

Online-Roundtable 02.05.2025

Regenerative solutions in refugee camps and settlements

Documentation & Key Insights



"What if we could transform refugee camps into regenerative communities?" - GenR

Summary

On May 2, 2025, Generation Restoration e.V. hosted an online roundtable with around 15 registered participants attendees from diverse organizations, including representatives from refugee settlements, NGOs, and research institutions. The roundtable took a leap from the critical themes of scaling to the essential topics forming standardization.

Taking the first step from scaling up to standardizing approaches across refugee settlements is intrinsic to GenRs strategy that provides social and financial capital to advance from scaling to standardization and, ultimately, business development. Participants were reminded of the last roundtable's highlights gathered by two working groups that discussed <u>seed production and conservation</u> as well as <u>impact</u> assessment and scaling.

The goal of this roundtable was also to develop two key documents for the essential topics forming the first part of standardization: alignment.

The overall question was then: How to align internally and externally in terms of sufficient internal capacity development for Regenerative Agriculture in Displacement Settings?

The session introduced the model going forward within the next few months: alignment, institutionalization and standardization (see chart below).

ALIGNMENT, INSTITUTIONALIZATION, STANDARDIZATION



ALIGNMENT

Definition:

Ensuring that all stakeholders, including donors, organizations, and communities, share a unified vision for the implementation and sustainability of regenerative practices.

Key Components:

- Shared values
- Alignment on community-driven, sustainable, and regenerative agricultural practices
- Common goals between communities and donors
- Creating a shared vision that allows for effective collaboration and mutual benefit
- Coordination of resources and strategies
- Alignment in funding sources, technical expertise, and logistics

INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Definition:

Institutionalization involves embedding practices and structures into formal systems, ensuring sustainability and long-term support.

Key Components:

- Pathways for refugee leadership
- Ensure refugee communities have a role in leading and managing these practices
- Collaborative models for
- cross-organization capacity-building
- Strengthen partnerships and shared resources between organizations to scale initiatives
- Institutional partnerships for funding & scale-up
- Establish long-term funding partnerships and collaborations with institutional donors

STANDARDIZATION Definition:

The process of creating uniform practices, protocols, or principles that can be applied consistently across different camps or communities.

Key Components:

- Co-developing practical, context-appropriate standards
- Work with local communities and experts to create standards suited to the context of refugee camps
- Scalable models
- Ensure standards can be applied at larger scales, across multiple camps or regions
- Monitoring & evaluation frameworks
- Set clear metrics to measure the success of these standardized practices

MAY

AUGUST



The definition of alignment focuses on the communities themselves but also on donors. Hence, two components of alignment were discussed in the plenum:



Internal Alignment – Coordinating resources and capacity among refugee settlements, host communities and grassroots organizations



External Alignment – Setting the frame for early donor involvement

As the goal was to establish collective key terms with the participants, the plenum was directed by specific questions. The collective key terms for both internal and external alignment will be summarized by GenR and distributed to all actors of interest in the vision to design refugee camps and settlements as regenerative places.



Internal Alignment

Internal alignment remains a critical challenge in refugee settlements and among host communities: While the benefits of regenerative agriculture are rather long-term, short-term success is essential but will not enhance the living conditions of those impacted. The questions posed in the plenum were the following:

- What do you need the community to understand about regenerative practices?
- How are you trying to convey the benefits?
- How can we help?

The participants highlighted several issues:

Benefit for the community

Many refugees do not understand the benefits of regenerative agriculture as it needs a long-term strategy and does not yield short-term success.

Expectation management

The long-term nature of regenerative agriculture requires expectation management without too many promises.

Ownership

Without proper ownership towards the solution, acceptance will be lowered. Involvement from the onset is key.

Demand side

It needs a price difference between organic and non-organic fertilizers. Until now, non-organic fertilizers are cheap and provide short-term success.

Supply side

Composting and creating organic fertilizer is difficult as it requires a certain

land area, but refugee settlements in Uganda mostly provide only 2 acres of land.

Several community-driven solutions were discussed to address these challenges:

Increase practical applications

In order to increase the understanding and showcase a "before and after"-picture, practical demo sites need to be established

Communicate effectively

Effectively means to be able to communicate with highly educated and less educated groups that require diverse communication channels. TikTok has been mentioned as one possible channel to use.

Mindset shift

Establish local learning centers to initiate a mindset shift and remind the people involved of the farming strategies they had implemented before the introduction of hybrid seeds and non-organic fertilizers.

Farmer Cooperatives

Organizing farmers into networks for knowledge exchange and collective seed preservation.

Key Findings and strategic terms to develop from will be formed in the document "Collective Key Terms to Coordinate Resources and Strategies for Regenerative Solutions in Refugee Camps". While aligning internally creates a profound basis for ensuring resource building and strategies to enhance engagement, ensuring external alignment with donors must be ensured for a higher degree of sustainable funding.



External Alignment

External alignment remains a critical challenge in refugee settlements and among host communities, due to the need of long-term involvement rather than short-term financial input given the nature of regenerative agriculture and the sociological component that defines living conditions. The questions posed in the plenum were the following:

- Think about your past experiences with funders. What has felt empowering? What has felt extractive or uncomfortable?
- What's your ideal relationship with donors? What level of visibility or influence do you want — and what would make it feel safe and respectful?

The participants highlighted several **learnings from donor involvement**:

Knowledge enhancement

Many projects include monitoring and data assessment methods that are highly beneficial for impact assessment within the grassroots organizations.

Seed fundings

Many projects receive funding for only 1–3 years, which is insufficient for regenerative processes that require long-term commitment. Developing the project further requires clear strategies that young organizations in refugee settlements oftentimes don't have.

Participants discussed the following approaches to improve early donor involvement:

Developing localized impact metrics

Establishing community-specific assessment frameworks rather than relying on generic global models.

Strengthening the relationship

Treat donors as partners and involve them from the onset.

Stay visible

Visibility attracts early donor involvement and creates a networking opportunity, e.g. through targeting specific segments of donors or communicating the search for donors in a networking group.

Include the host community

Convincing that a project does not rely on specific groups or people but that it is providing a benefit to the local region shows commitment.

Key Findings and strategic terms to develop from will be formed in the document "Collective Key Terms to Assess Early Donor Involvement for Regenerative Solutions in Refugee Camps".

We'd like to express our deep gratitude to all who contributed to the roundtable discussion. This documentation is based on voluntary engagement of this diverse group. Thank you!



Next Online-Roundtable on August 8, 2025, 9 am EAT

Generation Restoration will host the next roundtable continuing with the institutionalization aspect of standardization.



Please register here: https://form.campai.com/TfPhO3vyZzV. In the meantime, discussions can be continued in the Generation Restoration LinkedIn Group, as well as in the working documents (if you do not have access to them yet, write us an email: connect@genr.world).