offers classes for children and adults (sports, English, arts, sewing, etc.).

3/ SOMALI REFUGEE COMMITTEE (SRC)

Created in 2008 by a group of Somali refugees living in Kuala Lumpur. The SRC provides support to all Somali refugees with a particular focus on women and children. Program offerings include: children's classes, sewing classes, food distribution, assistance with access to health services etc. Approximately 1000 Somali refugees have received support from the SRC to date.

SOMALI REFUGEE COMMITTEE



OUR WORK: 3 URIP PROGRAMS

AFGHAN
COMMUNITY
CENTER

ROHINGYA
SOCIETY
MALAYSIA

SOMALIA
REFUGEE
COMMITTEE

OBJECTIVE N°1

The Urban Refugees program has responded to 3 objectives identified during the analysis phase :

Increasing the organizational and financial sustainability of the supported organizations

- One of the biggest challenges faced by organizations was fundraising. Following the program, all incubated organizations multiplied their average budget by 4, which has enabled them to establish. Multiple new programs, including: healthcare, education, and job training.
- The ACC and SRC have drafted and published a constitution available in their office to all members of their communities. The document includes procedures for elections and replacing officials, which led to a decline in community-based complaints, the election of new officials within the ACC, and improved parity in representation in all three organizations.
- The three partner organizations did not have well-defined financial management tools and processes in place at the start of the incubation. During the program, each organization created clear accounting and cash management processes.

OUR WORK: 3 URIP PROGRAMS



OBJECTIVE N°2

Improving implementation and impact of partner organizations

- While none of the organizations had ever done so before, as a result of the program, each one was able to carry out a detailed evaluation of their respective community's needs in order to align the proposed services to address them.
- All three organizations were also able to implement, tools to assess their impact: the RSM created two types of questionnaires and a database to monitor levels of participation in all services; the SRC created a database to record beneficiaries according to age and vulnerability; the ACC put in place a system of continuous evaluation, in order to constantly adapt and improve its services.

OBJECTIVE N°3

Strengthening strategic relationships and coordination with stakeholders

- At the end of the program, each organization's partners (NGO and UNHCR) reported a clear improvement in their relationships with all three organizations. The ACC established seven new partnerships.
- Coordination between organizations and their partners in the implementation of their programs has also significantly improved, according to participant testimonials.

OUR WORK: CONTINUING SMS UP

SMS UP

FURTHER TRIALS IN THE SMS UP PROGRAM

SMS Up is a tool that facilitates mobile group communication (similar to Viber or WhatsApp) among members of refugee organizations who own mobile phones. The tool works through SMS text message, which enables community members to share important and time sensitive information even without an internet connection.

SMS Up was launched in October 2016 and continued until June 2017. A study was conducted during the trial to ensure the tool served the needs of community members. 100% of the surveyed members said the tool was working and that they would continue using it in the long term; accordingly, 100% of refugee leaders said the tool had benefited their community.



OUR WORK: URIP UGANDA PROGRAM

UGANDA

STARTING PHASE - URIP UGANDA PROGRAM

In 2019, our team will launch the URIP program in Uganda, a partnership with a women's refugee community. Following the call for applications, fifteen communities applied, and five were selected by the Urban Refugees team. With support from the foundations *Agir Sa Vie*, *Raja*, and donations, we are recruiting a project manager to carry out the mission on-site.

Our actions :

- Identifying needs in Uganda
- Calling for applications (15 applications received)
- Selecting 5 women's communities
- On-site needs assessment
- Writing job description to recruit a project manager



OUR WORK 2017-2018

1 NEW PROGRAM



UGANDA



AFGHAN
COMMUNITY
CENTER



ROHINGYA
SOCIETY
MALAYSIA



SOMALI
REFUGEE
COMMITTEE

3 URIP PROGRAMS CARRIED OUT

CONTINUING THE SMS UP PROGRAM



SMS UP

OUR IMPACT

92%

ROHINGYA
SOCIETY
MALAYSIA

92% of the community members we worked with had better access to education, health, livelihood and/or safety.

AFGHAN
COMMUNITY
CENTER

900

900 refugees are represented by the Afghan Community Center and are URIP beneficiaries.

100 PEOPLE

SOMALIA
REFUGEE
COMMITTEE

Around 100 Somali refugees are assisted on a daily basis by the Somali Refugee Committee.

SMS UP

100%

- 100% of surveyed members answered that the SMS UP tool was working for them, and that they planned to continue using it.
- 100% of leaders of refugee organizations responded that the tool had benefited their community.

OUR IMPACT

108 CHILDREN

HAVE MATH, LANGUAGE, ART AND SPORTS CLASSES.



140 WOMEN

HAVE ACCESS TO LIVELIHOODS.

800 FAMILIES

BENEFITED FROM FOOD DISTRIBUTION.



OUR IMPACT

650 REFUGEES

HAVE ACCESS TO INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR SAFETY.



150

SUPPORTED TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT.

MEANS OF ACTION: PARTNERSHIPS AND FINANCING

2018

Many thanks to Raja and Agir la Vie for their donations of € 30,000 and € 20,000 respectively, as part of the preparation for the Uganda URIP project.

20K

30K



2017

Organization of a fundraising event in Melbourne, Australia, with a dinner hosting key donors.

5K



MEANS OF ACTION: ASHOKA NETWORK



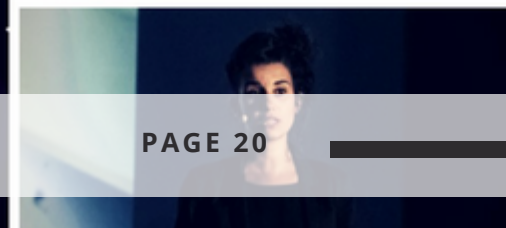
SONIA BEN ALI, ASHOKA FELLOW 2018

Sonia Ben Ali was named Ashoka Fellow 2018 after a long and rigorous selection process. Ashoka is the largest network of actors promoting **change and social innovation in the world**. Former Fellows include Pierre Rabhi from Les Colibris, Terre et Humanisme or Guilhem Chéron from La Ruche qui dit Oui.

We are proud to belong to this network, which will enable us to accelerate our impact in the years to come a growing challenge, as the number of displaced people around the world will be multiplied by 4 by 2050. It is time to change the way we respond to this crisis. Urban Refugees believes that we must see refugees as central to the solutions in order to build sustainable change. These convictions are supported and shared by the Ashoka network.



2018
A S H O K A
F R A N C E
CEREMONY



MEANS OF ACTION: EVENTS



CEREMONY AT THE GRAND REX



MEANS OF ACTION: EVENTS



GLOBAL CONSULTATION - JUNE 2018

Contribution with Refugees Led Organizations and partners.



OCT 2018

The team took part in the Opportunity Collaboration in Cancun in October 2018.

Sonia Ben Ali participated in the European Changemaker Summit organized by Ashoka.



European Changemaker Summit 2018 – Berlin MAY 2018



OCT 2018

Urban Refugees attended the Women's Forum plenary in Oct 2018.



JUNE 2018

Ashoka organized the EU Refugee Summit in Brussels. Contribution and keynote by Urban Refugees during the event.

MEANS OF ACTION: POLITICAL ADVOCACY



Meeting with SIDA at the end of 2018 to organize their seminar program and to coordinate facilitation by the Urban Refugees team on urban refugees issues.



Sonia Ben Ali and the President of the US Office meet in Washington, D.C. at the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration of the US State Department. The organization has funded our URIP programs in Malaysia. The team presented the impact of our approach and the importance of supporting refugee-led organizations.



MEANS OF ACTION: MEDIA



« IL FAUT ABSOLUMENT RÉFORMER CE SYSTÈME ! »

Sonia Ben Ali, 31 ans



DISCOVER THE ENTREPRENEURS WHO ARE
COMMITTED TO HELPING HUMANITY.



***"It is absolutely
necessary to reform this
system"** Sonia Ben Ali, 31
years old.*

REFUGEES : CITY-DWELLERS IN THEIR
OWN RIGHT



The story. She had always wanted to work in politics. It was during a gap year during her studies at the Institute of Political Studies in Bordeaux that it clicked for Sonia Ben Ali. She was in Colombia, and realized that she had a choice: she could spend her days between her friends, school, and the beach, ignoring the armed conflict that was shaking the country. "I was going to miss half of the story, miss out on what it really is." So she joined an aid organization for Colombians displaced by the conflict and participated in the organization of an international tribunal. "During this powerful moment of advocacy, we gave the floor to hundreds of displaced people," she recalls. By listening to these stories (...)

GOVERNANCE : LEADERSHIP TEAM

Sonia Ben Ali



Sonia co-founded URBAN REFUGEES in November 2012. She started working with refugees and displaced populations in 2007. During each mission in the field, she realized that most humanitarian aid took place in refugee camps, while the majority of refugees live in cities and receive very little support. In 2012, with web designer David Delvalle, she decided to tackle the global invisibility of urban refugees and created an online resource to raise this issue in the humanitarian agenda.

Before creating URBAN REFUGEES, Sonia worked with urban refugees in Bogotá (Colombia), Casamance (Senegal), in refugee camps in the Palestinian territories, and in Beirut (Lebanon) with NGOs and UN agencies. Sonia has a Masters in Humanitarian Affairs from the French Institute of Sciences Po Bordeaux.

Jacques Tassi



Jacques Tassi is a ESCP graduate and a certified public accountant. He was a partner at Ernst & Young for 22 years, then deputy-manager for the French Department. In 1999, he joined Handicap International France's Board of Trustees, where he served first as treasurer and then, in 2006, as chair. In 2009, he was appointed first-chair of the board of the newly-launched Handicap International Federation. Since 2013, he has been involved in the solidarity economy as a member of several non-profit organizations.

GOVERNANCE : TASK TEAM

Benoit Muller



Benoit spent the first 23 years of his professional life in prestigious humanitarian organizations in marketing, communication, and events. Convinced of the need to bring the worlds of business and solidarity closer, Benoit works hard to change practices and mentalities. His experience took a new dimension within Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) where he has carried out two Business to Business communication campaigns, both the first of their kind. Benoit also experiments with what he calls "benevolent management," an approach that shapes his collaboration with colleagues. Since 2017, Benoit has been assisting URBAN REFUGEES, particularly with fundraising.

Alice de Castelnau



Alice de Castelnau has been working in consulting and entrepreneurship for ten years. She is involved in organizational support for major business transformation projects and in strategic support for projects with a high social impact for a variety of stakeholders. She also has business development experience in a greentech/biotech startup and has recently created an ethical fashion business.



Nina Jovanovic

Nina Jovanovic is an Inseec Group graduate. After working within communication agencies in different fields (humanitarian, retail, TPE ...), she is now a consultant in communication and development for brands. She develops communication strategies for companies, as well as shaping their operations on and offline. Nina leads communication operations for Urban Refugees in France.

URBAN REFUGEES



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