Supporting Enterprise & Workplace Development For Sustainable Livelihoods

by: Hand in Hand Southern Africa
Enriching Lives is Hand in Hand Southern Africa's first quarter newsletter for the year 2018. It serves to disseminate information to all its employees, stakeholders and partners on the Livelihood project for refugees.

We encourage everyone to read our stories and articles on human rights, empowerment and skills development. We are rightfully mandated to empower, educate and enhance the lives of those we help and serve. All contributions, recommendations and comments are welcome. Share your stories and experiences with our editorial team on the following:

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I am glad to announce that we have been selected by UNHCR to be the 2018 implementing partner on the livelihoods and self-reliance pillar in South Africa. This is a huge task given the magnitude of the problem, limited funding and the fluidity and pervasive nature of the issues confronting Persons of Concern broadly and refugees in particular. The issues we have to deal with are real, but also very challenging in every way. Making a difference and touching the lives of migrant communities in our midst is quite exciting and fulfilling, but it requires a certain type of heart in us, a heart to serve. Many people we will be assisting have been through many traumatic experiences. While this project is not meant to address every problem, our focus is to ensure that people acquire language and technical skills needed to effectively participate in labour markets, an enabling environment is created that better serves the needs of PoCs, better businesses are started, grown and mentored, and qualifying candidates are placed in employment. I would like to welcome everyone on board and encourage you to do your best to make a difference in the communities we serve.
Remarks from the project manager - Mrs Neo Ramoleko

Refugees in South Africa are living under prolonged difficult situations for which there are no instant remedies. The South African government, international organisations and various NGOs provide humanitarian assistance in different forms to provide refugees with social support and protection – food, shelter; social, health and legal services. From May 2017, Hand in Hand has joined forces with UNHCR and a pool of other players to engage in programmes that encourage South Africans and refugees to take greater responsibilities for themselves, in ways that engage them in supporting the values of employment and self-employment. While this approach is not a solution to all challenges facing refugees in South Africa, we believe our approach support refugees to settle, gain rights to citizenship, and participate in and contribute to their political and social-economic environment. The harvest in plentiful, and fortunately the workers are many. Our HiH resourceful staff, stakeholders and partners are standing guard over the principles of social justice for refugees. In unison we say “open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all the unfortunate, open your mouth, judge righteously, and defend the right of the afflicted and needy” (Proverbs 31:8-9). Together we can!
ABOUT LIVELIHOODS

Humanitarian aid and action, resonates in the beauty of saving lives, preserving of human dignity, alleviating poverty and suffering. Humanitarian action is intended to assist individuals during or post crisis and disaster. The principles of Ubuntu, humanity and independence govern humanitarian behaviour. and action of people or organisations.

A livelihood as defined by Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway, "comprises the capabilities and assets (material &social resources) and activities required for a means of living". No human being on earth is illegal and inevitably so, no one chooses to become a refugee. For reasons such as this, the livelihoods of those who fled their home countries need to be preserved and restored. After all, human dignity is a right and an entitlement to all. Therefore, humanitarian aid and relief must encompass the provision of skills, training and economic opportunities that will lead to self-reliance and sustainability.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

UNHCR has partnered with Hand in Hand Southern Africa to implement the Livelihood and Self-Reliance project for refugees in South Africa. The project is being implemented in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Durban, from January 2018 to December 2018. A total of a 1000 beneficiaries will be assisted, in which 700 will be in Gauteng and 300 in Kwa-Zulu natal. The project will assist 80% of refugees and only 20% local citizens as the target population. In addition, a total of 59 beneficiaries from 2017 in need of further mentoring and coaching are carried over into 2018.

The Livelihood interventions outlined for this project include the following:

- Training and job placement programs
- Micro-finance
- Enterprise development
- Advocacy & lobbying
Hand in Hand started its journey in implementing the Livelihoods project by conducting a staff induction for all its employees in January 2018. The purpose of the induction was to introduce and welcome new staff members for the Johannesburg and Durban Offices. The staff was equipped with knowledge on livelihoods and project outcomes.

As part of one of many advocacy interventions for this project, Hand in Hand collaborated in a social dialogue with DDP (Democratic Development Program) and ASONET (Africa Solidarity Network). The social cohesion dialogue was held in Umlazi L-Section, Durban. Men and women (locals and refugees) were placed in groups of five and issues impacting refugee women in Umlazi were deliberated on. An insightful event it was, in shaping how advocating for refugee integration in host societies can be achieved.

Ethnicity and a rich culture define Hand in Hand’s organisational culture. Every month we celebrate employee birthdays with cake, drinks and lots of laughter.

We are family...

At Hand in Hand, we have policies that are designed to ensure clarity, consistency, transparency and accountability in decision making with regards to human resources issues. We underpin our valued business strategy to make sure we attract, motivate and retain talented high performers. Hand in Hand as a brand, recruits candidates in a fair and objective manner that promotes the image of the organisation.
Hand in Hand is mandated to help the poor by assisting them in starting businesses to work their way out of poverty. We value those we help and are very pleased in doing so. We recognise that education is an important element in remaining competitive in the ever-changing business world, therefore we are committed to help employees achieve their educational goals by encouraging a "learning" work environment. Each year, we celebrate and acknowledge our employees on their one year of service completion in addition to other developmental attributes that include team building.

The Finance Team

(From left: Mr Vicky Ngobeni, Ms Nomthandazo Masie, Mr Musawenkosi Ngobese & Mr Keith Chigutei)

The activities of the finance department cover a wide range of responsibilities, varying between book-keeping and providing information that assists managers in making strategic decisions. At Hand in Hand, budgets and forecasts are efficiently prepared by the team to ensure that financial reports and audits are reported correctly.

Hand in Hand assists its persons of concern (POC’s) in micro businesses, with small loans that will meet them at the point of their needs. The process of issuing loans is determined by an internal loans committee, which is held after every individual business assessment of a beneficiary. In the year 2017, a total of 18 loans were dispersed and only 2 during the first quarter of the year 2018. A standard, low rate for repayment is applicable to all those granted with loans. We aim at supporting enterprise development and sustainability for our beneficiaries.
Monitoring and evaluation has become more essential over the years, precisely due to evidence-based decision making. It is a powerful performance measurement tool, by which results can be measured and resource utilization be improved in any endeavor. During the first quarter, Hand in Hand has designed and implemented a Monitoring and Evaluation system with its associated tools. The staff were trained on UNHCR Livelihood Monitoring surveys using KoboCollect (an online application for data capturing and data analysis). Currently, data collection for baseline surveys is underway. We continue to do constant monitoring visits and data analysis for the different key performance indicators and submission of reports and statistics to UNHCR to ensure that our project is on the right track.

As we draw near to the close of the first quarter for the year, so do we draw to the close of the development of the e-platform. After much hard-work and much anticipation, the e-platform is finally ready for deployment. The e-platform is an online tool designed to facilitate communication between mentors (business advisors) and mentees (livelihood beneficiaries). In addition, the platform will assist business advisors with data capturing, without paper trail.
The employability-work stream for 2018 is targeted at registering 200 beneficiaries on job-search engines as well as their placement for wage earning employment. It is also aimed at placing 100 beneficiaries to study vocational programmes at accredited institutions of their choice or with the assistance of Hand in Hand. The Hand in Hand Livelihood beneficiaries wishing to study, are given bursaries upon their applications. Every bursary application is assessed and evaluated by an internal bursary committee.

To date, we have received 61 bursary applications and had 65 one on one sessions with these beneficiaries to discuss their career options as well as providing guidance on which institutions would best cater for their educational needs. We have also managed to negotiate with 5 training providers to reduce the tuition fees within the first quarter.

Employability information sessions are currently underway in both Gauteng and KZN and once completed, the beneficiaries will submit their updated curricula vitae (CV’s) so that the employability coordinators can engage with possible employers, labour brokers as well as recruitment agencies.
There are a number of refugees in South Africa that are among the economically marginalised (difficulty accessing the labour market, opening of bank accounts etc.). Through the Livelihood project, Hand in Hand Southern Africa advocates for the rights of refugees by building a support network within the civil society, government and the private sector. It is high time that the vision of African Renaissance (embracing of an African identity that promotes the continent’s political, economic and social renewal) envisioned by former presidents Thabo Mbeki and Nelson Mandela is emphasised and supported.

**Human Rights Event**
- March 28, 2018

The 28th of March 2018 is a day set aside to commemorate Human Rights Month in South Africa. Hand in Hand held a Human rights event to remember the freedom that comes with enjoying human rights, especially in the context of SA and its troubled past.

The event was held at Ikusasa Training (one of our key stakeholders) in Johannesburg, Gauteng. Beneficiaries in Johannesburg attended the event together with our stakeholders; the Lawyers For Human Rights, Human Rights Watch and the UNHCR our project partner.
From left: Ms Prudence Mohlala, Ms Lebohang Tshabalala, Mrs Portia Tsienyane, Mrs Jeannet Fihla, Ms Carol Nhlangwana & Mr David Ndiweni

The business advisors/trainers are the game changers and field ambassadors for this project. They interact with our beneficiaries directly, and play a vital role in changing and impacting the lives of the vulnerable, through training and empowerment.

In the first quarter, the following has been done:

1) Total of 73 beneficiaries trained on entrepreneurship in the 1st quarter, in Johannesburg and Pretoria. The number includes the beneficiaries carried over from the year 2017 and in need of extra support.
2) Total of 146 beneficiaries trained on employability and work-readiness in the first quarter in Johannesburg and Pretoria.
3) 11 start-up businesses formed in the 1st quarter for Pretoria and Johannesburg.
4) 25 mentorship/business assessments done in the 1st quarter for Pretoria and Johannesburg.
6) 9 businesses were successfully registered during the 1st quarter.

(From left: Nompilo Mbele - business advisor, Nokulunga Tshabalala - general assistant, Carol Maine - employability co-ordinator, Philisiwe Banda - business advisor & Thobeka Mfeka - business advisor).

In the 1st quarter, a total of 76 beneficiaries were mobilised and registered to join the project. Employability and entrepreneurship trainings are to commence in the 2nd quarter.
Lotridah Tshibombi aged 35 was born and bred in the war-stricken DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) in 1983. She is a well-spoken mother of five - two girls and three boys. Due to various political and social instability factors in the DRC, Lotridah was forced to flee her birth country in 2005, where she then found refuge in South Africa for herself and her children.

Vulnerable and separated from friends and relatives in the DRC, Lotridah had to adjust to a difficult, impoverished life in South Africa. Unemployed, withholding a degree in Teaching from the DRC, she experienced challenges supporting her family. Lotridah joined in on the Livelihood Project as a beneficiary in June 2017. She then got employability and work-readiness training for a month, which she successfully completed in July 2017. As part of the programme, she was enrolled at Jabulani Training & Development Services (TVET) in Benoni, where she completed an NQF level 4 course in early childhood and development in October 2017.

Happy and motivated, Lotridah began volunteering at different day care homes around her area. In January 2018, she started working at Kids Clubhouse as a daycare teacher. She was quoted saying: "my life as a refugee in South Africa has changed for the better, thanks to Hand in Hand and the Livelihood project". She sees herself having her own day care centre in future.
EMPLOYABILITY - VOCATIONAL TRAINING & JOB PLACEMENT

Ms Cecilia Tshehla (left) & Ms Mildred Mahlangu (right)

Cecilia (36 year old pictured above) and Mildred (34 year old pictured above) are South African mothers of two. Unmarried, they both reside with their children in the township of Soshanguve, north of Pretoria. Unemployed with no qualifications, they were unable to provide for their families.

Together, they joined the Hand in Hand Livelihood project in July 2017 and were given training on employability and work-readiness modules. They were given bursaries to attend vocational training at Anderson College in Soshanguve. There, they studied a course in End-User Computing, NQF level 4 for a period of six months. They successfully completed their qualifications in March 2018.

Prior to joining the project last year, the two were unable to make use of certain computer software such as Microsoft Word. They had no financial resources to go to school or enough money to support their families. Hand in Hand gave them a fair opportunity for making them work-ready and hopeful of a better future ahead. Cecilia got a general assistant job at an internet shop in her area. She is now able to assist clients draft their cv's and cover letters using various computer software. Milred remains grateful for the skills and knowledge she has acquired, and looks forward to getting a job that will further advance her expertise.
Mrs Sarah Mojingah (second from the right - top picture)

Sarah, a married mother of three, was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1979. Life in her birth country was good and like many, was leading a normal life. Tribalist injustices surfaced in her country and life took a sour turn for the worst. Internally displaced with her family, life started being difficult with no money and no food to eat. For this reason, Sarah and her family fled the country to seek refuge in South Africa in August 2008.

It was right at the plight of widespread xenophobic attacks in South Africa, that Sarah started living in Alberton, Johannesburg. Unable to speak English or find a job, life was hard for her and her family. Sarah together with her mother and sister, started a clothing/fashion design business called Anne Global Fashion Design.

Sarah, her mother and sister joined the Hand in Hand Livelihood project for refugees in July 2017. All three of them were trained on the self-employment modules on business and entrepreneurship. Among the three, Sarah is the one who applied for the Hand in Hand loan, which was approved in April 2018. The loan was used to purchase a brand new domestic embroidery machine for their business. This machine will increase revenue sales and save them time and money for doing their embroidery in Johannesburg CBD.

Attending training under the Livelihood project was the start of their success. The entrepreneurship training has given them an knowledge of how to assess the market and how to better manage their funds through strict budgeting. For example, before imparting business knowledge to them in our trainings, they explained how they would charge prices based on customers’ appearances. They reiterated they now charge standard prices for everyone and how this has helped them track profits adequately.
"They are taking our jobs"
- A myth believed, a story untold

by Lelo Mthimkulu

Johannesburg, Gauteng, March 12—
“They are taking our jobs” was what encapsulated in the minds of many citizens, during the somber outbreak of xenophobic attacks on South African soil between the years 2008 and 2015 respectively. Contextually for South Africa, the historical and racial injustices still dominate the public imagination, which often obscures the link between xenophobia and ethnic prejudice. Xenophobia as a form of ethnic, linguistic and cultural prejudice, often claims justification from immigration laws. Hence, stereotypes reduce individuals to “illegal migrants” title regardless of their actual immigration status, including those that forcefully fled their home countries to find refuge in South Africa. Therefore, refugees are left with no choice but to seek employability and self-employment opportunities that ensures their survival, sustainability and self-reliance. Is the quest for making a living a justified vindication of taking people’s jobs?
“South Africa belongs to all who live in it” – Nelson Mandela. The Legendary icon believed in the notion of freedom of expression for all those living within the borders of South Africa. On the contrary, does the statement allude to the local citizens only?

The government of South Africa has undertaken an obligation to grant protection to refugees and asylum seekers in the country according to the Refugee Act 1998, and the 1951 UN Convention relating to the status of refugees. The global legal instruments that South Africa has signed were created to provide a systematic procedure on immigration in which the concept of non-refoulment is emphasized. This means that refugees have the right to lawfully remain in South Africa, and should not be forcefully removed from the host country. Therefore, they get to enjoy all the benefits of human rights stated in the South African Bill of rights that is applicable to all, such as having access to education, jobs and health, only to mention a few.

Unfortunately, many refugees and those granted asylum in South Africa, remain to live under challenging circumstances due to a lack of employment opportunities. These include a range of ill-sentiments towards non-nationals and numerous legal procedural barriers taken by employers, to protect citizens with regards to accessing the labour market.

The practice accrue from role players' lack of knowledge to distinguish between the Refugee Act and the Immigration Act. These dynamics negatively affect refugees who have a sole priority to make a living. Ironically, South Africa is not able to access “refugee resources” in terms of labour and skill to contribute towards the economy of the country.

“To deny people their human rights is to challenge their very dignity” – Nelson Mandela. This icon continues to be used as reference because of his fight for freedom in South Africa. The right to work remain an important element to an individual’s livelihood, citizen or not. The freedom to work is intrinsic to a life of dignity and human fulfillment, social progress and societal prosperity. Therefore, in situations where one’s rights are denied, then their right to dignity is exclusively implicated. The denial to work, therefore restricts refugees and asylum seekers to support their families and worse, to live with humiliation and degradation. Consequently, denial of job opportunities and participation in the labour market compels them to resort to crime and foraging. What more damage will this have on a society that already has stereotypical judgements about foreign nationals working in South Africa? Them resorting to crime will in most cases result to gruesome xenophobic attacks in addition to many other stereotypes around them.

The cons for having refugees in South Africa outnumber the pros. In defiance of their skill, education and experience, refugees often suffer great difficulty in getting jobs in South Africa and/or suffer gross exploitation at the workplace. Frustrated with their quest for survival and need to be integrated in host communities, they often resort to entrepreneurship. Their sheer need for survival leads them to enter into what is termed as “necessity-based” entrepreneurship. This practice ultimately creates employment for themselves and other unemployed South Africans.

According to the study conducted by (Visser & Kalitanyi, 2010), immigrant entrepreneurs prefer hiring South Africans for the following reasons: South Africans offer the business a communication facility, get empowered, gain financial freedom and get trained in business skills.

Moreover, there is an element of transfer of money from towns to townships when immigrant entrepreneurs have businesses. They rent in the yards of South Africans which then allows them to earn a living. Despite the extraordinary efforts undertaken by South African government to combat unemployment, the rates to-date remain relatively high. Therefore, job creation remains a formidable challenge for the government. Immigrants ability to create employment refutes the unsubstantiated belief and stereotype that they are job takers of opportunities deserving of South Africans. The myth believed, leaves traces and deeper trails of a story untold.
Special Thanks To Our implementing partner and all our collaborating partners

Hand in Hand Southern Africa extends its gratitude of thanks to the UNHCR as the donor for the Livelihoods Project and in making a positive impact on refugees living in South Africa. Through your support we are able to reach and empower all our beneficiaries to become self-reliant and to fully integrate in their local societies.