International Labour Organization
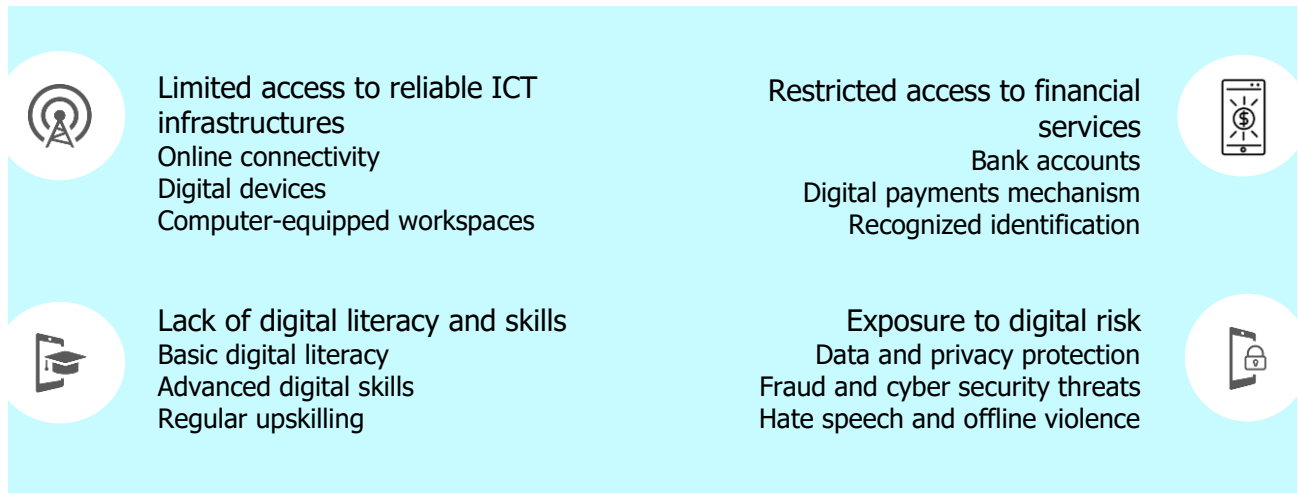
UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

PROSPECTS Opportunity Fund

Promotion, inclusion and protection of refugees and host communities in the gig economy

Challenge - Address the barriers to enable refugees and host communities' safe access to a fairer digital economy

› At the end of June 2022, an estimated 103 million people worldwide have been forcibly displaced from their homes.

› Economic inclusion is a key priority to rebuilding their lives and livelihoods with dignity and in peace.

› The digital economy's potential for job creation and economic empowerment of refugees and their host communities is vast.

› However, the lack of an enabling environment prevents refugees and host communities from actively participating in the digital economy safely, securing regular income and decent work.

Factors limiting access to digital jobs and livelihoods

Limited access to reliable ICT infrastructures
Online connectivity
Digital devices
Computer-equipped workspaces

Restricted access to financial services
Bank accounts
Digital payments mechanism
Recognized identification

Lack of digital literacy and skills
Basic digital literacy
Advanced digital skills
Regular upskilling

Exposure to digital risk
Data and privacy protection
Fraud and cyber security threats
Hate speech and offline violence

Response

Under the PROSPECTS Partnership, the ILO and UNHCR will deliver a joint Opportunity Fund project for the promotion, inclusion and protection of refugees and host communities in the gig economy: realising rights at work and mitigating digital risks, funded by the Government of The Netherlands.

Partnerships
ILO – UNHCR Regional, national and local stakeholders

Timeframe
Jan. 2022 – Dec. 2023

Geographical coverage
Global, regional and country level:
Ethiopia, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Sudan, Uganda

Central goal

To improve the working conditions of forcibly displaced people and their hosting communities on digital labour platforms, and mitigating associated digital risks, while working towards conducive and inclusive national and local employment strategies.

Approach

To this end, the ILO and UNHCR will work across three areas:

Policy solutions
To promote employment opportunities, improve rights at work and mitigate risks for digital workers

› 2023 Global Forum, a multi-stakeholder discussion on inclusive digital jobs, risk mitigating and increasing resilience.

› Expert Policy Network, a series of thematic discussions on inclusive access to decent work in the web-based economy/gig economy.

› Inclusive policy and regulatory frameworks: Mapping the challenges and opportunities for a conducive environment for decent work and livelihoods in the digital economy.

› Community-based assessments to better understand the experiences of forcibly displaced people and their host communities when engaging – or attempting to engage – in digitally-enabled jobs and livelihoods.

Capacity building
To enhance stakeholder capacity through tool development and technical guidance

› Support to digital employers and platform companies to guide their engagement with decent work for forcibly displaced people and host communities. Awareness tools on decent work conditions – retention, inclusiveness.

› Capacity building and training for gig workers on labour rights, on managing and mitigating risks of working online, establishing links with digital skills training programmes, digitalize your business training, career counselling and employability services.

› Training on new forms of social protection in the digital economy to raise awareness on challenges and recommendations to move forward.

› Capacity building for humanitarian and development organisations facilitating access to digital livelihoods on digital risk training materials.

Innovative solutions
To explore new models for safe, secure and refugee inclusive digitally-enabled livelihoods and jobs

› Pilot projects designed by local operations to test innovative models in implementing training tools, boost market-driven digital skills, enhance safe access to digital infrastructure and inclusive digital platform work.

› Develop partnerships with existing platform operators or social impact platforms to operationalize guidance tools and build capacity to improve working conditions of their members.

› Capture learning from pilots, existing initiatives and emerging approaches.

Contacts

Zulum Avila
Specialist on Employment Strategies
in the Digital Economy, ILO
avila@ilo.org

Tayná Martins
Innovations Facility Officer,
UNHCR
martinsm@unhcr.org