

# Sahel Re-Sound M'bera

## Project Overview and Mission Context

M'bera refugee camp, Hodh Ech Chargui, Mauritanie

*A consolidation, consultation, and mobilization mission aimed at the gradual establishment of a cultural, artistic, technical, and economic space serving Malian refugees and host communities.*



The project is led by the TADIAZT association (Mali, local implementation), in consortium with artists and cultural, craft, and sports actors from the M'bera camp, alongside For A Purpose (Belgium, donor and construction expert) and Resonant Earth (Belgium, artistic programs and fund mobilizer), the Carlo collective (Germany, audiovisual documentation), Cultural Storyville (Spain, cultural expert), and the Dawna cultural association (Mali, local implementation).

It is implemented in consultation with the support of regional authorities, UNHCR Mauritania, and the camp's general coordination, in full compliance with existing administrative, humanitarian, and security procedures.

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*"In M'bera, artistic and cultural diversity does not merely tell the story of exile: it opens a path toward dignity, transmission, encounters, opportunities, and a shared future."*



## Key Figures of the Project and Mission

Key Element	Figure/Period	Relevance for the Project
Arrival of Malian refugees in M'bera	2012	The project is part of a prolonged displacement context requiring long-term solutions beyond emergency humanitarian aid.
TADIAZT's presence in M'bera	Since 2019	TADIAZT has developed strong field knowledge, including familiarity with local artists and cultural dynamics.
Structured dialogue with artists	June 2024	The project emerged from ongoing exchanges with young creators and cultural actors in the camp.
Initial identification mission	August 2025	Key needs were confirmed: instruments, equipment, studio space, training, production, and visibility.
Consolidation mission	April 15–26, 2026	Meetings held with authorities, UNHCR, camp coordination, associations, and community stakeholders.
Participants: Artists, artisans, athletes, youth, women, adults, and community leaders	105 individuals encountered	The assessment goes beyond music, confirming the need for a broader cultural, sports, craft, and economic ecosystem.
Funding secured for pilot phase	68 000 €	Initial funding allocated for instruments, training, residencies, recording, post-production, and distribution.
Pilot phase (on-site and remote)	September 2026 to February 2027	Testing phase for training, equipment, production, governance, inclusion, and hybrid activities prior to long-term structuring.
Resource mobilization for a permanent, inclusive space	2 years of operation and activities needed	A key requirement to transition from pilot phase to a sustainable model, including coordination, training, maintenance, and production
Core objective	1 sustainable cultural space	To create a hub for training, creation, production, dissemination, knowledge transmission, and gradual income generation..
Target groups	Refugees and host communities	To strengthen social cohesion, economic opportunities, and peaceful coexistence.



## 1. Executive Summary

Since 2012, the M'bera camp has hosted Malian refugees in a context of protracted crisis marked by insecurity in the Sahel, pressure on natural resources, a gradual reduction in humanitarian aid, limited access to infrastructure, and a lack of professional opportunities for young people.

By 2025, the Hodh Ech Chargui region was hosting more than 290,000 Malian refugees, including approximately 120,000 in the M'bera camp and over 170,000 in surrounding host villages. The camp has therefore evolved into a long-term living environment, where responses must go beyond emergency humanitarian aid to include training, social cohesion, self-expression, economic autonomy, and future prospects.

Sahel Re-Sound M'bera offers a complementary response to traditional humanitarian interventions by structuring a cultural, artistic, technical, and economic ecosystem. This ecosystem aims to enable refugees and host communities to train, create, produce, disseminate, transmit knowledge, and generate income. The project builds on existing local potential and ongoing dialogue with artists initiated in June 2024.

An initial mission conducted in August 2025 confirmed key needs: dedicated spaces, instruments, equipment, training, visibility, and external connections. The April 2026 mission further consolidated this assessment through meetings and exchanges with Mauritanian authorities, UNHCR, camp coordination, local associations, and more than 100 community stakeholders, confirming the relevance of establishing an inclusive and sustainable cultural space.

The project is both anticipated and feasible, provided it is embedded within a clear, inclusive, and coordinated institutional framework. The pilot phase, scheduled from September 2026 to February 2027 and already supported by several donors<sup>1</sup> with funding of €68,000, will test equipment, introductory training programs, residencies, recordings, audiovisual productions, and governance mechanisms.

Priority needs now focus on mobilizing additional resources for the development of a permanent space, two years of operational funding, artistic, technical, audiovisual, digital, and entrepreneurial training, content production, local governance, maintenance, dissemination, income-generating activities, and knowledge capitalization.

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<sup>1</sup> Supported by Connect for Global Change, Connect&Create and Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen.

## 2. Context, challenges and justification

The M'bera camp emerged from a regional crisis that has lasted for more than a decade. Malian refugees live there in a situation of prolonged displacement, with a significant proportion of youth either born or raised in the camp. This situation has led to multiple disruptions: separation from territories of origin, interrupted educational and professional pathways, and loss of economic, cultural, and social networks.

This reality affects both refugees and Mauritanian host communities and is further exacerbated by declining humanitarian funding. According to the World Food Programme, half of the population in the M'bera camp is expected to face acute food insecurity (IPC Phase 3 or higher) during the 2026 lean season. The WFP also warns that funding reductions across West and Central Africa are deepening hunger, malnutrition, and despair among youth, with potential consequences including displacement, rising tensions, and conflict.

At the same time, UNHCR reports that population movements remain dynamic. As of April 2026, insecurity in northern and central Mali continued to drive displacement toward southeastern Mauritania. This confirms that M'bera is not merely a temporary settlement but a long-term living environment. It is a human, social, cultural, and economic territory requiring sustained and adapted investment.

UNHCR also highlights that refugees now represent a significant share of the population in Hodh Ech Chargui—approximately 35% of the regional population and over 5% of Mauritania's national population. This reality calls for a territorial approach: responses must extend beyond the camp to include host communities, local authorities, and regional dynamics.

In this context, culture, music, sports, crafts, audiovisual production, and technical training are not secondary activities. They address essential needs related to dignity, self-expression, learning, social cohesion, knowledge transmission, psychosocial well-being, conflict prevention, and the creation of local economic opportunities. UNESCO emphasizes that participation in cultural life fosters intercultural dialogue, social cohesion, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding. Furthermore, cultural and creative industries represent a significant global economic sector and, at the local level, can generate income through artistic production, events, technical services, crafts, training, and digital distribution.

The Sahel Re-Sound M'bera approach is therefore strategic. It goes beyond music production to transform existing cultural potential into a driver for training, professionalization, refugee-host cooperation, positive visibility, and progressive empowerment. The project also contributes to reducing social vulnerability, isolation, and exposure to risks by providing young people with a structured, meaningful, and constructive framework.



### 3. Project Genesis

The project is rooted in a gradual relationship between TADIAZT, the artists of the M'bera camp, and Sahelian cultural actors. Since 2019, TADIAZT has been active in the camp, notably through the Cultural Caravan for Peace of the Festival au Désert, providing operational, logistical, and technical support to artistic activities. At the same time, the association has maintained regular connections with M'bera artists, particularly during their visits to Bamako, offering them access to rehearsal spaces, recording opportunities, and technical support.

From June 2024 onward, these exchanges were progressively structured around a project focused on training, production, and artistic promotion. A mission conducted in the camp in August 2025 on behalf of the consortium confirmed the presence of strong creative dynamics, hindered by the lack of appropriate spaces, insufficient instruments, inadequate sound equipment, the absence of a production studio, and limited access to training in music, technical skills, cultural management, digital marketing, and entrepreneurship in the cultural and creative industries.

These findings confirmed the need to move from occasional support to a structured, progressive, and sustainable response.

This phase enabled TADIAZT, For A Purpose, and Resonant Earth to mobilize €68,000 for a pilot phase including instruments, basic equipment, introductory training, residencies, initial recordings, post-production, and dissemination.

### 4. Mission Objectives

The mission carried out from April 15 to 26, 2026, with all partners<sup>2</sup>, aimed primarily to prepare the pilot phase and consolidate the conditions for the project's feasibility, relevance, and sustainability.

It sought to engage with administrative authorities, humanitarian actors, camp management, direct beneficiaries, and host communities in order to:

- Update the initial assessment;
- Understand authorization procedures and security constraints;
- Broaden dialogue to include artisans, athletes, women, youth, and adults;
- Identify needs in terms of infrastructure, equipment, training, governance, protection, maintenance, and operations;
- Lay the groundwork for mobilizing additional resources.

### 5. Activities Conducted and Consolidated Assessment

The mission included exchanges with the Wali of Néma, the President of the Regional Council of Néma, the Hakim of Bassikounou, the Youth Department of Bassikounou, UNHCR in Bassikounou, the camp's general coordination, the camp's youth and culture coordinator, youth leaders, local associations and organizations, as well as artists, artisans, athletes, women, men, youth, and adults.

These discussions clarified the administrative, security, social, and institutional issues related to project implementation. Key aspects included identifying a site compatible with the camp's urban plan, understanding authorization procedures, ensuring security conditions, defining

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<sup>2</sup> TADIAZT asbl, Resonant Earth fv and 4APurpose vzw.

coordination mechanisms, and clarifying stakeholder responsibilities. They also confirmed that site selection must be carried out in consultation with the relevant authorities, UNHCR, and camp coordination to ensure compliance, safety, and local ownership.

Engagement with 105 young people and adults confirmed that needs extend far beyond music alone. Participants expressed the need for a structured environment to learn, create, rehearse, record, produce, transmit knowledge, showcase work, organize events, and develop economic opportunities. The diversity of participants: traditional and modern artists, sports associations, women, men, artisans, and community representatives, highlighted the interconnections between music, dance, sports, crafts, and audiovisual practices.

Acoustic sessions organized during the mission allowed partners to directly experience the camp's voices, instruments, musical styles, dances, and forms of expression.

Participation in a football final demonstrated the role of sport as a space for gathering, collective discipline, recognition, and community mobilization.

A craft exhibition organized with the president of the artisans highlighted the existence of local know-how that can be strengthened through exhibitions, sales, hosting delegations, intergenerational transmission, and income generation. Artisans, particularly blacksmith-griots and other knowledge holders, play a key role as custodians of memory and transmitters of music, dance, and storytelling traditions. They must therefore be fully integrated into the project as both cultural and economic actors.

The consolidated assessment highlights several key findings. M'bera possesses a shared Sahelian-Saharan cultural foundation common to both Malian refugees and Mauritanian host communities. Creative potential already exists but remains weakly structured and insufficiently equipped. Needs are structural: space, equipment, training, support, governance, maintenance, dissemination, and income generation.

The isolation of talent limits the camp's visibility toward Nouakchott, Bamako, and broader African and international cultural networks. Potential tensions linked to pressure on resources require inclusive, visible, and empowering activities benefiting both refugees and host communities.

Finally, the future space and all project activities must be recognized as a collective asset, managed transparently and inclusively to prevent exclusive individual or organizational appropriation.

## 6. Strategic Orientation: A Sustainable Cultural Ecosystem

The mission confirms that the most relevant approach is the gradual establishment of a cultural, technical, economic, and social space enabling training, creation, production, dissemination, and promotion of talent from both the camp and host communities.

This space should not be conceived as a simple studio, but as an integrated ecosystem structured around five complementary pillars:

- **Creation and Production:**

Studio, rehearsal spaces, learning of traditional and modern instruments, audio and video recording to enable the transition from informal practices to high-quality productions.

- **Training and Experimentation:**

Music and instruments (traditional, modern, electronic), singing, songwriting, sound engineering, stage lighting, music production (DAW), applied electricity for stage and audiovisual setups, recording, video, technical management, IT, digital communication, cultural management, and entrepreneurship.

- **Dissemination and Events:**  
Concerts, residencies, showcases, presentations, screenings, sport-music events, community days, hosting official delegations, digital distribution, professional networking, and programming at local, national, regional, and international levels, in line with administrative frameworks and partnerships.
- **Crafts and Creative Economy:**  
Exhibition space, sales, knowledge transmission, promotion of skills, income generation, and partner engagement.
- **Coordination and Governance:**  
Resource mobilization, planning, maintenance, inventory management, communication, beneficiary follow-up, and liaison with authorities, UNHCR, camp coordination, and partners.

This structure directly connects proposed responses to on-the-ground realities. The lack of space calls for a structured facility; the isolation of talent calls for professional content and distribution channels; the lack of opportunities calls for practical training; the risk of tensions calls for inclusive activities; and financial fragility calls for a hybrid model combining partner support with gradually increasing self-generated income.

## 7. Intervention Logic, Pilot Phase, and Governance

The pilot phase, scheduled from September 2026 to February 2027, represents a period of testing, learning, and operational validation. It will enable the installation of a temporary setup, the identification of initial participant cohorts, the launch of introductory training programs, the production of initial recordings, the creation of audiovisual content (EPs, music videos, live recordings, testimonials), and the organization of a public showcase.

Need	Response	Pilote Phase	Expected Outcome
Lack of space	Cultural, technical, and economic space	Temporary training–rehearsal–recording setup	Test the temporary system and prepare for the identification, development, equipment, or gradual construction of a permanent space
Limited support for talent	Training, mentoring, production	Residencies, workshops, first creative outputs	Produce works and increase visibility
Technical gap	Equipment and hands-on training	Instruments, mobile studio, digital audio production (DAW), video, technical control	Train an initial cohort of refugee and host youth in basic artistic, technical, and audiovisual skills
Isolation	Local, national, and digital dissemination	EPs, music videos, recordings, communication materials	Build connections with Nouakchott, Bamako, and external networks
Potential tensions	Joint refugee-host activities	Cultural, sports, and craft events	Strengthen trust and peaceful coexistence
Governance needs	Committee, charter, inventory, rules	Testing of a management framework	Establish a transparent, inclusive governance model recognized by local stakeholders

## **8. Theory of Change**

If refugee and host youth have access to a safe, well-equipped, and well-governed space, and if they benefit from practical training, production tools, joint activities, and opportunities for dissemination, then they will be able to develop skills, strengthen their self-confidence, generate income, participate in community life, and contribute to social cohesion.

This dynamic will help shift from a situation of passive vulnerability to one of active participation, skills development, and local contribution.

## **9. Operational Challenges, Risks, and Mitigation Measures**

The mission confirmed several challenges and risks that need to be anticipated, including administrative authorizations, security protocols, mobility constraints, the inability for international partners to stay overnight in the camp, equipment storage, beneficiary protection, inclusion, maintenance, and governance.

The challenges and risks identified (outlined in the table below) do not call the project into question. Rather, they highlight the need for structured coordination, forward planning, an operational framework validated with authorities, UNHCR, and camp coordination, and transparent project governance.

Taking these constraints into account from the preparation phase is a key factor in ensuring credibility and trust with authorities, UNHCR, technical and financial partners, and local stakeholders.

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## 10. Key Risks and Mitigation Measures

Identified Challenges and Risks	Mitigation Measures
Administrative delays	Anticipate authorization processes, clarify responsibilities, and maintain regular coordination with authorities, UNHCR, and camp management.
Security risks and access restrictions	Comply with protocols, adapt the timeline, validate movements, and maintain ongoing security monitoring.
Logistical constraints	Plan transport, storage, energy supply, and installation; identify local focal points capable of ensuring continuity.
Project perceived as refugee-only	Actively involve host communities in training, events, governance bodies, and economic activities.
Governance-related tensions	Establish a representative committee, a charter, clear access rules, an inventory system, and mediation mechanisms.
Low participation of women	Adapt schedules, engage families and community leaders, provide safe spaces, and offer targeted support (e.g., scholarships).
Misuse of equipment	Train users, assign responsible managers and night guards, implement inventory systems, borrowing rules, and allocate a maintenance budget.
Limited documentation of results	Collect data, testimonials, photos, and videos, and produce a pilot phase report.
Financial dependency	Diversify funding partners and progressively develop self-generated income, reinvesting it into maintenance, equipment renewal, and operations, without presenting it as an immediate substitute for partner funding.



## 11. Recommendations from Consultations with Authorities, Institutions, and Camp Stakeholders

Recommendation	Justification	Expected Outcome
Anchor the project within a clear and coordinated institutional framework	Authorities, UNHCR, and camp coordination emphasized the importance of complying with administrative, humanitarian, and security procedures.	Ensure institutional recognition, avoid misunderstandings, and secure implementation.
Identify a suitable site aligned with the camp's urban plan	Site selection must be discussed with relevant authorities, UNHCR, and camp coordination to avoid inappropriate placement.	Ensure a space that is accessible, safe, sustainable, and integrated into the camp's current and future structure.
Establish inclusive and transparent local governance	Stakeholders stressed that the space must not be perceived as belonging to any individual, group, or organization.	Strengthen legitimacy, prevent tensions, and promote collective ownership.
Engage all population groups	Consultations highlighted the importance of including youth, women, girls, adults, artisans, athletes, vulnerable individuals, and host communities.	Ensure the project is genuinely shared, inclusive, and representative of the camp's diversity.
Define clear rules for use, protection, and equipment management	Sustainability depends on clear rules regarding access, inventory, maintenance, safety, child protection, and inclusion of vulnerable groups.	Prevent conflicts, protect beneficiaries, preserve equipment, and ensure responsible management.
Gradually build local capacity	Stakeholders expressed the need for local skills in sound engineering, video, digital music production (DAW), technical management, maintenance, communication, and cultural facilitation.	Strengthen local autonomy and enable refugee and host youth to become technicians, trainers, managers, or cultural entrepreneurs.
Include host communities from the outset	A project perceived as targeting only refugees could generate frustration in a context of resource pressure.	Strengthen social cohesion, mutual trust, and peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities.
Integrate crafts, sports, dance, and audiovisual practices.	The mission showed that these practices are interconnected in the camp's social life and should not be addressed separately.	Build a comprehensive cultural ecosystem capable of reaching a broad audience and generating diverse opportunities.
Anticipate administrative, logistical, and security constraints.	Authorizations, travel, schedules, camp access, and restrictions affecting international partners must be planned in advance.	Ensure realistic, smooth implementation aligned with the requirements of authorities, UNHCR, and camp coordination.
Mobilize additional resources for sustainability	Existing funding enables the launch of the pilot phase but is insufficient for long-term development and operation.	Secure funding for site identification, development, equipment or construction, two years of operations, advanced training, maintenance, production, dissemination, and income-generating activities.
Document, monitor, and capitalize on results	Stakeholders emphasized the importance of measuring impact and learning from the pilot phase.	Improve the project, ensure accountability to partners, demonstrate impact, and mobilize additional support.

## 12. Expected Outcomes, Monitoring & Evaluation Indicators, and Accountability

In the short term, the pilot phase will strengthen young people's self-confidence, skills, participation, and visibility. It will generate the first distributable content and test governance and protection mechanisms. It will also help establish a framework of trust between beneficiaries, authorities, UNHCR, camp coordination, and project partners.

In the medium term, the project aims to provide regular training for refugee and host youth (both women and men), structure a local team, develop artistic and technical services, and foster income-generating activities in music, audiovisual production, events, crafts, training, and distribution.

In the long term, Sahel Re-Sound M'bera aims to become an autonomous, inclusive, sustainable cultural space connected to Mauritanian, Malian, African, and international networks.

Monitoring, evaluation, and accountability indicators are designed to be simple and measurable, including: number of young people trained, proportion of women and girls, number of host community youth involved, training hours, tracks recorded, EPs, albums, music videos and audiovisual content produced and disseminated, joint refugee-host activities organized, income generated, services delivered, artisans involved, management committee established, charter adopted, inventory completed, incidents or difficulties reported, testimonials collected, and pilot phase report produced.

At the end of the mission, our priority is to focus on mobilizing additional resources to:

- identify, develop, and equip a sustainable, secure cultural space compatible with the camp's urban plan;
- ensure at least two years of operations: local coordination, trainers, maintenance, transport, communication, security, daily management, small activity funds, and monitoring and evaluation;
- organize training and transfer skills to refugee and host youth;
- support artistic and audiovisual production;
- develop income-generating activities;
- strengthen the inclusion of young women, vulnerable groups, and host communities;
- establish transparent local governance;
- document, capitalize on, and disseminate the results of the pilot phase.

To this end, several forms of contribution can be mobilized depending on the profile, capacities, and area of intervention of partners:

- administrative facilitation and site support for national and local authorities;
- protection framework, administrative facilitation, and humanitarian coordination for UNHCR and camp coordination;
- funding for the space, its operations, its activities, and monitoring and evaluation for institutional donors;
- support for a venue, a studio, a cohort, or a creative fund for foundations and philanthropists; equipment, energy, IT, audiovisual or maintenance support for companies;

- mentorship, dissemination, and artistic exchanges for cultural actors; donation of an instrument, a training scholarship, support for a young woman, a music video, or a community event for individuals.

In the coming weeks, several resource mobilization actions will be undertaken in order to translate the identified needs into concrete support:

- consolidation of funding proposals, including budget, equipment needs, governance, implementation timeline, indicators, and evidence of the mission's impact;
- a crowdfunding campaign targeting individuals, diasporas, solidarity networks, and individual donors;
- a collection campaign for instruments, audiovisual and IT equipment, energy solutions, cabling, and maintenance equipment;
- structured outreach to potential donors and partners: public, private, associative, cultural, and institutional;
- preparation and submission of applications to calls for proposals aligned with priorities such as youth, culture, social cohesion, inclusion, vocational training, and economic empowerment.

### 13. Conclusion

Sahel Re-Sound M'bera responds to a need that is often less visible than immediate humanitarian priorities: dignity, expression, knowledge transmission, hope, and the professional future of young people in a context of prolonged displacement, pressure on resources, and the gradual reduction of aid.

Humanitarian needs remain immense, but life cannot be reduced to survival alone. Refugee youth and host communities also need spaces to learn, create, meet, produce, develop skills, generate income, and build positive futures.

The April 2026 mission confirms that the project is relevant, expected, and realistic. It is grounded in needs expressed by camp stakeholders themselves, in existing creative potential, in a co-construction approach, and in initial funding already secured for the pilot phase.

Supporting Sahel Re-Sound M'bera means investing in youth, peace, social cohesion, prevention of tensions, reduction of vulnerability factors, economic empowerment, professionalization of creative industries, and the recognition of refugees and host communities as actors of creation, dialogue, and development.

By supporting this initiative, authorities, UNHCR, donors, partners, philanthropists, companies, associations, and individuals will contribute to making M'bera a space of resilience, knowledge transmission, cultural innovation, and shared opportunities.

Every contribution, even targeted, can create a real opportunity for a young person, a young woman, an artist, an artisan, or a community and can make M'bera a place of creativity, skills, opportunities, and a shared future.

*Project Coordinator*

*Done in Namur, Thursday, April 30, 2026*



# M'bera Sahel Re-Sound M'bera Consortium

## Association [TADIAZT](#)

Lead organization of the consortium

**Consortium members:** artists, cultural actors, artisans, and athletes from the M'bera camp, [For A Purpose](#) and [Resonant Earth](#) (Belgium), Collective [Carlo](#) (Germany), [Cultural Storyville](#) (Spain), Association culturelle [Dawna](#) (Mali).

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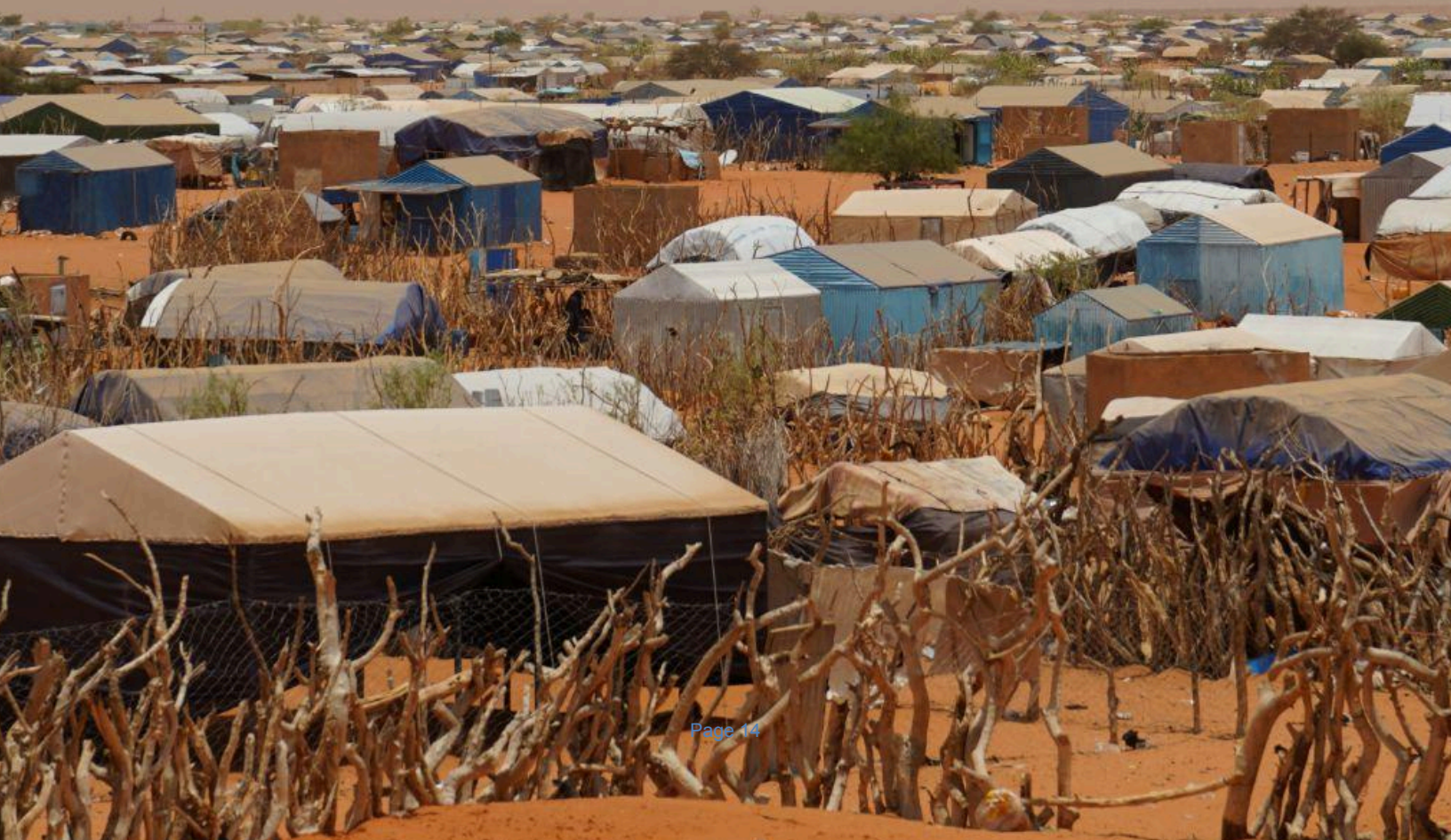
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**Sources and references used:**

- *UNHCR Mauritania: data on Hodh Ech Chargui, M'bera, and Malian refugees;*
- *WFP/IPC: data on food and nutritional vulnerability;*
- *UNESCO: references on culture, social cohesion, cultural participation, and refugees;*
- *UNDP: references on preventing factors of vulnerability and community resilience;*
- *European Commission: references on culture, social cohesion, and dialogue between refugees, migrants, and host populations;*
- *Data collected during the April 2026 field mission from authorities, UNHCR, camp coordinators, associations, artists, artisans, athletes, and beneficiaries;*
- *Internal documents from the Sahel Re-Sound M'bera project.*