



2019
Partnership Report on
Clothes Donations

UNIQLO/GU & UNHCR: The Power of Clothing

Working Together to Support
Displaced People



Background

Fast Retailing (UNIQLO/GU) has been an active supporter of UNHCR since 2006, through its UNIQLO/GU Recycle initiative which encourages customers to donate used clothes for distribution across the world to displaced people and others in need. So far, this has resulted in over 30 million items of second-hand clothing being distributed through UNHCR. This very tangible expression of “The Power of Clothing” has formed the foundation of UNIQLO/GU and UNHCR’s highly successful partnership, which has since expanded to support refugee employment at UNIQLO stores, refugee training and self-reliance schemes, cash donation, cause related marketing initiatives, a UNIQLO staff deployment programme, and public awareness raising activities, including in UNIQLO/GU stores and local schools.

The partnership between Fast Retailing (UNIQLO/GU) and UNHCR was formalized in 2011. It has been renewed and expanded over the following years. The most recent agreement was signed in 2017 for the next three years to continue UNIQLO/GU’s wide-ranging support for refugees and displaced people around the world.

**In-Kind
donations of
clothing**

**Refugee
employment
in UNIQLO
stores**

**Refugee
training and
self-reliance
projects**

**Financial
support**

**Awareness
raising
and cause
related
marketing**

**Deployment
of UNIQLO
employees
to UNHCR**

Cover: A young girl is seen holding new clothes after a UNHCR distribution event for refugees from the Central African Republic in the village of Mogoro, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). © UNHCR/Hugh Kinsella Cunningham

This page: Clothes are displayed before being allocated at a UNHCR distribution event in DRC. © UNHCR/Hugh Kinsella Cunningham

The Power of Clothing

The cornerstone of UNIQLO/GU's partnership with UNHCR is the desire to recycle used clothes, and to consequently make the world a better place, especially for those who have been forced to flee from their homes or are vulnerable for other reasons.

UNIQLO first donated clothes to UNHCR in 2007, and these clothes were delivered to countries such as Thailand, Nepal, Uganda and Tanzania. UNIQLO also made a cash donation of \$507,000, and during the same year we were pleased to host representatives of UNIQLO to see the impact of UNIQLO's support in person. Since then, the partnership between UNHCR and UNIQLO has continued to grow, with the donation and distribution of clothes increasing significantly from 2012 onwards. During the period from 2011 to 2019, Fast Retailing provided over 12 million US dollars including emergency and livelihood support for displaced people. This generous 'in-kind' support has been reinforced with communication campaigns, cause related marketing, and in Japan by UNIQLO/GU's school outreach programme, which has raised awareness of refugee issues targeting over 40,000 students, and encouraged them to start collecting clothes by themselves. Through the years of partnership, we welcome the increasing local connections between UNIQLO/GU and UNHCR country offices in countries such as Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Spain, the UK, etc., providing a great opportunity for UNHCR and UNIQLO/GU to make a difference and to raise awareness within their own communities.

Providing dignity and comfort to refugees

Since 2007, over 90% of the clothes distributed in UNHCR's field operations have been provided by UNIQLO/GU and its customers. These clothes help provide dignity and comfort to those who have been left with little and often struggle to meet even their most basic needs for food, shelter and medicine. The clothes can also provide a psychological boost, from the simple enjoyment of having something new and different to wear, to the knowledge that people in other parts of the world want to help – many of the recipients of distributed clothes offer thanks to UNIQLO/GU not only for the clothes, but for being remembered. UNHCR field operations make requests required clothing for refugees and who are in need of it and conduct the field distributions, while the coordination between the field operations and UNIQLO/GU is done by UNHCR HQs.

In 2019, UNHCR received 4,445,676 items of clothing donated by UNIQLO/GU, bringing the total received so far through the partnership to 30,739,074. The clothes were distributed in a total of 23 countries, with 13 countries benefiting in 2019. On behalf of all the refugees who have benefited from this partnership, we would like to express our deepest gratitude.

UNIQLO/GU's in-kind donations are requested by many UNHCR field operations every year, with particular demand from Africa in recent years. This following section of the report is designed to provide an insight into the clothes donations by UNIQLO/GU in a selection of countries in 2019.

Chad, Uganda and DRC: UNIQLO/GU Clothes Distributions in 2019

As in previous years, UNHCR Private Sector Partnerships (PSP) has worked closely with the country operations who have received and distributed UNIQLO/GU clothing in 2019 to document the distribution events, and show the impact clothes can make via testimonials, stories and photos. Below is a selection of material showing the enormous impact UNIQLO/GU's generous contribution has had once again on the lives of men, women and children affected by displacement.

Haswange's story, from Sudan to Chad

Haswange Abdallah Daoud fled Sudan with her six children. When she fled her village, she simply asked just to take a blanket to protect her baby from cold nights. However, the men who asked her to leave refused and beat her. She was injured and fled to neighboring Chad. She spent 27 days at the border in Adre. The weather was very cold, especially during the nights. They did not have shelter to protect themselves. Then, together with her children, she was relocated to the new camp of Kouchaguine Moura in early February.

When we carried out the interview, Haswange has been in the new camp for 23 days. In the camp, she feels safe, and she received assistance from UNHCR and its partners. She received a family shelter, food rations and basic Core Relief Items such as a kitchen set.

A UNIQLO/GU clothes distribution took place from 25 to 28 February in Chad's Kouchaguine Moura camp. The distribution was carried out by UNHCR and its partners. The identified beneficiaries were all families who had relocated to Kouchaguine Moura from the Sudanese border areas since early February. Every family received five pieces of clothing per person. The clothes were a mix of summer and winter clothes, and also included sports clothing and shoes. In total, 4,049 individuals from 1,016

families received clothes. Haswange's family also received clothes from UNIQLO/GU, including baby clothes and warm items to protect the children from the cold. She raised the need for shoes for her and the children and also for blankets.



UNIQLO/GU clothes distribution in Chad, 2019. © UNHCR



UNIQLO/GU clothes distribution in Chad, 2019. © UNHCR

Denise's story, Uganda

Denise Kabanza is a 40-year-old married woman with 12 family members who came to Uganda in 2014. While back in Ruchuru, DRC, the Maimai rebels stormed their area and brutally killed a large number of people. This incident forced Denise and her family to come to Uganda. She told us that while in transit, her husband was shot several times in the upper thigh and currently walks with support but is still on medication. She added that she is the only breadwinner of the family despite her big family size. She noted with gratitude that the clothes she received in **Kyaka, Uganda**, helped her so much because the size of her family means that she cannot buy clothes for all of them. Therefore, this donation has helped to reduce the pressure of buying clothes. She received four pieces of clothes herself - trousers which she normally puts on while going for her routine field and garden work and also at home after work. She can now wash and change her clothes, and this has contributed to her well-being.

Following the influx of Refugees coming to Kyaka, where the majority of the population is composed of women, there was a dire need for clothes to support the residents. In 2019, UNHCR received 20 bales of urgently needed women's clothes from UNIQLO/GU to help support the women and improve their well-being. A total of 1,364 women from the zones of Byabakora, Itambabiniga, and Sweswe were reached with the 2,728 pieces of clothing provided.

In **Nakivale**, Uganda, UNHCR received 17 bales of warm clothing for women, men, girls and boys and three bales for younger children to distribute at a Reception Centre to new arrivals, asylum seekers and refugees.

In total, 1,523 (968 female and 555 male) individuals from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda and South Sudan at the Kabazana Reception Center were supported with warm clothing. The well-being of new arrivals and asylum seekers was greatly improved through this access to warm clothing for the first time in a period of three years. This improvement was a great milestone, and the community appreciated effort and support from UNIQLO/GU and UNHCR.



Denise Kabanza in Kyaka, Uganda, 2019. © UNHCR



Women in Kyaka receive clothing at a UNIQLO/GU distribution. Uganda, 2019. © UNHCR

Clothes distribution in DRC

At the UNIQLO/GU clothes distribution in Baraka, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2019, displaced families received items from the 100,950 pieces of clothing donated by UNIQLO/GU to the operation:



Children receiving items of clothing at a UNIQLO/GU distribution in Baraka, DRC.
© UNHCR/Hugh Kinsella Cunningham



Clothes are displayed before being allocated at a UNHCR distribution event.
© UNHCR/Hugh Kinsella Cunningham



A group of refugee women from the Central African Republic is seen with their new clothes after attending a UNHCR distribution event in the village of Mogoro, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. © UNHCR/Hugh Kinsella Cunningham

A heartfelt THANK YOU to UNIQLO/GU and its customers. You have made an enormous difference to the lives of thousands of refugees, displaced persons and other vulnerable men, women and children in 2019 – all through the life-saving Power of Clothing!



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