

UNHCR IDEAS

AN INTRODUCTION

Welcome to **UNHCR Ideas**, an online idea-management project - using a platform called Spigit - that will allow the UNHCR community to generate innovative solutions to challenges in refugee protection and assistance.

UNHCR Ideas will provide a space for humanitarians and beneficiaries to share their practical experience and first-hand knowledge to inform colleagues around the world and solve common challenges. UNHCR staff members, partners, and beneficiaries will be invited to use the UNHCR Ideas website to share ideas and solutions to challenges highlighted by UNHCR offices and stakeholders. As ideas bubble through the system, contributors will vote, comment, and collaborate to eventually crowd source relevant and innovative solutions to the problem.

A “challenge” is a specific question that is posed to a community of stakeholders (refugees, UNHCR staff, partners, academia and the private sector) to jumpstart the creation of ideas around a specific issue faced by persons of concern to UNHCR, or by the organization in serving persons of concern. Challenges are time-limited events designed to engage the community in creating high-quality solutions. The goal at the end of a challenge is a collection of viable solutions, vetted by the stakeholders and experts, that could be implemented as pilot programs in the local area.

LAUNCH CHALLENGE: AUGUST 12TH, 2013

UNHCR Innovation will launch the **UNHCR Ideas** platform on August 12, 2013 with a six week-long challenge involving 150 staff members, partners and academic institutions. During the first four weeks of the challenge, participants will post their ideas, comment on others’ ideas, and vote on which ideas are most feasible and innovative. During the 5th week, a group of experts from inside and outside UNHCR will rate the top 20 ideas and provide in-depth feedback and support towards developing workable project plans. The top 5 ideas will then be considered by a committee of leaders from within UNHCR who will select the winning idea based on challenge-specific criteria.

“How can access to information and services provided by UNHCR and partners be improved for refugees and people of concern residing in urban areas?”

Refugees residing in urban areas have been the subject of increasing attention, both within UNHCR and beyond. The urban setting poses unique challenges for assistance and information delivery. UNHCR Innovation will use the ideas generated by the above challenge to complement existing efforts and augment the tools available to staff in these locations. This challenge will bring together communities from inside and outside UNHCR to share ideas; provide staff and stakeholders a space to share questions and concerns regarding their work; and find a potential low-cost solution that can be piloted in 2014.

AFTER THE CHALLENGE

After the committee announces which idea has been chosen, UNHCR Innovation will work with key stakeholders to pursue the solution in a variety of ways. The Innovation Office has seed funding with which to research, test or pilot the selected idea; moreover the participant who introduced the chosen idea will be made an Innovation Fellow and will be invited to participate in this year’s Innovation workshop. He or she will also be invited to join the project team to refine and test the solution. All contributions by early adopters and innovators will be highlighted through acknowledgment and recognition in public fora.

UNHCR INNOVATION

