



SMART
COMMUNITIES
COALITION

2021
Year in Review



Welcome message



Shirin Pakfar

Chief, UNHCR Private Partnerships and Philanthropy

The number of forcibly displaced persons has surpassed 1% of humanity. Crossing the staggering milestone of 100 million for the first time on record, this drastic rise has been propelled by the war in Ukraine and new waves of violence or protracted conflict in countries including Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Myanmar, Nigeria, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. With the great majority unable to return home, growth in displacement is surpassing solutions.

In this context, there is a need for the whole of society to respond to the challenge. That is the essence of the Global Compact for Refugees adopted by UN Member States in 2018, which specifically carves out a clear role for the private sector to work in partnerships with governments, civil society and refugees. And that is why platforms like the Smart Communities Coalition are so critical to ensure we join up our knowledge and initiatives to support those forced to flee.



Fundamentally, companies can do four things to have a positive impact on refugees:

1. Donate either financial or in-kind to organizations helping those who have been displaced.
2. Reconceive their products, services or markets to directly meet the needs of refugees through business models that are both financially sustainable and concretely improve refugee lives by having access to better basic human needs including energy, connectivity and digital tools.
3. Employ refugees directly or indirectly throughout value chains.
4. Advocate for refugee inclusion to public and authorities, to create more cohesive societies, which in turn is good for business.

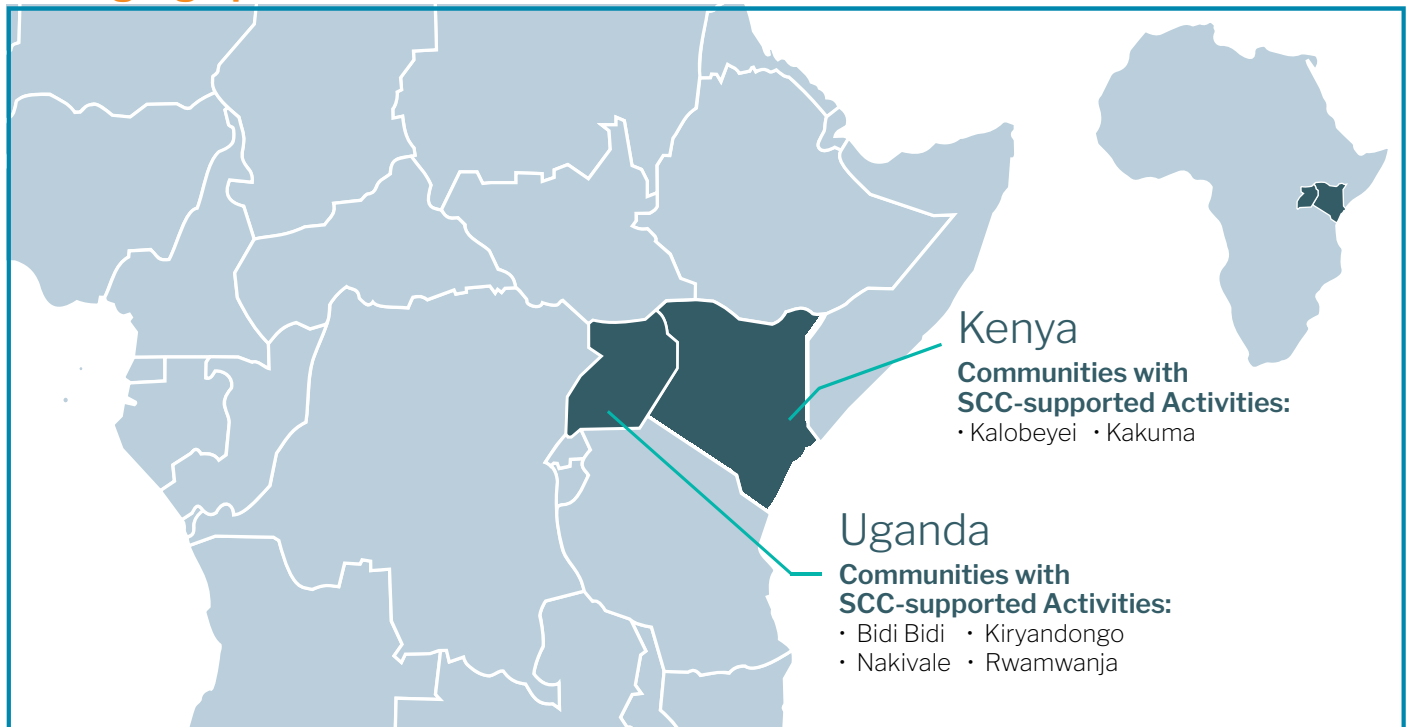
The Smart Communities Coalition is a manifestation of the aspiration for private sector engagement set out in the Global Compact for Refugees and the coalition provides a platform for companies to engage with refugees across all the above. Going forward, members of the coalition should pursue our collective goal to ensure refugees have reliable, consistent access to the goods and services they need most, enabling their inclusion in communities.

At a Glance

Overview

The **Smart Communities Coalition (SCC)**, co-chaired by Mastercard and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), acts as the bridge connecting humanitarian organizations and private sector companies, from startups to large corporations, in order to improve the delivery of services. The SCC seeks to mobilize collaboration by 1) networking and matchmaking, 2) financing, and 3) generating new models to enhance lives and livelihoods in refugee settings. We seek to enable innovative, sustainable approaches, creating hope and economic opportunity for the forcibly displaced and the communities that host them. Our stakeholders are organized according to their core strengths to address three fundamental pillars – energy, connectivity, and digital tools.

Focus geographies



Given that the power of the SCC is in its ability to bring diverse organizations together to better serve the needs of the forcibly displaced and the locals that host them, the SCC is actively looking to expand its activities beyond Kenya and Uganda. We are developing an expansion framework and list of indicators to consider prior to selecting a country.

Objectives



Increase efficiencies in operations management and service delivery



Empower forcibly displaced individuals to provide for themselves and their families

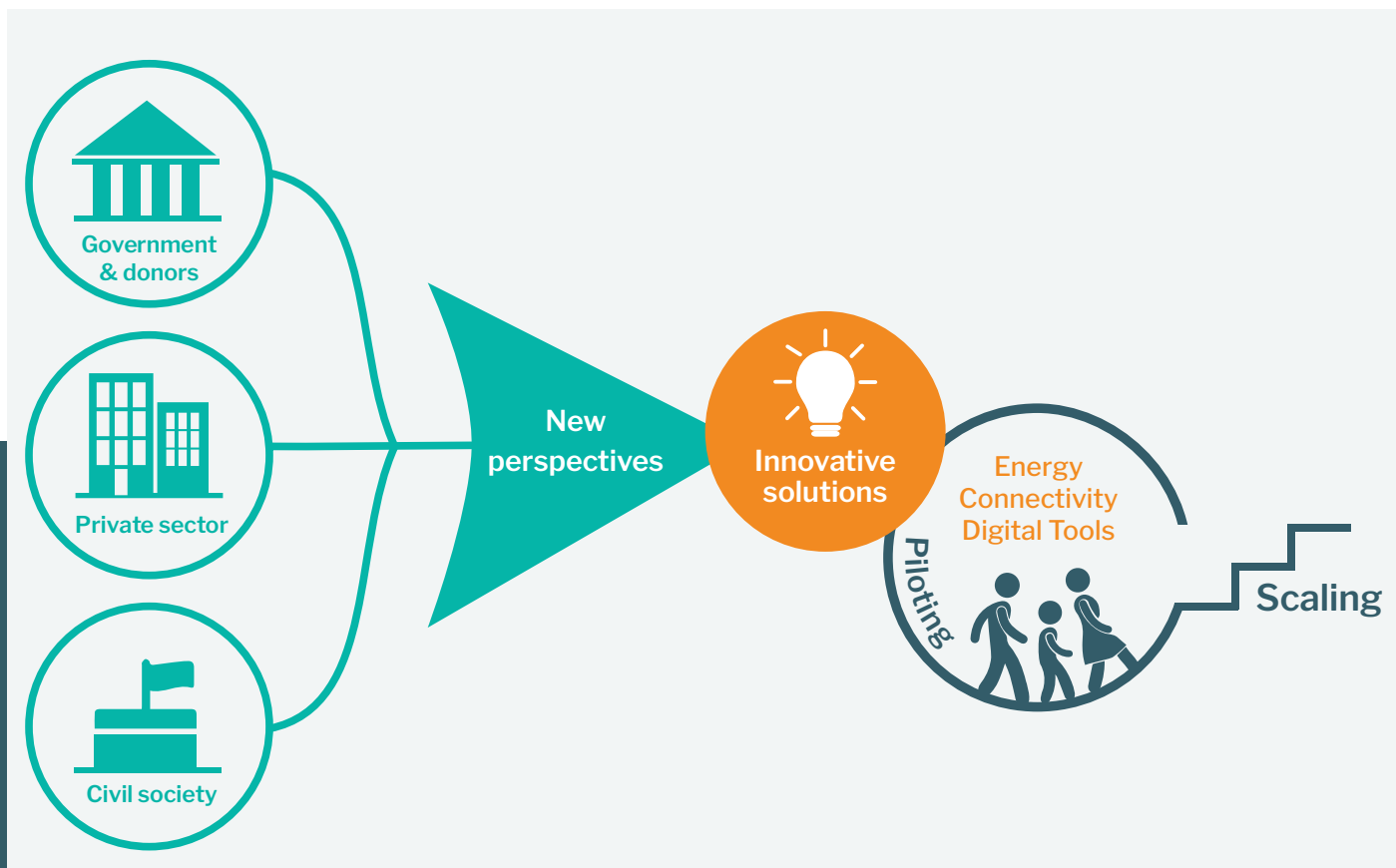


Equitably address the needs of host community members in and around targeted settlements



Provide opportunities for stakeholders to connect and collaborate to promote climate change action and gender equity

Methodology



Principles

To **encourage private sector engagement** to improve service delivery to forcibly displaced and host communities

To **implement activities** (tools, investment projects, etc.) that empower through economic growth opportunities

To provide **greater value for communities** that host the forcibly displaced through new approaches to economic and social integration

To **enable United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)** that manage humanitarian response with increased efficiencies thus stretching their funding for greater impact

Pillars



Energy

Access to energy enables better livelihoods, enhances personal safety, and reinforces regional stability



Connectivity

Mobile phone and internet access offer critical information and connection to support networks



Digital tools

Digital tools create new education, training, livelihood and information opportunities

2021 Results

Coalition management

12

new members from various industries

12

webinars hosted/co-hosted

9

knowledge products developed and disseminated

Beneficiaries

5,318 

with new or improved access to **energy**

1,855 

with new or improved access to **connectivity**

459 

with new or improved access to **digital tools**

44,135 USD

in savings for beneficiaries

199

jobs created

3,331

clean energy products sold

5,794 kWh

clean energy generated

Focus for 2022

- Launch new windows of the SCC Innovation Fund
- Select and announce winners of the Rwamwanja mini-grid activity and begin implementation
- Advance targeted matchmaking and information sharing to facilitate collaboration across the SCC network
- Publish SCC's second playbook on the Digital Agents for Energy+ pilot
- Explore supporting SCC members that lend to refugees and their host communities

Co-chair contact info

Sasha Kapadia

Director,
Humanitarian & Development,
Mastercard
E: Sasha.Kapadia@mastercard.com

Claudia Schwartz

Energy Access Advisor,
Beyond the Grid,
Power Africa
E: cschwartz@usaid.gov

Diana Boncheva-Gooley

Senior Advisor,
Digital Finance,
USAID
E: dbgooley@usaid.gov

SCC Secretariat: SCC@Mastercard.com | www.smartcommunitiescoalition.org

Members & Collaborators



Organizational Progress

Continued digital engagement

Due to ongoing travel restrictions and safety concerns stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, the SCC focused on virtual convenings of the network. Seeking to break the mold of the typical Zoom conference, the 2021 Annual Meeting brought together 141 participants from 57 organizations over four sessions in March. The meeting served as a platform to engage members' senior leaders, review progress made in 2020, and collect suggestions for improving SCC's effectiveness. The coalition also met on a quarterly basis for digital matchmaking and new member presentation webinars.

In partnership with Accenture, the SCC produced a Microsoft Power BI-based dashboard version of the member heatmap. The digital heatmap now visualizes member activity in Kenya and Uganda and serves as an informational resource.

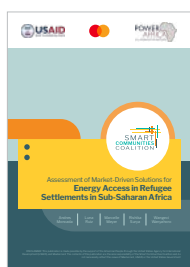
In order to keep members informed and engaged, the SCC published quarterly newsletters that shared updates on coalition growth, pilot and other projects, and maintained a tracker of awards, grants and other funding opportunities relevant to the three pillars in displacement settings.

Focus on digital tools and financial inclusion

Motivated by the addition of an SCC co-chair from USAID's digital finance team and looking to diversify and increase partnership opportunities for members, the SCC made a concerted effort to recruit and engage new members with capabilities in digital tools and finance. Throughout 2021, nine new members with investment, analytics, and telecommunications expertise joined the coalition. The SCC also held quarterly financial inclusion working group meetings to spur knowledge sharing and presentations on topics like digitization of savings groups and digital financial literacy among members.

Sharing learnings and best practices

The SCC published multiple reports and led webinars to share best practices in service delivery of energy, connectivity, and digital tools solutions in displacement settings. Highlights include:



Assessment of Market-Driven Solutions for Energy Access in Refugee Settlements in Sub-Saharan Africa: Summarizes findings and recommendations from 13 energy access projects, authored by a team of Columbia University graduate students.



Sustainable Energy for Small Businesses in Displacement Settings: In partnership with EnDev and UNITAR/Global Platform for Action, SCC co-facilitated a webinar on approaches to providing clean energy for enterprises in displacement settings.



De-Risking Pay-As-You-Go Solar Home Systems in Uganda Refugee Settlements: Reviews achievements and lessons learned from an SCC pilot.



Digital Financial Literacy Training in the Uganda Refugee Response: In partnership with U-LEARN and the Uganda Cash Working Group, SCC co-facilitated a webinar and published a learning brief on digital financial literacy training design and implementation in refugee settlements in Uganda.

Sustained donor engagement

In 2021, the Secretariat engaged numerous donors and philanthropies and explored partnerships, shared relevant concept notes and facilitated introductions. To mark 2021's World Refugee and Humanitarian Days, the SCC penned a [call to action](#) to public and private funders and practitioners to engage with the coalition to drive multi-sector partnerships.



Growing the coalition

In 2021, the SCC added 12 new members, now making the network nearly 80 strong:

- [Agsol](#)
- [A-R-E-D](#)
- [Atlas AI](#)
- [BuffaloGrid](#)
- [Ensibuuko](#)
- [Grameen Foundation](#)
- [HIP Consult](#)
- [Kenya Climate Ventures](#)
- [Kiva](#)
- [MFS Africa](#)
- [Techfugees Foundation](#)
- [United Nations Capital Development Fund](#)



Ensibuuko:

Thanks to aligned objectives, SCC and Ensibuuko can jointly design, build and lead a shared digital future for forcibly displaced populations in achieving financial inclusion. In 2021, SCC provided access to key learnings around signals, explored risks and opportunities for supporting displaced populations, and enabled key collaborations with members DanChurchAid, Lutheran World Federation, Opportunity Bank and USAID on leading digital transformation. In 2022, we look forward to piloting and scaling up multiple digital financial inclusion projects across settlements and host communities Uganda with support from SCC members including GSMA, UNCDF and USAID.



Grameen Foundation:

Through the SCC, we have met so many organizations doing interesting work, and also gotten closer to some organizations that we had already met through other fora. We've already started a small-scale clean energy finance pilot with one SCC partner, and are hopeful to see that grow and expand in the new year. At the same time, the SCC has connected us to partners funding the type of refugee financial and market systems strengthening work that we specialize in, and this is invaluable to scaling our work. In the new year, we would love to scale up our clean energy finance pilot to new groups and new settlements and share that work with the SCC. We are also hopeful for new opportunities to pilot and collaborate with SCC partners who are working to advance refugee self-reliance and economic growth.



Techfugees:

Being a SCC member, Techfugees has benefitted from knowledge sharing and coordination between public and private entities with the global digital tech community to open new collaboration opportunities to serve displaced persons. In 2022, we are looking forward to deploying innovative technology and partnerships to enable transformational change in the delivery of services to connect the unconnected and harness the untapped potential talent of displaced persons to participate in the digital society.

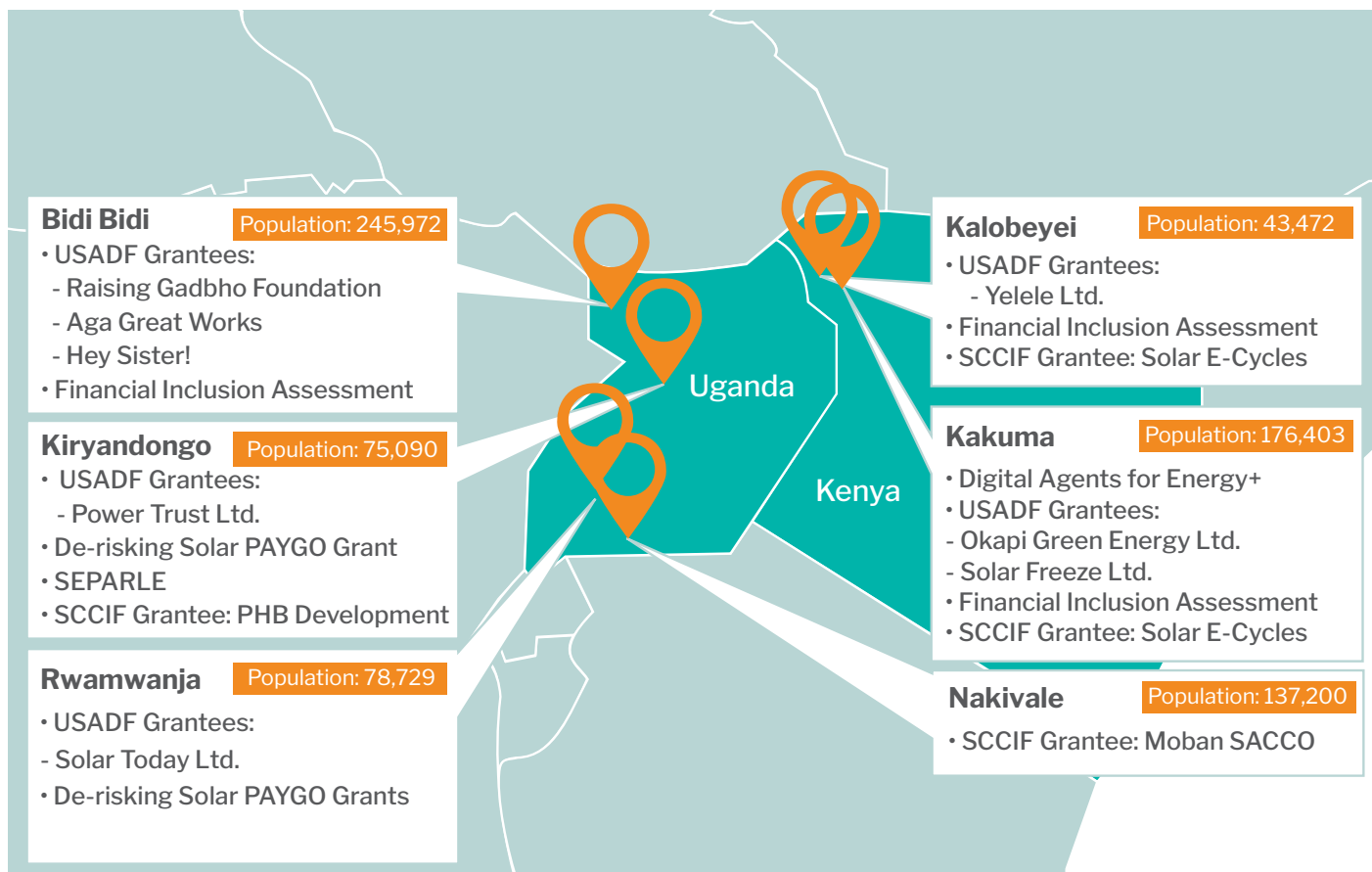
Coalition governance

The SCC's Advisory and Steering Committees continued to provide strategic, operational and tactical guidance to steer the SCC throughout 2021.

	Advisory Committee	Steering Committee
Purpose	Advise on SCC's strategic direction	Advise on SCC's operational and tactical activities
Members		
Key takeaways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit the SCC theory of change • Explore geographic expansion • Identify new funding partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advised on SCC matchmaking format and SCCIF funding opportunities • Guide matchmaking efforts by outlining needs in the field • Help steer communications cadence



2021 Project Highlights



SCC Activities:

DIGITAL AGENTS FOR ENERGY+

Pillars: Energy and Digital Tools

Members: International Trade Centre (ITC), Mastercard, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and TotalEnergies

Time period: 2018 - 2021

The Digital Agents pilot was designed to create job opportunities for refugee and host community youth and support the growth of small and medium enterprises through the marketing and sales of household solar PV in Kakuma and Kalobeyei in Kenya. Concluding in early 2021, the project facilitated training and mentorship, procured phones and solar PV products for seven wholesalers and 21 youth, and resulted in 60 sales.

60

solar energy products sold worth 97,600 KES (Kenyan Shilling)

21

agents trained and hired by wholesalers

12

agents conducted sales on behalf of six wholesalers

SCC INNOVATION FUND GRANTEES

Time period: 2021 - present

In January 2021, the SCC Innovation Fund (SCCIF) announced four winners for its [inaugural call for proposals](#). The four consortia will implement activities that will benefit nearly 3,500 displaced and host community households across Kenya and Uganda. Fund manager EnDev published a [review](#) of the first round.



Water containers intended to be transported by electric bicycles

E-Cycles Kenya

Solar E-Cycles, Strathmore University and OFGEN will deploy e-cycles in Kakuma and Kalobeyei in Kenya. Twenty solar tricycles will be assembled and piloted in the area, with business and user training provided by Strathmore University. The e-cycles will serve farmers, shops, health centers and families as cheaper options compared to traditional motorcycles.

Moban SACCO

Moral Brotherhood and Neighborhood (Moban) SACCO, BiziSol and OffGridBox will install a solar-powered solution for energy, drinking water, and connectivity in Nakivale, Uganda. The team aims to deploy two containerized “Off Grid Boxes” that will produce approximately 12 kWh/day and offer purified water to 800 households and power businesses. The team will provide digital skills and business training, enable mobile-based payments and establish a community-based utility company to lead operations.

2021 MEL HIGHLIGHTS:

Number of beneficiaries creating additional income:

30 | 3 female
27 male

Number of jobs created:

9 | 4 female
5 male



PHB Development

PHB Development, Yelekeni Farmers' SACCO, BrightLife and UltraTec are developing a 5 kW solar-powered hatchery and individual solar home systems for poultry farming in Kiryandongo, Uganda, improving efficiencies across the entire poultry life-cycle. Solar product testing will commence in 2022 with the SACCO to manage the solar hatchery, while BrightLife will lease 50 W solar home systems to poultry farmers.

2021 MEL HIGHLIGHTS:

Number of beneficiaries creating additional income:

50 | 30 female
20 male

Number of jobs created:

50 | 30 female
20 male

UNITED STATES AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION (USADF) GRANTEES

Time period: 2019 - present

Okapi Green Energy Limited

This year, Okapi Green Energy Limited commissioned a Wi-Fi system which completed its 20kW mini-grid project. The WiFi system is configured to the reliable network provider, Safaricom, and integrated to its payment system. A total of 159 customers have been connected to the grid, and the remaining 41 customers shall be connected during the first quarter of 2022.

“Having enrolled in an online learning course, I had to find a way to attend lessons virtually...other options were expensive, but this Okapi Green Wi-Fi was affordable and with only Ksh 20. I can fully attend a 2-hour class...” - **Muroon, JWL student**

2021 MEL HIGHLIGHTS:

Amount of energy installed:

20 kW

Total number of beneficiaries with new or improved access to energy:

785 | 53% female
47% male

Total number of beneficiaries with new or improved access to connectivity:

443 | 43% female
57% male

Estimated amount of savings per year:

23,847 USD

Number of jobs created

105 | 41 female
64 male



Solar Freeze Limited

This year Solar Freeze Limited procured pay-go-enabled solar freezers and delivered them to Kakuma for installation. Freezer sales began with high demand and all available freezers were immediately booked by customers. Solar Freeze also conducted training for 16 local technicians, and through online engagement, all trainees have been linked to multiple field installation activities for solar power related projects. Additionally, Solar Freeze was selected as a winner of the prestigious [Ashden Award](#).



Besides using the Solar Freeze unit to run 2 businesses that store breast milk and cold water, Priscila has tapped the power from the 300 W solar panel to charge mobile phones, and operate a TV and radio.

2021 MEL HIGHLIGHTS:

Amount of energy installed:

4.4 kW

Number of jobs created:

23 | 7 female
16 male

Total number of beneficiaries with new or improved access to energy:

13 | 7 female
6 male

Power Trust Limited

Power Trust Limited is monitoring, supporting and facilitating payment plans for container-based productive use solar energy hubs for five businesses in Kiryandongo, including a salon, retail shops and machine mill. The company installed a freezer with a backup storage unit. The hubs contribute to income generation in both the refugee settlement and host community and serve women and youth groups. Over half of the businesses have observed increases in revenue generation.

2021 MEL HIGHLIGHTS:

Total number of beneficiaries with new or improved access to energy:

2,500 | 1800 female
700 male

Solar Today

Solar Today is serving multiple businesses with remote-controlled solar systems such as solar lighting and phone charging stations in Rwamwanja settlement, now serving 125 beneficiaries in total.

2021 MEL HIGHLIGHTS:

Number of products sold:

16 | new units

Number of jobs created:

16 | 2 female
14 male

Yelele Limited

Yelele Limited installed a mini-grid distribution network including connections to customers. Yelele received tariff approval by the Government of Kenya to produce and sell electricity to residents of village 3 in Kalobeyei settlement, as well as a construction permit. The project is pending a final permit prior to supplying electricity.

Raising Gabdo Foundation

Raising Gabdho Foundation made final preparations for a solar PV-based minigrid in Yumbe, Uganda. Two containerized solutions will provide energy and ICT services to community members, with payments made via mobile money using the Zeed energy mobile application, which will be rolled out to Kampala and Bidi Bidi as well.

2021 MEL HIGHLIGHTS:

Systems sold:

500 | briquettes, cookstoves
and cooking baskets

Total number of beneficiaries with
new or improved access to energy:

695 | women

Total number of beneficiaries with new
or improved access to connectivity:

500 | women

Estimated amount
of savings per year:

10,000 USD

Number of jobs created:

10 | 8 female
2 male

Aga Great Works Limited

After receiving approval from the Office of the Prime Minister, Aga Great Works installed a powerhouse for its mini-grid that will serve refugees and host community members in and near Bidi Bidi settlement. The team has led sensitization events and hired locals at the project site, and installed solar PV systems for health, ICT and residential sites in Yumbe district.

2021 MEL HIGHLIGHTS:

Total number of beneficiaries with new or improved access to energy:

2,370 | 406 women

Total number of beneficiaries with new or improved access to connectivity:

846 | 366 women

Estimated amount of savings per year:

7,500 USD

Number of jobs created:

12 | 3 female
9 male

FINANCIAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP

Pillars: Digital Tools

Members: DanChurchAid, Developing World Markets, FINCA Uganda, FSD Africa, FSD Uganda, GSMA, Mercy Corps, NetHope, Norwegian Refugee Council, USAID, and World Vision

Time period: 2019 - present

Throughout 2021, the coalition's financial inclusion working group met digitally every quarter to share updates, present learnings and identify opportunities for collaboration. Topics of interest included village savings and loan association (VSLA) digitization, financial literacy, loans, and other financial mechanisms for refugee and host community members. The group also identified new organizations to invite into the SCC.

HEY SISTER! SHOW ME THE MOBILE MONEY!

Pillars: Digital Tools

Members: DanChurchAid and USAID

Time period: 2021-present

With funding from USAID, DanChurchAid deployed Strategic Impact Advisors' [Hey Sister! Show Me the Mobile Money!](#) digital financial literacy campaign in Koboko, Maracha and Yumbe communities in Uganda. From September to December 2021, DCA used interactive voice recordings in local languages to train facilitators to lead trainings on digital financial literacy for VLSA members on topics such as mobile money payments, consumer rights and redress procedures and SIM card swaps.

2021 MEL HIGHLIGHTS:

Total number of facilitators trained:

113 | 64 women

Total number of VSLA members trained:

8,445 | 7,282 women

Inzikuru Nelly, *Hey Sister!*
 Participant in Yumbe, Uganda:
 “After listening to Hey-Sister,
 I have learned a lot about the
 importance of using mobile
 money as a means of saving and
 securing my finances. I have so
 far saved 112,000 UGX on my
 mobile money account. This is
 so cheap and easy to access
 as we do not have any nearby
 banks; it’s less costly in terms of
 maintenance and the process of
 saving using mobile money does
 not take a lot of time...”



Training for Lokopio women's group, Yumbe

Looking Forward

The SCC remains staunchly committed to the idea that better collaboration leads to better outcomes. Combining the expertise and capabilities of companies with the knowledge and experience of humanitarian and development organizations allows us to construct new ways to serve. Now, four years in, we have the results to back up our assumption. The challenge then becomes making it so new ways become old ways (that replace the old old ways). We must work to disseminate and apply our lessons learned across the sector. With future windows of the SCC Innovation Fund on the horizon, we will look to support those projects that embrace and extend the SCC model. We also continue to accept new members who see value in the network and the resources provided therein. If this resonates with you, join us!

Together we can build the momentum needed to transform the operating model in the humanitarian context.

To learn more about the SCC, please contact us at
SCC@mastercard.com



Sasha Kapadia
 Director,
 Humanitarian & Development,
 Mastercard
E: Sasha.Kapadia@mastercard.com



Claudia Schwartz
 Energy Access Advisor,
 Beyond the Grid,
 Power Africa
E: cschwartz@usaid.gov



Diana Boncheva-Gooley
 Senior Advisor,
 Digital Finance,
 USAID
E: dbgooley@usaid.gov

www.smartcommunitiescoalition.org